

**Mother tongue education and transition to
English medium education in Uganda: Teachers'
perspectives and practices versus language policy
and curriculum**

by

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Declaration

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the authorship owner thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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Abstract

In this dissertation I report on an ethnographic survey study undertaken on bi-/multilingual education in ten primary schools in Uganda. The primary aim of this study was to explore how teachers understand and manage the process of transitioning from mother tongue (MT) education to English as a language of learning and teaching (LoLT).

In this study I used a multi-method approach involving questionnaires, classroom observations, follow-up interviews and note taking. Data was analysed using a theme-based triangulation approach, one in which insights gleaned from different sources are checked against each other, so as to build a fuller, richer and more accurate account of the phenomenon under study. This data was gathered firstly from teachers and classes in the first three years of formal schooling (P1 to P3) in order to understand the nature of multilingualism in the initial years of primary schooling and how teachers use MT instruction in preparation for transition to English-medium education that occurs at the end of these three years. Secondly, data from P4 and P5 classes and teachers was gathered so as to examine the manner in which teachers handle transition from MT instruction in P4 and then shift into the use of English as LoLT in P5.

The study has identified discrepancies between *de jure* and *de facto* language policy that exist at different levels: within schools, between government and private schools in implementing the language-in-education policy, and, ultimately, between the assumptions teachers have of the linguistic diversity of learners and the actual linguistic repertoires possessed by the learners upon school entry. Moreover, the study has revealed that it is unrealistic to expect that transfer of skills from MT to English can take place after only three years of teaching English and MT as subjects and using MT as LoLT. Against such a backdrop, teachers operate under circumstances that are not supportive of effective policy implementation. In addition, there is a big gap between teacher training and the demands placed on teachers in the classroom in terms of language practices. Moreover, teachers have mixed feelings about MT education, and some are unreservedly negative about it. Teachers' indifference to MT education is partly caused by the fact that MTs are not examined at the end of primary school and that all examination papers are set in English. Furthermore, it has emerged that Uganda's pre-primary education system complicates the successful implementation of the language-in-

education policy, as it is not monitored by the government, is not compulsory nor available to all Ugandan children, and universally is offered only in English.

The findings of this study inform helpful recommendations pertaining to the language-in-education policy and the education system of Uganda. Firstly, there is a need to compile countrywide community and/or school linguistic profiles so as to come up with a well-informed and practical language policy. Secondly, current language-in-education policy ought to be decentralised as there are urban schools which are not multilingual (as is assumed by the government) and thus are able to implement MT education. Thirdly, the MT education programme of Uganda ought to be changed from an early-exit to a late-exit model in order to afford a longer time for developing proficiency in English before English becomes the LoLT. Fourthly, government ought to make pre-primary schooling compulsory, and MT should be the LoLT at this level so that all Ugandan children have an opportunity to learn through their MTs. Finally, if the use of MT, both as a subject and as a LoLT, is to be enforced in schools, the language of examination and/or the examination of MTs will have to be reconsidered.

In summary, several reasons have been identified for the mentioned discrepancies between *de jure* and *de facto* language-in-education policy in Uganda. This policy was implemented in an attempt to improve the low literacy levels of Ugandan learners. It therefore appears as if the policy and its implementation will need revision before this achievable aim can be realised as there is great difficulty on the teachers' side not only in the understanding but also in managing the process of transitioning from MT education to English as LoLT.

Opsomming (Afrikaans)

In hierdie proefskrif lewer ek verslag oor 'n etnografiese opname van twee meertaligheid wat in 10 laerskole in Oeganda uitgevoer is. Die hoof doel van die studie was om vas te stel hoe onderwysers die oorgang van moedertaalonderrig na Engels as taal van onderrig en leer (TLO) verstaan en bestuur.

Ek het 'n veelvuldige metode-benadering in hierdie studie gevolg en gebruik gemaak van vraelyste, klaskamerwaarnemings, opvolgonderhoude en veldnotas. Data is geanaliseer deur gebruik te maak van 'n tema-gebaseerde trianguleringsbenadering, een waarin insigte verkry uit verskillende bronne teen mekaar geverifieer is om sodoende 'n voller, ryker en meer akkurate verklaring vir die studieverkynsel te gee. Hierdie data is eerstens onder onderwysers en leerders in die eerste drie jaar van formele skoolonderrig (P1 tot P3) ingesamel om vas te stel (i) wat die aard van veeltaligheid in die beginjare van laerskool is en (ii) hoe onderwysers moedertaal (MT) gebruik om leerders voor te berei vir die oorgang na Engels-medium onderrig wat aan die einde van hierdie drie jaar geskied. Data is tweedens onder P4- en P5-onderwysers en in P4- en P5-klaskamers ingesamel om sodoende die wyse te ondersoek waarop onderwysers die oorgang van MT-onderrig in P4 en die skuif na die gebruik van Engels as TLO in P5 hanteer.

Die studie het diskrepansies tussen *de jure*- en *de facto*-taalbeleid op verskeie vlakke geïdentifiseer: binne skole, tussen die regering en privaatskole in die implementering van die taal-in-onderwys-beleid, en ook tussen die aannames wat onderwysers oor die talige diversiteit van leerders het en die werklike talige repertoires waarmee hierdie leerders die skoolsisteem betree. Die studie het verder getoon dat dit onrealisties is om te verwag dat oordrag van vaardighede van MT na Engels kan plaasvind ná slegs drie jaar van (i) Engels en MT as vakke en (ii) gebruik van MT as TLO. Teen hierdie agtergrond werk onderwysers onder omstandighede wat nie effektiewe beleidsimplementering ondersteun nie. Daar is ook 'n groot gaping tussen onderwyseropleiding en die eise wat aan onderwysers in die klaskamer gestel word in terme van taalpraktyke. Verder het onderwysers gemengde gevoelens oor MT-onderrig, en sommige is sonder voorbehoud negatief daaroor. Onderwysers se onverskilligheid teenoor MT-onderrig word gedeeltelik meegebring deur die feit dat MTe nie aan die einde van laerskool geëksamineer word nie en dat alle eksamenvraestelle in Engels opgestel word. Dit het ook geblyk dat Oeganda se voorskoolse onderwysstelsel die

suksesvolle implementering van die taal-in-onderwys-beleid kompliseer, aangesien hierdie vlak van onderwys nie deur die regering gemonitor word nie, nie verpligtend of toeganklik vir alle Oegandese kinders is nie en universeel in slegs Engels aangebied word.

Die bevindinge van hierdie studie maak nuttige aanbevelings moontlik aangaande die taal-in-onderwys-beleid en die onderwyssisteem in Oeganda. Eerstens is daar 'n behoefte aan die opstel van 'n landswye taalprofiel van gemeenskappe en skole sou 'n goed-ingeligte en prakties uitvoerbare taalbeleid daargestel wou word. Tweedens behoort die huidige taal-in-onderwys-beleid gesentraliseer te word, aangesien sommige stedelike skole (in teenstelling met wat deur die regering aangeneem word) nie veeltalig is nie en dus wel daartoe in staat is om MT-onderrig te implementeer. Derdens behoort die MT-onderrigprogram in Oeganda verander te word van een waarin leerders MT-onderrig vroeg verlaat tot een waarin hulle MT-onderrig laat verlaat, sodat daar meer tyd is vir die verwerwing van Engelse taalvaardighede voordat Engels die TLO word. Vierdens behoort die regering preprimêre onderwys verpligtend te maak en behoort MT die TLO op hierdie vlak te wees sodat alle Oegandese kinders die geleentheid het om deur middel van hul MTe te leer. Laastens, as die gebruik van MT (as 'n vak sowel as as TLO) in skole verplig gaan word, behoort die taal van eksaminering herbesin te word en/of die eksaminering van MTe heroorweeg te word.

Opsommenderwys: Daar is verskeie redes geïdentifiseer vir die genoemde diskrepansies tussen die *de jure*- en *de facto*- taal-in-onderwys beleid in Oeganda. Hierdie beleid is ingestel in 'n poging om die lae geletterdheidsvlakke van Oegandese leerders aan te spreek. Dit blyk dat die beleid en die implementering daarvan hersien sal moet word voordat hierdie haalbare doelwit gerealiseer sal kan word, want onderwysers vind dit merkbaar moeilik nie net om die huidige beleid te verstaan nie maar ook om die proses van oorgang van MT-onderrig na Engels as TLO te bestuur.

Ekisengejje (Luganda)

Mu kiwakano kino, njogera ku kunoonyereza okwesigamizibwa ku kwekaliriza ekibinja ky'abantu ab'awamu n'engeri gye bakwatamu ebyenjigiriza nnaniminnyingi mu masomero ga pulayimale kkumi mu Uganda. Ekigendererwa ky'okunoonyereza kuno ekikulu kyali okwekaliriza engeri abasomesa gye bategeeramu ne gye bakwatamu enseetuka y'okuva mu kusomera mu lulimi oluzaaliranwa okudda mu Lungereza.

Mu kunoonyereza kuno, nakozesa enseetuka mpendannyingi omuli olukalala lw'ebibuuzo, okwekaliriza okw'omu kibiina, okubuuza ebibuuzo eby'akamwa n'okuwandiika ebyekalirizibwa. Ebiwe byakenenulirwa mu miramwa nga giggyibwa mu ebyo ebyakuŋŋaanyizibwa mu mpenda ez'enjawulo. Enkola eno yeeyambisa ebyakukuŋŋaanyizibwa mu mpenda ez'enjawulo nga buli kimu kikkuutiriza kinnaakyo ne kiba nti ekijjo ekinoonyeerezebwo omuntu akitebya mu ngeri enzijuva era engagga obulungi. Okusooka, ebiwe byakuŋŋaanyizibwa okuva mu basomesa ne mu bibiina ebisookerwako ebisatu (P1 okutuuka ku P3) n'ekigendererwa ky'okutegeera ennimi eziri mu myaka egisooka egya pulayimale n'engeri abasomesa gye batandikamu okusomesereza mu nnimi enzaaliranwa nga bateekateeka abayizi okubazza mu kuyigira mu Lungereza. Okuyigira mu Lungereza kutandika okubaawo ng'emyaka esatu egisooka giweddeko. Ebibiina, P4 ne P5 nabyo byatunuulirwa n'ekigendererwa ky'okwekaliriza engeri abasomesa gye bakwatamu enseetuka y'okuggya abayizi mu kuyigira mu nnimi enzaaliranwa mu P4 okubazza mu kuyigira mu Lungereza mu P5.

Okunoonyereza kuno kuzudde empungu wakati w'enteekera y'ebyennimi eragirwa n'ekozesebwa ku mitendera egy'enjawulo: Empungu esooka eri mu kussa mu nkola enteekera y'ebyennimi mu byenjigiriza wakati w'amasomero ga gavumenti n'ag'obwannannyini ate ne wakati w'ebyo abasomesa bye bakkirizaamu ku nnimi abayizi ze boogera n'ennimi abayizi bo ze boogera nga tebannayingira masomero. Mu ngeri y'emu okunoonyereza kuno kukizudde nti si kya bwenkyanya okusuubira abayizi okuzza mu Lungereza ebyo bye bayigidde emyaka esatu mu nnini enzaaliranwa nga mu myaka gye gimu egyo Olungereza n'olulimi oluzaaliranwa babadde baziyiga ng'amasomo. Mu mbeera efaanana bw'etyo, abasomesa bakolera mu mbeera etabasobozesa kutuukiriza nteekera ya bya nnimi mu byenjigiriza. Mu ngeri y'emu, waliwo empungu nnene wakati w'obutendeke abasomesa bwe balina n'ebyo ebibasubirwamu okukola mu kibiina nga beeyambisa olulimi. Si ekyo kyokka, abasomesa si batangaavu ku kusomeseza mu nnimi enzaaliranwa, era n'abamu boogera kaati nga bwe batawagira nkola eno. Endowooza

y'abasomesa ku kusomeseza mu nnimi enzaaliranwa yeesigamiziddwa ku kuba nti ennimi enzaaliranwa tezibuuzibwa ku nkomerero ya pulayimale ate era n'okuba nti ebibuuzo byonna ku nkomerero ya pulayimale bibuuzibwa mu Lungereza. Ng'oggyeeko ekyo, kyeyolese mu kunoonyereza kuno nti okusoma kwa nnasale mu Uganda kukaluubiriza okussa mu nkola enteekera y'eby'ennimi mu byenjigiriza kubanga eddaala ly'okusoma lino terirondoolwa gavumenti, si lya buwaze ate era abaana bonna mu Uganda tebafuna mukisa kusoma nnasale, n'ekirala nti okutwaliza awamu ebisomesebwa ku ddaala lino biba mu Lungereza.

Ebizuuliddwa mu kunoonyereza kuno bisonga ku bisebwebwa ebiyinja okuyamba mu kutereeza enteekera y'eby'ennimi mu byenjigiriza ko n'omuyungiro gw'ebyenjigiriza gwonna mu Uganda. Okusooka, kyetaagisa okukunetaanya ennimi ezoogerebwa mu bitundu ne/oba mu masomero ne kiyamba mu kussa mu nkola enteekera y'eby'ennimi mu ngeri entangaavu. Eky'okubiri, kisaana obuyinza bw'enteekera y'eby'ennimi mu byenjigiriza eriwo kati buzzibweko wansi kubanga waliwo amasomero g'omu bibuga agataliimu nnimi nnyingi (nga gavumenti yo bw'ekitwala) era nga bwe gatyo gasobola okussa mu nkola enteekera y'eby'ennimi mu byenjigiriza. Eky'okusatu, enteekateeka y'okusomeseza mu nnimi enzaaliranwa eya Uganda esaana eyongezebwe okuva ku myaka 3 etuuke ku myaka 6 okutuuka ku 8. Ebbanga eryo eggwanvu liyamba omuyizi okukaza Olungereza n'oluvannyuma asobole okuluyigiramu. Eky'okuna, gavumenti esaana efuule okusoma kwa nnasale okw'obuwaze era ennimi enzaaliranwa zisaana zibeere olulimi oluyigirwamu ku ddaala lino kibeere nti abaana bonna mu Uganda bafuna omukisa okuyigira mu nnimi zaabwe enzaaliranwa. N'ekisembayo, bwe kiba nti okukozesa ennimi enzaaliranwa mu masomero ng'olulimi oluyigirwamu ate era ng'essomo kinaagobererwa mu masomero, olulimi olubuulizibwamu ebibuuzo ne/oba okubuuzibwako ebibuuzo bisaana bifiibweko nate.

Mu bufunze, ensonga nnyingiko ezinokoddayo ng'ezireetawo empungu wakati w'enteekera y'eby'ennimi mu byenjigiriza n'ebyo ebikolebwa mu masomero mu Uganda. Enteekera eno yassibwa mu nkola n'ekigendererwa ky'okwongera ku mutindo gw'okuyiga okusoma n'okuwandiika mu bayizi b'omu Uganda. Wabula ate kifanana okuba nti enteekera eno n'engeri gy'essibwa mu nkola bijja kwetaaga okuddamu okufiibwako olwo ekigendererwa ekyabiteekerwa kiryo ke kituukibweko. Kino kiri bwe kityo kubanga waliwo enkalubira ya maanyi mu basomesa mu kutegeera ne mu nkawajja y'okuteekateeka abayizi okubaseetula okubagya mu kuyigira mu lulimi oluzaaliranwa okudda mu Lungereza.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my late mother, Mary Nakajwala Mukasa who passed on on 28 September 2011. The scholarship that has seen me produce this work came to me as a condolatory gift: it reminds me of those first words you taught us to read at home in Luganda even before we had our first day in school. Those first words were but a priceless foundation to my later education.

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List of abbreviations

BICS	Basic interpersonal communication skills
CALP	Cognitive/academic language proficiency
DLB	District Language Board
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EPRC	Education Policy Review Commission
ELL	English language learners
LABE	Literacy and Adult Basic Education
LoLT	Language of learning and teaching
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MES	Medadi Ssentanda
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MLEN	Multilingual Education Network (Uganda)
MT	Mother tongue
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
PLE	Primary leaving examinations
RTI	Research Triangle Institute
TBE	Transitional bilingual education
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UCRNN	Uganda Child Rights NGO network
UNCST	Uganda National Council of Science and Technology
UNEB	Uganda National Examinations Board
UNESCO	United Nations Scientific Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Education Emergency Fund

Transcription symbols/typographical conventions

T	Teacher
L	Learner
Ls	More than one learner/all learners speaking at once
MS	Researcher
^	Rising tone
...	Omitted text
Bold font	Bold font is used in the extracts for stretches of speech occurring in Luganda, both for the original spoken version and the translation thereof.
<i>Italicised font</i>	<i>Italics</i> are used for the translation of Lugandan text as well as for text of which the spoken version occurred in English but as part of a conversational turn that also contain Luganda.
Small capital letters	Small capital letters are used for non-Western Lugandan person names.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The unsatisfactory levels of educational achievement in many parts of the world have led to various studies and to modifications to curricula in favour of mother tongue (MT) instructed curricula, in an attempt to improve literacy skills (cf. Benson, 2002). Globally, and in Africa in particular, the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) in schools has been contentious for many years. In contexts where children have been introduced to formal education in European languages rather than in familiar languages (Knagg, 2013a), children's performance has generally not been desirable.

The debate on the use of MT as a LoLT has been on-going for many years, particularly after UNESCO's (1953) recommendation that local languages be used in education. Subsequent to this recommendation, many studies have been conducted on the role of MT use in educational achievement. MT educational models (such as MT-based programmes, transitional models, and immersion and submersion programmes) are operative in different contexts, and each of these educational innovations has strengths and perils (see section 2.2)¹. Many studies have confirmed that LoLT and children's language skills play an important role in educational achievement of learners during the early years. In one such study, reported by Barron (2012:17), a literacy programme, Literacy Boost, was introduced in a local language in Nepal after it was found in 2008 that 42% of Grade 3 learners could not read a single word. Post-implementation testing indicated that learners in this programme outperformed those in comparison programmes in which MT use did not occur (cf. also Abdazi, 2010 for the case of Mali).

Uganda is a country with over 40 languages (Lewis, Simons, & Fennig, 2013). Ever since the introduction of formal education in the country, attempts have been made to employ MTs as LoLTs in education. These endeavours have at one time included the use of dominant or languages of wider communication followed by stages during which English is used

¹ See also, amongst others, Ball (2011); Barron (2012); Benson (2008); Chumbow (2013); Cummins (2005); Dutcher (2003, 2004a); Fafunwa, Macauley, and Sokoya (1989); Heugh, Benson, Bogale, and Yohannes (2007); Heugh (2011a); Klaus (2003); Walter and Chuo (2012); and Walter and Dekker (2011).

exclusively as LoLT (Lasebikan, Ismagilova, & Hurel, 1964). Given the multilingual nature of the country, and its desire to seek national and regional integration, Kiswahili has also been proposed as a national language and LoLT but with very limited success (Ssekamwa, 2000, 2008). Even though Uganda proclaimed a language-in-education policy in 1992 (Government of Uganda, 1992), it was only in 2006/2007 that the commitment towards policy implementation became operational. As from 2006/2007, the opportunity has reopened for the use of MTs and/or languages of wider communication in rural schools. This implementation was motivated by poor literacy skills among primary school learners.

The new curriculum for Primary one to three (P1 to P3)² involves instruction through MT, with Primary four (P4) being a transitional class: teachers and learners are expected to shift from MT to English as LoLT in P4, and although MT use is allowed in this class, teachers are expected to keep the use of MT to a minimum. The National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC; 2006a) guidelines are that by the end of P4, teachers should use MT only to explain difficult concepts. In P5, MT becomes a subject and English becomes the only LoLT, up to P7 (Government of Uganda, 1992; Kajubi, 1989; Kateeba, 2009; Ministry of Education and Sports, 2004, 2008; NCDC, 2007b, 2008, 2011, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2007a).

Walter and Dekker (2011:667) have observed that in the past, “[l]anguage (of instruction) was generally viewed as a minor variable readily overcome by standard classroom instruction”. In other words, the opinion had been that as long as the general standard of instruction was good, language of instruction did not matter. However, “as researchers have sharpened their focus to the reasons for educational failure, language has begun to emerge as a significant variable in producing gains in educational efficiency”. Equally, Wolff (2006:50) has noted that “[l]anguage is not everything in education but without language everything is nothing in education”.

Teachers, who are at the centre of language policy implementation, are reported to be essential role-players in any educational programme. Wolf (2011), Wang (2008), and Spillane, Reiser and Reimer (2002) describe teachers’ attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, values and expertise as having the ability to positively and/or negatively impact the implementation process, “not only because teachers are unwilling to change in the direction of the policy but

² Primary (P) here is the equivalent of Grade (Gr) in the South African system. Primary school in Uganda comprises seven classes, namely P1 to P7.

also because their extant understandings may interfere with the ability to interpret and implement the reform in ways that are consistent with the designers' intent" (Spillane et al., 2002:393). In other words, when teachers deliberately or otherwise do not work in ways that are consistent with policy and curriculum demands – for instance, when teachers use inappropriate teaching methods, do not use the specified language of instruction, and/or do not make use of the appropriate evaluation methods as outlined in the policy and curriculum – learners' achievement is likely to be affected negatively. In this regard, Garcia (2009:313) observes that teachers “create, contest, change, and transform policies, as they enact their pedagogy”.

Teachers are thus required to modify what they do in the classroom and to change their attitudes and practices in order to meet the specifications laid down by language-in-education policy and the curriculum (Smit, 2005). The overarching aim of this study is to ascertain how teachers manage and understand the process of transitioning from use of MT as LoLT to English as LoLT in multilingual contexts in Ugandan primary schools. Reforms involving MT instructed curricula are often challenged by stakeholders' (including teachers') perceptions, attitudes and practices at the implementation stage (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; Wang, 2008). This study investigates teachers' understanding and management of the early-exit MT education model operative in Uganda in order to reveal the discrepancies and challenges that may arise between stated language-in-education policy and the practical implementation thereof in classrooms.

1.2 Problem statement

Taking into account the multilingual nature of the country (see section 1.7 below), the government of Uganda formulated a policy that promotes the practice of MT³ education based on an early-exit transitional model, as described in Chapter 2. The country's language-in-education policy stipulates that rural schools select a dominant local language (MT) to be used as a LoLT from P1 through P3, with P4 then being a transitional year in which there is minimal use of MT as learners are being prepared to transition to English, which is the LoLT from P5 through P7. Urban schools, presumed to be “too multilingual” to choose one MT as

³ “MT” is used here to mean a language that a child/learner knows best and learnt to speak first (Ouane & Glanz, 2010; UNESCO, 2003).

LoLT, use English as a LoLT and teach MT as a subject throughout primary school (Government of Uganda, 1992; Kateeba, 2009; Ministry of Education and Sports, 2004, 2008).

Aware that transitional models are criticised by researchers in the field of bilingual/multilingual education, this study set out to ascertain how teachers in Uganda understand and manage the process of transitioning from MT to English as LoLT in a multilingual context. In order to accomplish this goal, it was considered of interest to examine how teachers perceive the language policy (cf. Wang, 2008) and the curriculum, and what they conceive as challenges on their side and on the side of learners in the process of transitioning from MT to English as LoLT.

1.3 Research questions

This study is guided by and aims to answer the following questions:

- (i) What is the extent of language diversity among teachers and learners in each one of four selected schools in Uganda?
- (ii) What are teachers' understanding of and attitudes towards the language-in-education policy of Uganda regarding MT education in the first three school years and the transfer to English after P3?
- (iii) What do teachers perceive as the challenges to the successful transfer from MT as LoLT to English as LoLT during P4 and P5 in Ugandan schools?
- (iv) What practices and educational strategies are used in P4 and P5 classrooms to specifically facilitate learners' transfer from their MT to English as LoLT?

1.4 Objectives of the study

As noted in section 1.1, the overall objective of this study is to ascertain how teachers manage and understand the process of transitioning from MT to English as LoLT in multilingual contexts in Ugandan primary schools. This overarching objective is broken down into the following achievable objectives:

- (i) To draw language diversity profiles of the particular schools, classrooms and individual teachers who are participants in this study, in order to obtain a sense of the extent and nature of multilingualism in various types of schools in Uganda.
- (ii) To examine teachers' attitudes towards the current language policy and the practices it prescribes.
- (iii) To assess teachers' perceptions of what contributes to success or failure of the transition to English as LoLT and the continuation of learners in the education system.
- (iv) To describe the classroom practices and educational strategies used by P4 and P5 teachers to facilitate the transition to English as LoLT.

1.5 Rationale of the study

There are two particular reasons that motivated this study. I will start with the one related to personal experience.

I spent my early years of schooling in a rural environment (pre-school to P5) where teachers and learners used MT freely, both in class and outside. Like many other rural children, I had no exposure to English outside of school. My parents, being primary school teachers, gave my siblings and me additional home schooling, but in Luganda, our MT. Their focus was particularly on reading. After P5, I was transferred to an urban school, having achieved second place out of more than 50 learners in my year group at my rural school in the end of year exams.

At the urban school where admission was sought for me, I was given an admission test that was to be written in English. The test comprised questions relating to English language, Social Studies and Mathematics. I scored 2% in the test. Teachers questioned my academic ability and suspected that the report card with which I sought admission to their urban school was forged. As I could not "prove my worth" in the admissions test, the teachers and my parents agreed that I repeat P5 in the urban school. At this school, all classroom instruction was solely in English. Learners were not allowed to speak "vernacular" on the school compound; when caught, a punishment would be given. In class, I could follow whenever the teacher taught, but I could not engage in any discussion or ask questions as I did not "have

the words” to do so. The content of the P5 classes was familiar to me, but I could access it in my MT more comfortably. In the end of first term examinations, I was placed 25th out of 50 learners. In the promotional exams to P6, I was placed third, and after that I was never placed lower than second position until the end of P7. In my Primary Leaving Examinations, I obtained distinction 1⁴ for English as a subject. During these years, the Ugandan language-in-education policy was still being formalised, and so all schools taught MT at their own discretion and in their own way. There was no planned transition from MT to English, and learners like me who moved from MT to English as LoLT had to acquire the required English competence without special assistance. Given my experience as a learner, I now seek to find out how a planned transition from MT to English as LoLT may be managed and what teachers understand as challenges in this process. Due to my experience, I am, on a personal level, a proponent of high quality MT education. However, in my capacities as school teacher, student and researcher, I take great care to approach the subject in an unbiased way and to interpret my findings in a scientifically sound manner.

Secondly, this study is motivated by findings related to learners’ literacy skills in Uganda, as well as by the findings of previous research on learners instructed in a familiar language (MT) in the early years of schooling. Reports by the private non-governmental organisation (NGO) Uwezo (2011) and by the Uganda National Examinations Board⁵ (UNEB; Uganda National Examinations Board, 2010, 2011) have revealed low scores for counting, reading and language comprehension among learners, particularly those in P3 and P6. In the 2011 UNEB review of learners’ literacy and numeracy skills, the following observation was made:

The use of local language in lower primary could have led to better performance in Numeracy. Pupils’ weak performance in Literacy could have been due to the deficiency in the teachers’ skills to teach, particularly reading, reflected by the teachers’ weak performance in Oral Reading; implying that they themselves might not have been taught reading skills. It is important that the teachers’ deficiency in reading skills should be urgently addressed, so as to improve pupils’ achievement in Literacy.

(Uganda National Examinations Board, 2011:xii).

UNEB focuses on reviewing children’s reading and counting skills, presumably because “reading and maths are normally considered the most fundamental of the basic skills to be taught and mastered in early basic education” (Walter & Dekker, 2011:677). Given the

⁴ At the time I wrote my P7 examinations, “distinction 1” indicated a score of 80% to 100%.

⁵ This assessment is commonly referred to as National Assessment of Progress in Education (NAPE), conducted by the Uganda National Examinations Board.

available evidence that children who begin their learning in their MT have a better start, learn faster, and perform better than those who start their schooling in an unfamiliar language (see *inter alia* Barron, 2012; Benson, 2005; Butzkamm, 2003; Cummins, 1979; Dutcher, 2003; Fafunwa, et al., 1989; Klaus, 2003; UNESCO, 2003; Walter & Dekker, 2011; Woldemariam, 2007), one would expect Ugandan learners to perform better in basic reading and counting than they currently do, as UNEB (2011) has pointed out. However, as Dutcher (2003) and Walter and Dekker (2011) caution, the MT advantage may be reduced by ineffective teaching for a number of reasons and by lack of support for MT education on the part of the teachers, parents and/or the government.

This study therefore focuses on how teachers understand the process of transitioning from MT to English as LoLT in multilingual contexts in Ugandan primary schools. I was interested in what teachers do in practice to manage this transition as well as what they perceive as challenges or hindrances to successful transition. The potential significance of the findings from this study to teachers, policy makers and other educational role-players is explained in the next section.

1.6 Potential significance of the study

There are no traceable studies that have examined how teachers understand and manage the process of transition from MT as LoLT to English as LoLT in multilingual Uganda. Also, there are few studies in developing countries that examine the outcomes and/or predictions of transitional models like that operative in Uganda (cf. Piper & Miksick, 2011; Piper, 2010). Unlike most developed countries, many developing countries opt for early-exit models⁶ (Ball, 2011; Heugh, 2011b; Stroud, 2002), and such models need to be studied if informed educational policies are to be instituted. In light of this, the findings from this study could be beneficial to the following sets of persons:

- (i) Teachers, whose attitudes and practices directly affect learners' achievement; they can then be helped to acquire and strengthen their language-related classroom practices with regard to MT education.
- (ii) Curriculum planners with an interest in developing appropriate curricula for primary school learners;

⁶ This model is explained in some detail in Chapter 2.

- (iii) Teacher trainers, who are tasked with preparing teachers with teaching strategies appropriate for the successful implementation of MT education and transitioning to English;
- (iv) Material developers, who prepare language materials for MT and English as subjects and in MT and English (as LoLTs) for other subjects, and
- (v) National policy makers who design language policies for primary schools. Policy makers could learn of the educational outcomes, successes and challenges that come with the early-exit model chosen for Uganda's MT education. In addition, lessons of a practical nature as observed in classroom instruction could be beneficial in the refinements of the language-in-education policy of Uganda.

The research is therefore relevant to several role-players interested in the development of MT as LoLT and in the process of transitioning from MT to English as a LoLT in Uganda.

1.7 Background to the study

In order to understand the context of this study, this section paints a picture of the multilingual contexts in which MT education is implemented. This background also highlights some of the challenges in implementing MT education in an African setting such as the one in which this study is situated.

1.7.1 A general picture of multilingualism in education in Africa

According to Abdulaziz (2003), Bamgbose (1999), Lodhi (1993), Ssekamwa (2000), and Stroud (2002), the nature of MT education in Africa is related to the inherited colonial education policies and practices: in countries where African languages had been used in education, they remained in such use after independence; and where they had been excluded from use in education or where their use had been limited to the initial three or four school years, this situation also often remained unchanged (see also Chimbutane, 2009, 2011; Ouane & Glanz, 2010). According to Ball (2011) and Ferguson (2013), the employment of MT in education in African contexts has been informed by politics, economics and ideology rather than by educational considerations (cf. Stroud, 2001, 2002; Tollefson, 1991). In addition, Glanz (2013:57) observes that “the practice of applying research results from regions with

very different linguistic contexts and learning environments to the African continent” is commonplace yet undesirable as concerns MT education in Africa (cf. Banda, 2009, 2010; Brock-Utne, 2004). Some African countries and/or communities have resorted to the use of European languages only (Heugh et al., 2007) – e.g., English, French and Portuguese – and have disregarded MTs altogether (cf. Benson, 2002). This has generally resulted in many challenges such as low literacy levels, high dropout rates, and low throughput rates (Glanz, 2013) as children are required to learn through unfamiliar languages. In the next paragraphs, I outline some of the challenges that surround MT education in Africa.

The challenges surrounding MT education in Africa take various forms. Some relate to misconceptions about second language (L2) learning⁷ and others to resources (human and material). The latter include irrelevant curricula, under-qualified teachers, inadequate learning materials, high teacher-learner ratios, and poor learning environments, to mention but a few (Bamgbose, 2004; Benson, 2000, 2002; Dutcher, 2003, 2004; Glanz, 2013; Heugh et al., 2007). According to Benson (2002), bi-/multilingual education in Africa also faces the challenge of transitioning from experimentation to implementation. In this regard, she cites the case of the Yoruba project in Nigeria (see Fafunwa et al., 1989) which was very successful – not only in demonstrating that MT education is possible but also in showing the importance of MT education for the first 12 years of a child’s life (Fafunwa et al., 1989) – but which has not been replicated elsewhere in the country or in Africa (cf. Akinnaso, 1993).

The employment of MTs in education systems in Africa has also been limited by the belief that African languages cannot be employed in education, especially not in Science and Mathematics (Fafunwa et al., 1989; Heugh et al., 2007; Obanya, 1999; Ouane & Glanz, 2010). Those who hold this view argue that African languages do not have the vocabulary to articulate scientific concepts (cf. wa Thiong, 2013). There is however research evidence to the contrary – see, for example, the Ife Project in Nigeria (Fafunwa et al., 1989); the Rivers Readers Project in Nigeria (Fyle, 2003); the use of Somali language for up to 12 years in formal schooling (Abdulaziz, 2003; Glanz, 2013; Ouane & Glanz, 2010); the use of Ethiopian languages in primary schools for up to eight years (Heugh, et al., 2007; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2011); and the use of Mali to teach physics and chemistry at tertiary level in Banama (Ouane & Glanz, 2010).

⁷ These misconceptions of L2 learning are discussed in Chapter 2.

Another reason that countries advance for limiting MT education to only the early school years is the seemingly overwhelming linguistic diversity in many African countries. The many languages in Africa have thus been viewed as a barrier to the employment of learners' MTs in education. This view tends to lead to the use of official or international languages (Ouane & Glanz, 2010) in education. MT education has however been possible elsewhere in the world in countries that are almost as multilingual as those in Africa. For instance, Papua New Guinea has over 800 languages but runs MT education programmes that are reported to be successful (Klaus, 2003; Malone & Paraide, 2011), and many South East Asian countries are multilingual but they practise MT education (see, e.g., Kosonen & Young, 2009a; Logjijn, 2009; Quigano & Eustaquio, 2009; Young, 2009).

Another common belief held by people in multilingual contexts is that if a language is not used as a LoLT and if it is not taught as early as possible, it cannot be acquired successfully (Benson, 2008; Dutcher, 1997; Glanz, 2013; Heugh, 2011; Knagg, 2013b; McLaughlin, 1992). This belief is based on a lack of awareness of “the difference between using a language as a medium of instruction and teaching a language as a subject” (Glanz, 2013:61). Teaching a language as a L2 requires no prior knowledge of it, whereas using a language as a LoLT does, because it is the language through which the curriculum content is learned and understood and academic literacy acquired. In this regard, Benson (2002:308) argues that there is “failure to apply established principles of bilingual education to local practices”. These principles are discussed in section 2.4 with reference to Benson (2008).

This picture of MT education in African communities is relevant to the understanding of MT education in Uganda. In the next section, I describe the linguistic nature of the country Uganda within which MT education is practised.

1.7.2 A linguistic description of Uganda

English is the official language in Uganda and Kiswahili is the second official language (Uganda Government, 1995, 2006). The country has over 45 indigenous languages: at least 43 living and two said to be extinct (Lewis et al., 2013). The exact number of languages in Uganda is not clear as different sources give different numbers. For instance, the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda cites 56 ethnic groups of which each claims to have a distinct language (Uganda Government, 1995, 2006), but there are also area languages in the country

(also see section 1.7.3). The Government White Paper (1992) lists five area languages (Luganda, Lugbara, Luo, Runyakitara, and Ateso/Akarimojong) whereas Lasebikan, Ismagilova and Harel (1964) list six (Luganda, Lugbara, Lwo, Lunyoro, Teso, and Kiswahili).

Information about pertinent language-related issues like the distribution, dialects, and level of development of particular languages as well as individual linguistic repertoires is almost non-existent in Uganda. Nakayiza (2012) states that information such as the number of languages spoken is based on national censuses with an assumption of a one-to-one relation between ethnicity and language, an assumption that may not render accurate figures. A number of Ugandan languages have different varieties and it not always clear when a variety is a dialect and when it is seen as a separate language. For instance, Ladefoged, Glick and Cripe (1972) classify Luganda, Lusoga and Lukenyi as dialect clusters, but Lewis et al. (2013) list the same as independent languages. One of the difficulties one might encounter in classifying languages is the degree of mutual intelligibility among languages. Apart from Ladefoged et al. (1972), no known studies in Uganda have considered issues of mutual intelligibility among Ugandan languages.

In addition, the issue of language has, to a certain degree, been politicised in the country. For example, in 2009, the speakers of Luruuri-Lunyara, a language variety long classified as a dialect of Luganda (Nakayiza, 2012), strongly opposed the traditional hegemony of the Kabaka⁸ of Buganda⁹, claiming that they are an independent group with their own language which is not a dialect of Luganda. The Luruuri-Lunyara claim of language independence caused violent uprisings in various parts of Uganda. Such “misclassifications” of language varieties can potentially affect MT education in the country.

Figure 1 provides a map of Uganda with the major language groups and individual languages (based on Lewis, 2009). Lewis et al. (2013) classifies Ugandan languages into four major language groups, namely Bantu, Sudanic, Nilotic (further sub-divided into Eastern and Western Nilotic), and Kuliak. However, Lasebikan et al. (1964) divided Ugandan languages into Bantu, Sudanic (Moro-Mangbetu), Nilotic, and Nilo-Hamitic. The Bantu language group

⁸ “Kabaka” is a traditional term among the Baganda to refer to their supreme leader, the king.

⁹ “Buganda” is a traditional term to refer to the land occupied by the Baganda people who speak Luganda. This area occupies most of the central part of Uganda, including the capital, Kampala.

is the largest of all in Uganda. The Bantu languages include Ganda (or Luganda; 4,130,000)¹⁰; Nyankore (2,330,000); Soga (2,060,000); Kiga (or Chiga; 1,580,000); Masaaba (1,120,000); Nyoro (667,000 speakers); Konjo (or Konzo; 609,000 in Uganda); Toro (488,000 according to the 1991 census); Rwanda (or Ruanda or Rufumbira; 449,000 in Uganda); Gwere (409,000); Nyole (341,000); Ruli (160,000); Bwisi (68,500 in Uganda); and Amba (35,600 in Uganda).

The Central Sudanic languages are Aringa (or Lugbara or Low; 300,000 speakers); Ma'di (or Madi; 296,000 in Uganda); Kakwa (130,000 in Uganda); Ndo (33,800 in Uganda); and Ndrulo (or Lendu; 11,100 in Uganda). The Nilotic languages include Ateso (1,570,000 in Uganda); Laŋo (1,490,000); Alur (617,000 in Uganda); Adhola (360,000); Karamajong (260,000); Kupsabiny (181,000); Kumam (174,000); Acholi (170,000 speakers in Uganda); Kakwa (130,000 in Uganda); Pokot (70,400 in Uganda); Nyangi (or Nyangia; 15,000); and Ngadotho (number of speakers unknown) (Lewis, 2009; Lewis et al., 2013). The Kuliak languages, a language group that is said to be greatly endangered, comprises two languages, namely Ik (10,000 speakers) and Soo (5,000 speakers).

The Ugandan languages are at different levels of development. Some have fully developed and accepted orthographies while others do not. A few have a reasonable number of written materials, others have only a Bible translation while still others have almost no written materials at all (Nakayiza, 2012; Nannyombi & Rempel, 2011). Nannyombi and Rempel (2011) note that the orthographies of some languages (e.g., Kawamba, Ruuli, Langi, Ik, and Madi) are in the process of development and testing, whereas others (like Gisu, Dhola, Samia, Kumam, Alur, Lugbara, Acholi, and Kakwa) are in need of analysis, revision, development and testing. Finally, some languages, such as Soga and Teso, are in need of orthography revision and further development due to dialectal issues and inadequate representations of different dialects in the existing orthographies. These different levels of development have implications when it comes to employing a language in a teaching and learning process which uses MTs as LoLT. For many languages, there will be disagreements among teachers and learners on how to represent certain words in the orthography of a particular language.

¹⁰ Unless otherwise stated, speaker numbers are as per Lewis (2009) or the 2002 Uganda census, also cited by Lewis et al. (2013).

1.7.3 *Ugandan languages of wider communication: a brief history of their employment in mother tongue education*

Educational efforts to employ the various Ugandan languages as MTs in education resulted in a categorisation of certain languages as area languages or languages of wider communication (Government of Uganda, 1992; Kajubi, 1989). The concept of Ugandan languages of wider communication came into being due to the plans to use MTs in education, as explained in the following paragraphs.



Figure 1: Map of Uganda showing major language groups and families (Lewis, 2009).

Lasebikan et al. (1964:16) report that there were plans laid down between the 1940s and 1960s to develop and recruit MTs in education. From what these authors report, it appears

that attempts were made to use languages of wider communication in various districts in Uganda. For instance, in 1946, the Education Directors passed this policy on the use of MTs in education:

- (i) The main African language spoken in each area should be the sole medium of instruction throughout the primary school (Standard I – VI), provided it were sufficiently developed and widespread to justify the production of the necessary textbooks.
- (ii) The African languages in small areas only should be used as a medium of instruction for primary I in the district, after which children should be taught in one of the more widespread African languages.

(Lasebikan et al., 1964:16).

With this policy in place, six languages were recognised as LoLT in the following year (1947): “Luganda, Lunyoro (sic), Lugbara, Teso, Lwo, and Swahili. In addition to these, Runyankore was to be allowed during the first two years (Standard I and II) in [what was then the – MES] Ankole [kingdom – MES], as well as Kumam in Teso districts, and Karamojong in Karamoja district. English was to be taught as a subject in the fifth and sixth years” (Lasebikan et al., 1964:16). This policy was in effect until 1963, when another policy was proposed by the Uganda Education Commission. This commission directed that the LoLT be limited to Akaramojong, Ateso, Luganda, Lugbara, Lwo, Runyankore-Rukiga, and Runyoro-Rutoro (thus grouping Runyankore-Rukiga and Runyoro-Rutoro¹¹ as language clusters, and eliminating Teso and Kiswahili as possible LoLTs).

Lasebikan et al. (1964) report that the circumstances in place then would make the Education Commission policy of limiting the LoLT to the above seven languages impractical for two reasons: (i) the situation in mostly urban schools where classes consist of learners from different language backgrounds, and (ii) if a language has no reading materials, then literacy acquisition in that language becomes too difficult. This challenge thus brought in English as a LoLT in areas where a dominant local language would not easily be identified. For the areas where MTs were used as LoLT, English was introduced as a subject in P3 and as a LoLT in P4.

To aid language planning and development, strategies towards a national literacy campaign were put in place. Lasebikan et al. (1964) point out that, despite the challenges faced in the implementation, the government division in charge of the Literacy Campaign, namely the

¹¹ Note that Makerere University categorises these languages as one, and all are taught under one subject name, Runyakitara.

Division of Community Development, laid down a strategy for the language teaching campaign involving the following steps:

- (i) Organisation of a literacy Committee for each area
- (ii) Preparation of primers and follow-up readers in 20 different languages
- (iii) Preparation of literacy kits, literacy certificates, and certificates for volunteer teachers
- (iv) Recruitment of volunteer teachers for all language groups
- (v) Training programmes for the volunteer teachers
- (vi) Setting up a country-wide network of supervisors
- (vii) Finding suitable facilities for printing literacy materials
- (viii) Applying for financial support to carry out the second phase of the campaign.

(Lasebikan et al., 1964:26).

By 1964, only steps (iv) and (vii) had not been implemented. During this time, efforts for the development of MT education were in high gear and involved communities and parents, something that is crucial to the acceptance of MT education. Community involvement and sensitisation is, however, a challenge to the present efforts of MT education, as will be shown in Chapter 8.

It is interesting that Lasebikan et al. (1964) noted it strange that the learners' languages which were used as LoLT for the first years of primary education were not compulsory subjects for the primary leaving certificate. The non-examination of MTs at the end of primary school is pointed out as one of the demotivators to the teaching of MTs in Uganda today. This study's findings also point out this issue very strongly (see, e.g., section 8.8).

Twenty languages were identified to receive attention of development as LoLT by 1964.

They were the following:

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Acholi | 11. Lugisu |
| 2. Alur | 12. Lusoga |
| 3. Ateso | 13. Madi |
| 4. Jopadhola | 14. Runyankore/Rukiga |
| 5. Kakwa | 15. Runyoro/Rutoro |
| 6. Karamojong | 16. Runyarwanda |
| 7. Kumam | 17. Sebei |
| 8. Laŋo | 18. Lusamia/Lugwe |
| 9. Luganga | 19. Lukonjo |
| 10. Lugbara | 20. Bwamba |

The first 17 languages listed above had literacy primers and follow-up readers for adult literacy, and the last three were in preparation. By comparison, in 2006/2007 (the year in which MT education was formalised in Uganda), there were only nine languages that had developed orthographies and reference materials and were therefore fit for use as a LoLT in primary schools (Kateeba, 2009).¹²

According to a subsequent report by UNESCO (UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Africa, 1985) on the *African community languages and their use in literacy and education*, only eight languages were used as LoLT for the first 3 or 4 school years in Uganda, namely Ateso, Kiswahili, Luganda, Lugbara, Luo, Runyankore, Rukiga, and Rutoro. UNESCO explains that these languages were used “in first level education, as a medium of instruction in years 1-5 and as a compulsory subject in years 6-7” (UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Africa, 1985:73). It appears that up until the 1990s, the Castle Education Commission Report guided education in Uganda (Rosendal, 2010). Recall however that the language-in-education policy passed in 1992 was not formally implemented until 2006/2007. It is not clearly reported in the literature how and why efforts to develop and employ MT languages as LoLT in Uganda’s education system have fluctuated, with certain languages ceasing to act as LoLT. Bamgbose (1999), however, provides a clue as to what might have happened to the employment of African languages in education in the 1960s: soon after Uganda gained independence, there was a move towards the learning of and learning in foreign languages because of the perceived opportunities that accompanied this. This move might have slowed and/or eliminated the use of MTs in Uganda’s primary education.

Between the 1960s and 2006/2007, the use of MTs in Uganda’s primary education was not formalised, and it was mostly a practice in rural schools only. On reintroducing MT education in Uganda and because of the language-in-education policy guidelines, the issue of languages of wider communication resurfaced. Today these are regarded as Luganda, Lwo, Runyakitara/Runyoro-Rutoro and Runyankore-Rukiga, Ateso/Akaramojong, and Lugbara (Government of Uganda, 1992), the classification being based on the intelligibility of these languages to speakers of certain other languages. It was hoped that the employment of

¹² The question arises as to what happened to the orthographies developed for the rest of the 11 languages. The fact that these languages no longer have sufficient materials to be used when teaching the LoLT points towards fluctuating levels of effort to develop Ugandan languages. See the next paragraphs for further discussion.

languages of wider communication would simplify the implementation of MT as LoLT – that is, speakers of the mutually intelligible languages in a certain group were expected to engage in MT teaching and learning under a certain language label. For instance, for the minority languages Soga, Samia, and Luuri (amongst others) speakers were expected to engage in Luganda (one of the languages of wider communication) as LoLT as their languages were categorised as mutually intelligible with Luganda. This arrangement has been criticised by scholars because it denies speakers of minority languages an opportunity to learn in their MTs (Heugh et al. 2007; Kirkpatrick, 2013).

As will be explained in Chapter 3, on reintroducing (or formalising) MT education in 2006/2007, there were nine languages (including the area languages mentioned above) that were ready for employment in MT teaching. These were languages that had developed orthographies and written literature (Kateeba, 2009). By 2009, a further 26 languages had their orthographies and other materials developed and submitted to the NCDC for approval for use in MT teaching (Kateeba, 2009). Apparently, there are 35 languages approved as LoLT (but many more are applying to be listed as well).

The level of development of the other Ugandan languages has not been reported, but many language groups in multilingual Uganda have developed orthographies for and materials in their languages to enable their languages to be employed as LoLT in the first three or four years of their children's schooling before a shift to English as LoLT is made.

1.8 Organisation of the dissertation

The dissertation is structured as follows: Chapter 1 contextualised the study, and Chapter 2 presents the issues related to language policy and how it is implemented in educational settings world-wide. The available types or models of MT education existent in educational settings are discussed, with prominence given to the bilingual transitional model which is the type of model investigated in this study. Chapter 2 also contains a discussion of the building blocks of transitional models together with the possible benefits of MT education to learners in their early years of schooling. In addition, the chapter presents issues related to teacher recruitment and training as far as MT education is concerned. Finally, the chapter discusses

the classroom and/or educational strategies used in scaffolding the transfer from MT to L2 as LoLT.

Chapter 3 discusses language policy and the MT curriculum in Uganda's education system. In this chapter, the language policy and the curriculum are characterised in light of the theoretical underpinnings revealed in Chapter 2. Furthermore, the process of transition from MT to English in Uganda's primary education is explicated. In addition, Chapter 3 provides a discussion of prior studies on language policy implementation in Ugandan schools. In this chapter, a review of what is already known about MT education in Uganda is thus given.

In Chapter 4, the research site, tools and instruments, including the procedure undertaken to collect the data that informed this dissertation, are explained. In addition, the process of data analysis followed in this study is presented.

Chapter 5 provides the language profiles of the study schools and linguistic repertoires of individual teachers and learners. Furthermore, the language proficiency of learners in both MT and English is discussed. In addition, the chapter presents teachers' as language models of English language learning to learners. The implications of such linguistic profiles for MT education and the transition to English in Uganda are given.

In Chapter 6, an exposition and discussion is given of (i) teachers' attitudes towards the language policy and the practices it demands of them, (ii) teachers' opinions on what contributes to the success and/or failure of the transition to English as a LoLT, (iii) the issues surrounding the teaching of English, and (iv) the challenges involved in the transition to English on the part of the learners.

Chapter 7, in turn, presents teacher training issues as well as the classroom practices and educational strategies used by teachers to facilitate the transition to English, whereas Chapter 8 discusses the challenges that both teachers and learners face in the process of transitioning from MT to English as LoLT. Finally, in Chapter 9, I present the conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research on the topic.

1.9 Definitions of key terms

The definitions used in this study are adopted from different authors as referenced hereunder.

Mother tongue (MT) refers to a language that one knows best or learnt to speak first. In many other contexts, MT is referred to as “first language” (L1; see Ball, 2011; Ouane & Glanz, 2010; UNESCO, 2003). I acknowledge the terminological distinctions between “mother tongue”, “first language” and “home language”, and have decided to use “mother tongue” for the purposes of this study as it is the term most frequently used in the literature on MT education (and in bi- or multilingual education).

It is important to note that there have been changes in the articulation of what MT as a LoLT is in the Ugandan policy documents. The following observations can be made:

- (i) The Kajubi report (1989:33) used the wording “area language” and “language of wider communication” to refer to the proposed LoLT in P1 to P4. In addition, the languages singled out as area languages or languages of wider communication were Luganda, Lwo, Runyakitara/Runyoro-Rutoro and Runyankore-Rukiga, Ateso/Akaramojong, and Lugbara. The Government White Paper (Government of Uganda, 1992:18-19) amended this to “relevant local languages” and singled out Luo, Runyakitara, Luganda, Ateso/Akarimonjong, and Lugbara as the LoLT.
- (ii) NCDC documents interchangeably use “mother tongue”, “the first or familiar language” and “area language” to refer to the MT that should be used as LoLT.
- (iii) The Ministry of Education and Sports’ *Education Sector Strategic Plan* (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2004, 2008) refers to MT as “local language” or “mother tongue” interchangeably.
- (iv) There now appears to be a shift from “languages of wider communication” or “dominant languages” to “first languages” (L1s) as LoLT. For instance, Kateeba (2009:3) states that “on the advent of thematic curriculum, the number of languages approved by government as stated in the GWP [Government White Paper – MES] has been extended from 6 to 9. Besides the 9 languages that had orthography and written literature, 26 more languages have developed their orthographies and other necessary requirements and submitted to the NCDC for approval”. Recall that there are criteria set by the NCDC to be met for any

language to qualify as LoLT (cf. Rosendal, 2010), which is evidence to suggest that any language in Uganda is a potential LoLT.

This lack of a consistent vocabulary to correctly define what “MT” refers to in the education system might be confusing to teachers. The mandate to choose a LoLT or local language is in the hands of the District Language Boards¹³ (discussed in Chapter 3). It is also important to note that there are many districts in Uganda which do not have operating DLBs. Moreover, the formation of districts in Uganda seems to be an ongoing process. The continuous creation of districts might well distract from proper implementation of the language policy, because a particular school might be in one area with a particular dominant language but upon such area being split into two or more districts, the school might fall in an area with a different dominant language altogether. It is possible that schools can use such “escape clauses” as reasons not to implement the current language-in-education policy.

Second language (L2): In this dissertation, the term “second language” refers to “the second language learned at school for formal educational purposes” (Alidou et al., 2006:4). In other contexts, this could be referred to as a “foreign language” because the language is originally learnt for a very specific purpose (namely for use as LoLT), but in Uganda, L2s such as English or area languages are necessary for survival and fulfil many important functions apart from being a LoLT (such as being prominent languages in trade and the media), and therefore “L2” is preferred here over “foreign language” (see Richards & Schmidt, 2002:472).

Language policy refers to “legislation on and practices pertaining to the use of languages in a society” (Kosonen & Young, 2009:13). This is usually done by the government (Tollefson, 1991:16).

Language-in-education policy refers to “legislation on and practices pertaining to the languages or media of instruction and languages of literacy used in basic education” (Kosonen & Young, 2009:13).

Language planning refers to “all conscious efforts to affect the structure or function of language varieties. These efforts may involve creation of orthographies, standardisation and

¹³ A District Language Board (DLB) is a group of individuals at district level (in Uganda) who are charged with the responsibility of planning and overseeing the teaching, learning, and use of a local language, or a language of wider communication, in that district as a LoLT in the primary schools of that district. A DLB is also charged with developing an orthography and instructional materials for a particular language.

modernisation programmes, or allocation of functions to particular languages within multilingual societies” (Tollefson, 1991:16).

Language of instruction refers to “a language through which the contents of the curriculum in a given educational system or a part of it are taught and learned” (Kosonen & Young, 2009:13). I am aware of some authors referring to “language of instruction” as “medium of instruction” (MoI; Piper & Miksick, 2011) or “language of instruction” (LoI; Altinyelken, Moorcroft, & van der Draai, 2013). In this dissertation, the term “language of learning and teaching” (LoLT) is preferred, largely because it caters for both the learner (on the learning side) and the teacher (on the instruction side). In sum, LoLT refers to the language in which the curriculum content is presented to the learners in class and the language in which these learners do their schoolwork.

Transfer refers to the application of knowledge obtained in one language to another language. Note that in this dissertation, “transfer” does not only refer to linguistic transfer (also known as “linguistic interference” or “first language interference”) as defined by, amongst others, Ellis (2008), but also to the transfer of academic content matter (such as knowledge of the water cycle) and academic skills (such as the ability to do multiplication in mathematics) learnt in one language to the other. Where the reference is to the transition from one language as LoLT to another as LoLT, the term “transfer” will also be used. The specific intended meaning of the term will be made apparent by the context of its use.

Transition “is an educational term indicating the point at which the medium of instruction shifts from one language to another” (Benson, 2008:5; cf. Van Ginkel, 2011). Usually, this switch is from MT or majority language to an official and/or international language like English.

Bilingual education is “the use of more than one language for instruction and attaining literacy” (Kosonen & Young, 2009:13; see also UNESCO, 2003:17-18).

Mother tongue education refers to “a system of multilingual education which begins with or is based on the learners’ first language or mother tongue” (Kosonen & Young, 2009:13; World Bank, 2010:10). In this context, Alidou et al. (2006:4) define “mother tongue” as “a language best known to the child”. Ball (2010:7, 2011:12), by contrast, uses the term “mother

tongue-*based* instruction” and defines it as the “use of the L1 as the primary language of instruction across the curriculum and throughout the school day”. In this dissertation, MT education will be used to mean education conducted in a language best known to a child before/at the time of entering school.

Chapter 2

LANGUAGE POLICY AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to discuss and analyse the theoretical aspects and implementation of various language-in-educational models. The objectives of such an analysis are to identify strengths and weaknesses of different language education models and to give a historical overview of the progression of MT education over the past 60 years. The chapter will begin by giving a theoretical perspective of different language-in-education models, and this will be followed by a proposed model of language-in-education for the African multilingual settings and building blocks of bi-/multilingual education. This chapter will also analyse the pivotal role of teacher training as far as MT and multilingual instruction is concerned. Thereafter, the educational strategies to scaffold transition from MT to L2 as a LoLT will be discussed. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the trend of transitional models, given that this study investigates the transition from MT education to English-medium education.

2.2 Language-in-education models: theoretical perspectives

Different labels in the literature are used to make reference to existing MT education models. A multiplicity of factors have motivated the creation of various MT education models¹⁴, and these factors include (but are not necessarily limited to) theoretical understandings of language acquisition, political agendas, cost implications and teacher training (Ball, 2011:21). In this chapter, it will be shown that the difference between these models lies in the amount

¹⁴ Hornberger (1991:215) proposes a framework for looking at bilingual education types. She states that “the distinction between transitional and maintenance models of bilingual education is well known, though not necessarily consistently defined in the scholarly literature”. Hornberger proposes that language education models should be defined “with respect to language, culture, and society, and program types in terms of characteristics relating to student population, teachers, and program structure” (Hornberger, 1991:222). Accordingly, Hornberger (1991:222-223) classifies bilingual education as comprising:

- (i) transitional bilingual education which targets low status languages and is intended to improve academic achievement in L2;
- (ii) maintenance bilingual education which targets low status languages and is envisioned for improved academic achievement in both learners’ L1s and L2s;
- (iii) enrichment models which comprise bilingual education programmes that target the development of low status languages, cultural pluralism, and social autonomy; and
- (iv) enrichment bilingual education intended for language development, cultural pluralism and social autonomy.

of time spent on using the MT as LoLT and the point at which the L2 is initiated as a LoLT (i.e., the point of transition) or the absence of MT as LoLT in the education system. This review section therefore focuses on language-in-education models, highlighting the characteristics of each model, including its merits and shortcomings. Such an assessment is intended to give an understanding and a comparative view of the aims of each language model vis-à-vis its output of learners. An in-depth examination of the transitional model is given due to its centrality to the present research study.

2.2.1 *Mother tongue based education*

Available literature attests that MT education appears to have gained momentum after the 1951 UNESCO meeting that produced a report titled *Use of vernacular languages in education*, published in 1953 (UNESCO, 1953). This report states that “the best medium for teaching is the mother tongue of the pupil” (UNESCO, 1953:6). As will be elaborated below, this statement became central to educational research which sought to determine the value and validity of MT education in educational achievements of learners the world over. It is through and from research studies undertaken subsequent to 1953 that the present day MT education programmes and arguments for and against MT education have stemmed (Cummins, 2000b).

In a MT based education model, learning is conducted only in the learner’s home language, the MT (Ball, 2011). It is not clear whether or not learners under this educational model are exposed to a L2 at all. Learners under this model are said to be highly academically competent in their MT and possess an elaborate repertoire of expression given their extensive exposure to the MT. This model is mostly applicable to monolingual communities where learners’ home language (MT) is the LoLT at school as well as the official language and/or language of wider communication in that community.

Ball (2011) recognises that much as it is decades since UNESCO (1953) declared the value of MT education, the practice is still unpopular in some contexts. Elaborating on the challenges facing MT education, Ball, firstly, cites that many policy makers consider MT to be costly. Such a line of thinking has led many policy makers to either neglect MT in education or to allow it for only a very limited number of years – the latter is referred to as an “early-exit model”. Secondly, Ball (2011) concurs with Benson (2008) that many policy makers believe

that MT impedes L2 acquisition and learning, and that, for many, learning English (as a L2) is of greater importance than learning through the medium of the MT, given the benefits that are said to result from English learning.

Third and fourth challenges to the implementation of MT education (recognised by UNESCO, 1953; cf. Ball, 2011) are that some languages have no lexicographical and orthographical components which makes it difficult for them to be used in teaching and learning. Other languages, though possessing a written form, have not sufficiently developed to allow for their use in academic discourses (cf. Fafunwa et al., 1989). Some languages do not have enough teachers trained in teaching (in) the MT and for other languages such teachers are non-existent. A sixth challenge is that in contexts where communities are at liberty to choose a local dominant language as a LoLT, they often disagree on which language is the majority and/or which language should be used as the LoLT.¹⁵

Seventhly, learning materials may not be available for a language to be employed as a LoLT. In the Ugandan context, a language is cleared to be used as a LoLT if it has a developed orthography and at least *three* literature materials. Eighthly, as indicated in the available literature, teachers and parents might resist MT education. For example, Kagolo (April 30, 2012) reports on parents in Uganda removing their children from schools that teach through MT; Sun (2009) reports on a similar situation in Southeast Asia.

Lack of political will is a ninth challenge facing MT education world-wide (see Ball, 2011). Given that the contemporary trend is to demand English or another international language as LoLT, parents in many countries exert pressure on schools to teach in English, and ensure that their children are proficient as early as possible (Ball, 2011). This pressure is not always countered by government-funded or government-led information campaigns on the possible benefits of MT education.

Lastly, it is also noticeable in the literature that earlier studies (before the 1950s), conducted primarily in the United States (USA), recommended the elimination of MT education as use of the MT was considered an impediment to L2 acquisition. Cummins (2000a) explains that

¹⁵ Uganda's language policy prescribes that rural communities/schools choose a local dominant language to be used as a LoLT for the first three years of primary education. This might also mean that it is the mandate of schools to look for qualified teachers to teach in the chosen dominant language. However, for the public schools in Uganda, it is the government that allocates teachers to schools.

opponents to MT use in school reasoned that instructing learners through their MT denied them academic advancement and the proficiency that they could acquire in a L2 (mostly English), i.e., that the MT got in the way of acquiring a L2.¹⁶ In this regard, Cummins (2000a) points out that the teaching of English at that time was “too diluted” to enable non-English speaking learners to master it – had English (or any other L2) been taught well, the minority language learners would have acquired it with ease.

Related to the foregoing is that there was a misconception that for one to be proficient in English, one had to start English instruction immediately upon entering school (McLaughlin, 1992; Dutcher, 1997; Benson, 2008). Gersten and Woodward (1995) point out that there is still no consensus among some scholars as to when to introduce learners to intensive English as LoLT.

Those who support the instruction of learners through their MT in the early years of learning have advanced reasons for their support of this endeavour. Firstly, children in MT programmes have a solid foundation to their schooling (Barron, 2012; UNESCO, 2013). This is the case because use of a child’s familiar language at school provides continuity between home and school in the sense that they will find their home language used at school. Children who find a nonfamiliar language spoken at school might develop low self-esteem and/or a negative attitude towards school, eventually culminating in dropping out of school (Baños, 2009:3; Henrik-Magga, Dunbar, & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2008; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2011). With use of MT in the early years of schooling, failure rate is considerably reduced (Barron, 2012; Ouane & Glanz, 2010; also see Henrik-Magga, Dunbar, & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2008; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2011).

Among the studies that produced results in support of MT programmes is the Ife Project of Nigeria, conducted from 1970 to 1978 (Fafunwa et al., 1989). In this project, learners were taught through their MT, Yoruba, for six years of primary school. This project’s results indicated that when children are instructed uninterruptedly through their MT for their first six school years and when English (the L2) is taught as a subject during the first 12 years of a child’s life,¹⁷ these children can academically achieve more or as much as their counterparts

¹⁶ As will be explained in this section, this is still a popular misconception in present-day Uganda.

¹⁷ Fafunwa et al. (1989) call this “the most formative period” in which “attitudes and aptitudes are developed” (Fafunwa et al., 1989:10).

in an English-only programme (c. Dutcher, 1997). Note however that the success of the Ife project is also possibly attributable to various other factors apart from MT education, including non-linguistic ones such as curriculum changes, new course materials, and experienced teachers who received specific training and who changed their classroom practices (cf. Akinnaso, 1993) to meet the project's needs.

Other projects have also shown the positive role of MT in learners' educational achievement. These include the bilingual education study in Mozambique (Benson, 2000, 2002); the Rivers Readers Project of 1970 (Fyle, 2003) in Nigeria; Ramirez, Yuen, Ramey and Pasta's (1991) study in America; and Collier and Thomas (2004), Thomas and Collier (2002; 1997), Collier (1987), and Walter and Chuo (2012) in Cameroon. In sum, these scholars agree that for children to develop their academic potential in their L2s and to succeed in their academic career, they need to learn the L2 as a subject for a period of 4 to 7 years. This period may vary depending on the availability of resources and exposure to the language outside school.

As stated above, MT is seen to enable learners to understand the academic content. A second advantage to using MT as LoLT is that the MT provides a link between home and school and, as such, learners are able to start their schooling successfully. The predicted benefit of MT use is that it provides scaffolding for the acquisition of the L2. According to Cummins (2000b), empirical evidence indicates that transfer of academic skills across languages is possible in addition to the other benefits that accrue from MT education. In this regard, Gándara (1999) states that language and mathematics skills can transfer from a primary language to the L2 (cf. Ball, 2011).

A third benefit of the use of MT education is that such education enables family participation in children's educational life. In situations where home language is different from school language, and where parents and/or family members are not literate, they feel alienated and may not easily support their children in learning (Barron, 2012; Cummins & Genzuck, 1991; Dutcher, 1997; NCDC, 2011; Ramirez et al., 1991). Fourthly, it has been shown that MT education supports lifelong learning. Lifelong learning is a process in which a person continues to pursue knowledge post-school for career purposes or for personal gain. Learners who received their education via their MT are confident of what they learn and, as a result, are prepared to face the world (Ministry of Education and Training (Vietnam) & Unicef, 2012).

A fifth benefit pertains to language preservation. MT skills are often still fragile and can easily be lost in the early school years if not used at school and/or home (Cummins, 2001; cf. Fillmore, 1991). Cummins (2001) notes that if this is continued, a child may only retain receptive skills in their MT, with no ability to respond in it. Using a MT as LoLT could thus lead to language preservation.

A sixth benefit is that MT education makes education more inclusive (Benson, 2002, 2005; Romaine, 2013). Girls have been reported to be severely more disadvantaged than boys when education takes place in nonfamiliar language. Thus, with MT education, more female learners are likely to enrol for schooling, develop literacy skills and also stay longer in the education system and attain better results.

These benefits of MT education have not been realised to their fullest in most African countries. They could however assist these countries in order to achieve Millennium Development Goals (MDG), particularly goal 2 (Barron, 2012; Romaine, 2013), viz. achieving universal primary education. Romaine (2013) notes that if it is acceptable that education is more meaningful when given in a learner's language, then the pivotal focus of MDG achievement should be language in education. Accordingly, since the majority of children in African countries do not proceed beyond secondary education (Department of International Development, 2010), capitalising on MT education would be beneficial.

2.2.2 Transitional model

Different appellations have been used to refer to the transitional model: “bridging” model (Ball, 2011; Kosonene & Young, 2009a; World Bank, 2010); “bi/multilingual education” (Ball, 2011:21); and “subtractive bilingual model” (Alidou et al., 2006:60; Heugh, 2011). Kosonen and Young (2009a:14) define bridge language of instruction as “a situation in which an educational programme is organised in such a manner that mother tongue speakers of non-dominant languages can build a culturally and linguistically appropriate educational foundation in their home language first, and subsequently learn additional languages”. Where such a condition is met, learners would be able to have the capacity to use for lifelong learning all those languages to which they are exposed (Kosonen & Young, 2009). Ball (2011:65) defines a transitional bilingual model as “an education program that aims to provide learners with planned transition from one language of instruction (as the primary or

only medium of instruction) to another language of instruction (regardless of grade). That is, one language is phased out and another language is phased in to replace it". There are three forms of a transitional model. The first, a form of bilingual education where instruction in MT lasts for between 1 to 4 years, is commonly referred to as an "early-exit" model (Benson, 2005; Dutcher, 2004; Ouane & Glanz, 2010); the second, where the MT is used for up to 6 years, is called a "late-exit" model; and, finally, the "very late-exit" model involves transition after 8 years of MT as LoLT (Heugh, 2011a:138). In effect, transitional models promote monolingualism (cf. Stroud, 2002).

"Transfer" and "transition" are two central concepts in transitional MT models. The operational definitions of these two concepts employed in this study are taken from Benson (2008). Benson (2008) and Heugh (2011a) caution that these two terms are usually confused and used interchangeably yet they are distinctly different. "Transfer" is defined as "a scientific concept that explains how we learn language" whereas "transition" is defined as "an educational term indicating the point at which the medium of instruction shifts from one language to another" (Benson, 2008:5).

Although transitional models are criticised as being weak, given the fact that they involve removing MT early, Benson (2008:6) states that the extent of exposure to the MT in such models is "better than none at all"; it is possible for learners in the early-exit programmes to register some benefits that accrue from MT education. Available evidence in, for instance, Ramirez's report in Cummins (1992), Ramirez, Yuen, Ramey, and Pasta (1991), and Walter and Chuo (2012) indicates that early-exit learners are able to catch up with the immersion learners. In addition, Kosonen (2009) reports that, in the Philippines, use of local languages¹⁸ up to Grade 3 in a transitional model has improved the learning achievement of the learners.

The transitional model, however, has a major shortcoming. It is said to be implemented with the ultimate aim of obtaining literacy and competence in the official language (L2) or international language (Ouane & Glanz, 2010, 2011). Benson (2008:6) argues that this model does not offer MT education but is rather simply a "short cut" to the L2. Others regard the transitional model as a weak form of MT education (see Ball, 2011; Heugh, 2011a; World Bank, 2010), because it is seen as a "subtractive bilingual model" given that learners'

¹⁸ In the Philippines, some local languages are used orally in the teaching and learning process.

language competence in their MTs is not yet well grounded at the time of introducing the L2 – the L2 possibly “subtracts from” rather than “adds to” the MT (see Magga et al., 2033:1), unlike the case of additive bilingual models.

Regarding the time of introducing the L2, many scholars agree that for transition and transfer to take place successfully, one should aim for late transition, which entails the use of MT as LoLT and exposure to the L2 as a subject for 6 to 8 years (Benson, 2008a; Fafunwa et al., 1989; Heugh, 2011a; Magga et al., 2003; Ouane & Glanz, 2010). The point of transfer recommended by many scholars seems to be P6 (or Grade 6)¹⁹ (see Ball, 2011), but Heugh (2011) states that in countries where MTs are not well resourced, transfer after 8 years of formal schooling is preferable. According to Benson (2008), it might seem illogical to have children spend so much time in their MT when the goal is ultimately to transfer to English, but a strong foundation built in MT aids in L2 learning. In this regard, Ball (2011:29) states that “while children clearly need some exposure to a language to learn it, research does not support a ‘time-on-task’ hypothesis predicting a correlation between the amount of exposure to, and degree of proficiency in, L2, except in the very earliest stage of learning”. Heugh (2011:138) summarises what was known about early-exit transitional models in 2010:

There is, by 2010, no internationally-acknowledged second language acquisition expert who suggests that transition to the second language by the end of third year of primary school will serve most children well. No acknowledged expert in psycholinguistics and second language acquisition will suggest that children in developing and minority or poor communities can switch from mother tongue education by end of the third year (or grade) to the second language and achieve well across the curriculum by the second half of primary school or secondary school. There is no internationally-recognized or validated research that shows that this is possible.

(Heugh, 2011:124-125)

Heugh (2011:138) further recounts that early-exit bilingual models “do not facilitate transfer and transfer is highly unlikely in early-exit transitional models”. In sum, for transfer of both language and academic skills to occur from the MT to English (L2), children should be

¹⁹ Cummins (1979, 1980, 1981, 1992, 1998, 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2001, 2005, 2007), Dutcher (1997), and McLaughlin (1992) provide explanations on the amount of time necessary for the development of basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP) (cf. Benson, 2008; Heugh et al., 2007; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2011). With reference to Finnish immigrant students in Sweden, Cummins (2000a, 2000b) reports that conversational proficiency (BICS) usually reaches peer-appropriate levels with exposure to the L2 within 2 years, but that a period of 5 to 7 years is desirable for learners to reach competent academic levels of English (CALP; cf. Ball, 2011a, 2011b; Benson, 2008; Fafunwa, 1979; Heugh, 2011; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2011). In this regard, Cummins (2000a) states that playground language (or BICS) is different from classroom language (CALP), where hypothesising, evaluating, predicting, concluding, classifying, etc. occur in the latter but hardly ever in the former.

allowed sufficient time to develop the required vocabulary in English. When this is not done, literacy acquisition is rather challenging.

UNESCO's findings indicate that many African languages are not adequately employed in the education system (Ouane & Glanz, 2010). They are usually used for a very limited time during the early years of schooling, after which a transition to the L2 (an official language or a dominant language) takes place, but this transition occurs before learners have fully mastered those skills in their MT that are necessary to facilitate a successful transition to L2 as LoLT. Heugh (2011:138) observes that when L1 is removed too early (as is the case in early-exit programmes), "there is no (or insufficient) transfer". She adds that "one cannot transfer (move) knowledge from one language to another if the scaffolding in the former has been removed from the education process".

Despite the plethora of criticisms levelled against a transitional model and particularly an early-exit type of transitional model, many countries continue to adopt it for various reasons including misconceptions surrounding the acquisition of the English language. Benson (2008a) and Heugh (2011a) explain that there are "myths" that tend to guide how policy makers design language-in-education programmes which fall under an early-exit model. For instance, Benson (2008a:3) says:

One such myth is that the best way to learn a second language is to use it as a medium of instruction. (In fact, it is often more effective to learn additional languages as subjects of study). Another is that to learn a second language you must start as early as possible. (Starting early might help learners to have a nice accent, but otherwise the advantage goes to learners who have a well-developed first language). A third is that first language gets in the way of learning second language. (Building a strong foundation in the first language results in better learning of additional languages.)" (cf. Benson, 2008b; Cummins, 2000a; Dutcher, 1997; McLaughlin, 1992 for similar and other myths).

2.2.3 Multilingual education model

A multilingual education model makes use of more than two languages in the education system (Ball, 2011). There is the use of MT, a regional language and an international language. In this model, education begins with MT; other languages, namely a regional language and an international language, e.g., English or French, are added in due course. Such educational models are likely to be found in countries with more than one official language, such as India which has 19 official languages, South Africa with 11 (UNESCO,

2003:13-14); Niger with 10 and Guinea Bissau with 20 (Hovens, 2002:252). Children that are taught through this model may be bilingual or multilingual. Ball (2011:63) explains that the L1 is stronger as it is used more widely as a LoLT.

2.2.4 Immersion or foreign language instruction

An immersion model is described by Ball (2011) and Cummins (1998) as an education system which is either monolingual or bilingual but usually begins with the L2 as LoLT. Learners educated in such a model can develop as bilinguals, but under certain conditions limited bilingualism results (World Bank, 2010). Canada in the 1960s developed this model using English and French (World Bank, 2010:9).²⁰

Traceable evidence indicates that there is more empirical support for transitional programmes than for immersion programmes; specifically, transitional bilingual programmes (preferably late-exit programmes) are more beneficial than immersion programmes. Contemporary studies criticise immersion programmes for not making use of learners' prior knowledge embedded in their MT. This is not to suggest that no countries practise immersion programmes but merely that empirical studies indicate less benefit from immersion programmes than from transitional programmes.

In conclusion, there has been a progressive demystification of immersion of learners into languages. For example, Baños (2009:1) writes that in the 1970s and 1980s, L1 use in the L2 classroom was considered a “bad thing” as it was believed that learners should have as much L2 exposure as possible. This entailed that an immediate adoption of the L2 was preferred as soon as the learners entered school. This belief is no longer widely held by prominent scholars in the field of language education.

2.2.5 Submersion programme

A submersion programme (or a “sink or swim” model; Ball, 2011) is a monolingual model. It is described by Ball (2011) and Kosonen and Young (2009) and involves use of a LoLT

²⁰ Note that there has been at least one prominent court case in which the fairness of immersion programmes for minority language learners was challenged, namely *Lau v. Nicholas* in 1974 (see Cummins, 2000a; Baker & de Kanter, 1981:5-6). In this court case, the San Francisco Public School District was allegedly reported to have violated the rights of minority children by including them in submersion programmes instead of transitional programmes.

which is not known to the learner or which the learner does not speak. Such a language is usually an official language in that country or a language of wider communication. For instance, in Uganda's case, Tembe and Norton (2008) report on non-Luganda-speaking communities whose learners are taught to read and write in Luganda (recall that Luganda is a language of wider communication in Uganda), as these communities believe that if their children travel away from their communities, they would have need of this language. Strictly speaking, World Bank (2010) and Benson (2008) do not regard such an education as being engaged in MT education, because there is no use of MT in this programme; instead, children are taught in "a foreign language", so to speak.

2.2.6 Maintenance and additive/bilingual education

One particular model, based on the idea of maintenance, has been given many labels, including "bi/multilingual education", "additive bilingual model", "dual medium", or "two-way medium" (cf. Ball, 2011; Ouane & Glanz, 2010; World Bank, 2010). In such a model, both the MT and L2 (and there could be more than one L2) are used as LoLT throughout the education system. There is usually a 50% use of both languages as LoLT throughout learners' school careers; the MT is never removed as LoLT. Heugh (2011) states that this model aims at producing learners who are highly proficient in both MT and L2 (cf. Hornberger, 1991).

The advantage of this model is that learners become competent in using both their MTs and L2s academically as well as in expression. This form of language programme is labelled a strong model of MT education (Ouane & Glanz, 2010; World Bank, 2010) because the MT is kept as the LoLT throughout the education system. Ouane and Glanz (2010) point out however that "additive bilingual model" (or one of its variant terms) is sometimes incorrectly used to refer to an education system where the L2 is the main focus in the sense that the MT is introduced for the very first years and a switch to the L2 is then introduced, a practice said to be common in countries where early-exit transitional models are operative.

2.3 A model for the African communities' context?

In the preceding sections, I have discussed aspects of MT or bilingual education as they occur in contexts which, closely looked at, do not represent the African context well. Heugh and

Mulumba (2013:8) contend that “it is important to distinguish between the literature written in the global north, where most school students continue to have mother tongue (L1) education for the duration of their education experiences, and the literature which concerns education in the global south, where the majority of children who reach school are offered second or foreign (L2 or FL) medium education”. In an African context (part of the global south), the majority of children grow up as bi- or multilinguals (Banda, 2009, 2010; Brock-Utne, 2004; Glanz, 2013; Heugh et al., 2007). Consequently, the nature of African multilingualism should be acknowledged in the educational life of African children, with African language-in-education policies reflecting the nature of multilingualism in the African context rather than focusing on policies that work well in (largely) monolingual contexts (Banda, 2009, 2010; cf. Wolff, 2002).²¹

Banda reasons that current language-in-education policies are based on the western world context where most people grow up monolingual and only start learning their L2s after they enter school. However, in the African context, children learn their L2s (and often L3s and L4s as well) before they begin school. According to Banda, treating such children as if they were monolingual amounts to depriving them of the linguistic resources with which they come to school. He illustrates his argument by citing the example of South African children on the Cape Flats (an area with low socioeconomic status that forms part of the greater Cape Town area) who grow up speaking English and Afrikaans. At school, these bilingual learners are labelled either as Afrikaans or as English monolingual speakers. They are consequently placed in classrooms according to their supposed L1 even though they are almost equally proficient in their two languages. Banda argues that for such children to fully benefit from their education, a language policy that considers the nature of their linguistic repertoire is needed. Also see, for instance, the classroom contexts described by scholars in the global south in which learning is constrained when learners’ linguistic repertoires are not employed in the learning process – e.g., Chimbutane (2011); Cincotta-Segi (2013); Groff (2013); Hornberger and Johnson (2007); Jean-Pierre (2013); Lin (2013), and Rubagumya (2013). In this regard, Cummins (2001:17) states the following:

Any credible educator will agree that schools should build on the experience and knowledge that children bring to the classroom, and instruction should also promote children’s abilities and talents. Whether we do it intentionally or inadvertently, when

²¹ Also see non-African cases (e.g., that of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic) where children grow up multilingual in richly multilingual contexts (Cincotta-Segi, 2013).

we destroy children's language and rupture their relationship with parents and grandparents, we are contradicting the very essence of education.

In sum, for MT education in Africa to provide benefits such as those discussed in section 2.2.1, it is appropriate to consider the nature of multilingualism in the African context.

The above is a summary of the existing language education programmes in which MT education is promoted and practised with varying levels of success. The successes achieved through these MT models depend on the concretisation of various aspects, including the quality of teaching in both L1 and L2, the amount of exposure to both L1 and L2 at school and/or at home, and the quality of teachers available. In the remaining part of this section, I discuss the principles of bilingual education, as per Benson (2008).

2.4 Principles of successful bi- and multilingual education

The success of any educational programme is heavily dependent on the principles upon which it is built. Drawing from the available body of scholarship, Benson (2008:2-11) provides a summary of such principles for bi- and multilingual education. Although these principles may not be applicable in all multilingual educational programmes, due to various constraints of which Benson warns, they are considered crucial for the realisation of the benefits of MT education.

The first of Benson's (2008) principles is that "children need the period from birth to approximately 12 years of age to develop their home language competence". As children go to school before age 12, Benson highly recommends that learners' MTs be used as LoLT for a greater part of the curriculum up until Grade 5 or 6; Benson is thus arguing for a late-exit model if MT is to be replaced by the L2 at all. She emphasises that use of learners' MT does not mean that learners should not be exposed to a L2 but rather that they should strengthen their L1 skills further. Once the MT skills are built strongly, such skills can transfer to the L2 when the time for transition comes. Ball (2011), like Benson, recommends that the use of MT as LoLT be extended until a learner reaches adolescence (cf. also Cummins, 2005) so that child language development is not interrupted. The reason for this recommendation is that when language development is interrupted, there is a possibility of a learner losing the acquired skills, be it in the L1 or the L2 (cf. Cummins, 1992).

In African communities, this principle demands even more. As children interact outside of the school context in their MTs (which are usually more than one; see Banda, 2009, 2010; Brock-Utne, 2004, 2011; Glanz, 2013), it is desirable that they receive their education in the languages in which they were more proficient before they reported to school.

The second principle mentioned by Benson (2008) is that “[c]hildren normally require about 5 to 7 years of second language (L2) learning before they can learn academic subjects through this language exclusively”, and therefore the L2 can be offered as a subject for 5 to 7 years of primary schooling with MT being the LoLT during that time. This points to Benson’s preference for a late-exit bilingual transitional model. Learners who are not given a chance to develop their L2s for a substantial period before the L2 becomes the LoLT face a twofold challenge: first, they are expected to learn the academic vocabulary in a language unfamiliar to them, and, second, at the same time they are expected to interpret concepts using a language of which they are in the process of acquiring vocabulary and fluency. This disrupts the learning process, which could result in literacy acquisition becoming slow and challenging.

Benson’s (2008) third principle is that “[b]uilding a strong foundation in the L1 helps L2 learning much more than early or long exposure to the L2” (cf. Wolff, 2002). Recall the “myth” that earlier (and thus longer) exposure to the L2 results in better mastery of the L2, and that available literature shows that this is a misconception.

A fourth principle of bi-/multilingual education stated by Benson (2008) is that “[t]he most effective bilingual programmes continue to invest in L1 thinking and learning for as long as possible”. Benson hereby advances the view that a well-developed L1 enhances a learner’s cognitive faculty. Educational programmes that make use of the L1 as LoLT and offer the L2 as a subject throughout the school career of the learners, develop such learners’ L1 skills, which later enable them to express themselves successfully in their L2s. Recall that when a learner is exposed to a concept in the L1, such a concept need not be relearned in the L2; rather, the learner only needs to learn the vocabulary in the L2 to be able to talk about that concept (cf. Cummins, 2005; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2011). According to Benson (2008), in order for maximum transfer from MT to the L2 to occur, MT should be the LoLT as well as a subject; where this is not possible, MT should be offered as a subject throughout the school career of the learners.

Benson (2008) and others observe that these theoretical principles may not work in all multilingual contexts; some contexts have particular circumstances which may not favour application of such principles. For instance, some countries do not have as many qualified teachers or as much resources as others, and the learners of some countries are not exposed to contexts where they can practise their L2 skills outside the classroom. Where availability of resources and opportunities differ, benefits that accrue from MT education will also differ.

2.5 Mother tongue education and teacher recruitment, training and placement

Luke (1998:9) states that “[m]any teachers have been forced to take on responsibilities that they were never trained for (e.g., [teaching – MES] English as a second language...)” (cf. also Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003). When teachers qualified to teach MT and the L2 are available, the quality of teaching is ensured (World Bank, 2010). In Uganda, teachers are expected to have sufficient language proficiency in the language of wider communication employed by their school as the LoLT during the first three years to use that language as LoLT, teach that language as a subject, and manage the transition from that language to English as LoLT, thus also having sufficient proficiency in English. For this reason, and because teachers are at the centre of any educational programme (Tse, Shum, Ki, & Wong, 2001), I discuss here available evidence of the role that teachers play in the success of MT education.

Fafunwa et al. (1989:13) observe that “inadequate books in the hands of good teachers could still lead to good learning on the part of pupils; in contrast the most adequate books, when placed in the hands of poor teachers, could be less effective educationally”. In other words, if a teacher is provided with material to teach learners without adequate training on how to use such material, the learning process can be affected negatively. Teacher training in broader terms pertains to various issues; some of these issues are educational (pertaining to teacher training) and others have to do with policy (including teacher recruitment and placement policies). These issues will be discussed below.

UNESCO (2003:31) emphasises, with regard to MT instruction, that “all educational planning should include at each stage early provision for the training, and further training, of sufficient numbers of fully competent and qualified teachers of the country concerned who

are familiar with the life of their people and able to teach in the mother tongue” (see also Cummins & Genzuk, 1991; Kyeyune, 2012; Young, 2009).

In most multilingual communities that have adopted MT education programmes, teachers were not trained through their MTs but through their L2s (cf. Benson, 2002, 2004; Dutcher, 2004b; Heugh, 2011b). Obanya (1999:91) contends that it is often the case that language teachers are native speakers of languages they teach but did not receive training in teaching those languages. Dutcher (1997) states that should teachers not have learnt the LoLT during their own schooling, they should receive special training so that they become comfortable with reading and writing it (cf. also Dutcher, 2005). In other words, teachers should receive adequate preparation to use MT as LoLT and to teach it as a subject. In this regard, Benson (2004:208) states that teachers in MT programmes who did not receive their schooling in the MT “tend to bring little formal training to the task, though they have years of work as well as their own experience as students in L2 submersion-type schooling, where use of the MT has traditionally been prohibited or considered shameful”. With such a background, these teachers have no “models to imitate in terms of teaching L1 literacy or helping students gain communication competence in the L2 so that L1 literacy or skills can be transferred”. Teachers therefore need thorough linguistic preparation, both theoretically and practically, before they can engage with language learning. In the following paragraphs, I present some case studies of teacher preparation for MT teaching in multilingual contexts.

According to Fafunwa et al. (1989:13), prior to the start of the Ife project in Nigeria, it had been erroneously assumed that all teachers could teach their MT competently without being prepared or (re)trained to do so. The initiators of this project quickly noticed that their assumption was wrong and devised means of preparing teachers in order for them to perform to the expectations of the project. Teacher preparation included in-service training of teachers, presentation of evaluation workshops, special workshops for introducing new materials, long vacation workshops for text writing and teaching methods, and short overseas training sessions (also see Benson, 2002, 2004; Dutcher, 2004b; Heugh, 2011b). Throughout the training, emphasis was placed on teaching the MT distinctively from the L2, as the MT would later facilitate the transfer of skills to the L2 (Fafunwa et al., 1989:68-69). Benson (2004) advises that, in addition to teacher training, information concerning bilingual education elsewhere in the world should be availed to teachers. This could also include

visiting functioning bilingual schools to gather first-hand experience. As teacher preparation was planned for in the Ife project, it was possible for the project initiators to emphasise that the children should learn to read first and to read well in Yoruba (their MT) before they would be made to read formally in English (their L2). “This was done to relieve undue pressure on learners to further strengthen their transfer of skills” (Fafunwa et al. 1989:13). In order to strengthen the foundations of the project, those teachers who showed little interest in learning and adjusting their attitudes towards learners were dismissed from the project.

In Mali and Papua New Guinea, education authorities recruit speakers of different languages to be trained in MT education pedagogics (see Dutcher 2004b:21). Logijin (2009) states that in Malaysia, where Kadazandusunu is used as LoLT, teachers have to complete courses to enable them to understand the Kadazandusunu syllabus. Experience from Vietnam also suggests that teacher training and capacity building are crucial, as this helps to determine whether they will have the skills and techniques to ensure that learners acquire the desired competencies by the time they transition to the L2 as LoLT (see Ministry of Education and Training (Vietnam) & Unicef, 2012).

In Uganda’s case, before the thematic curriculum and/or MT education was implemented, teachers were intensively trained for 10 days (Altinyelken, 2010:155). Officials predicted that this training would be sufficient, but the Kampala teachers in the Altinyelken (2010) study recounted that the training was insufficient, as it was rushed and superficial and as such could not cover all the aspects of the new curriculum. The World Bank (2010) states that rapidly trained teachers may at first have low educational attainment and have a background of non-MT training. Such short preparation of teachers may create an impression that MT education is ancillary to education through the L2. This then may result in poor employment of linguistic methods of teaching and may produce learners that find it difficult to transition to the L2 later on. The implication here is that there should be continuous professional development and preparation of teachers in both MT and L2 teaching.

Benson (2004) raises the following question: “Do we expect too much of bilingual teachers?”, describing the many demands that are usually placed on teachers in multilingual contexts and yet they are usually less prepared to face such demands than are their counterparts in monolingual contexts: teachers in bilingual programmes, particularly in developing countries, often have less training, teach less well-resourced languages (yet they

are expected to teach both L1 and L2), teach under-nourished students, must bridge the linguistic and cultural gap between home and school, must behave as respected members of the community, and are expected to manage any opposition – which usually comes from themselves and from parents (Ouane & Glanz, 2010) – to the use of MT in schooling (Benson, 2004:204). Nyaga and Anthonissen (2012) and Ouane and Glanz (2010) stress the need for teachers to be trained in handling multilingual classrooms. They explain that teachers should be trained to guide learners in developing not only language competence but also multiliteracy in general. In many African countries, many learners' MTs are not the dominant MT used as LoLT. Because of this, learners who do not speak the LoLT at school entry need extra support from the teacher so as not to be left behind in the learning process. These circumstances may require the learner to acquire literacy in more than two languages, namely the LoLT, their MT and English. Teachers therefore need to be prepared and trained on how to handle language and literacy development in multilingual classrooms.

Like teacher training, teacher recruitment and placement should also be a planned activity. In many bilingual programmes, there is a need to train and recruit more teachers so that there are enough teachers to provide MT instruction for learners in their early years (Gándara, 1999). Dutcher (2004b) explains that when an educational programme is small, teacher recruitment and placement may not be challenging, but nationwide programmes are indeed challenging and require careful planning.

Ball (2011) explains that teacher recruitment based on L1 fluency may not always be possible, and, as such, solutions to this challenge may have to be sought. Ball elaborates that, where possible, some practitioners in the community can be recruited to work with teachers who may not be fluent in the L1 of the learners. If such practitioners are recruited, they can then work with the teacher by co-teaching, reading texts to learners more fluently, telling stories, and possibly handling cultural aspects that children may need to learn about (see Klaus, 2003 for a case of successful implementation of such recruitment in Papua New Guinea).

Regarding teacher placement, education authorities should endeavour to prepare teachers in all respects, including placing them or transferring them to areas where their L1 skills may be required. Nyaga and Anthonissen (2012) found that teacher placement in Kenya does not take into consideration the MTs spoken by teachers. In Kenya, teachers are posted to any part of

the country, including to areas of which they do not speak the languages. This means that the teacher cannot communicate with learners in their MTs. Nyaga and Anthonissen mention that such teachers often use their MT as LoLT, even where such MT is “foreign” to the majority of learners in that area. As a result, learning is complicated.

In the following paragraphs, I present cases of teacher recruitment and placement. It should be borne in mind that in most countries where English or another foreign language is used as a LoLT in all schools, teachers can be recruited and placed in any area of the country without paying attention to the languages spoken by the teacher and/or the community. This practice cannot be followed in a MT education context as communities and schools will then receive teachers who do not speak the language of the community and/or the school’s LoLT, rendering communication between teachers and parents difficult, and yet this communication is important for children’s educational success (cf. Klaus, 2003). Dutcher (2004b) cites an example in Guatemala where the national database did not have teachers listed against languages spoken. When such important information is not planned for nationwide, scenarios such as those given below arise.

In Indonesia, where MT is used as LoLT, the performance of children has not been good – not because of the medium of instruction, but partly due to lack of teachers’ awareness of their students’ home language (Tse et al., 2001:75). The education authorities in Indonesia may not have planned teacher recruitment and placement, which inadvertently affected the quality of MT education.

In Ethiopia’s case, teachers were transferred to schools to teach Gamo, a language with different dialects (Woldemariam, 2007), without ensuring a match between the dialect spoken by the teacher and that spoken by the learners. This resulted in misunderstandings between teachers and learners, the latter complaining that the former could not assess them correctly (Woldemariam, 2007, cf. Fafunwa et al., 1989 for the importance of teachers learning to assess their learners in their learners’ L1). Tse et al. (2001) note that “success in the use of children’s home language for instruction purposes, especially in elementary schools, depends on the teachers’ ability to speak the local language”. Dutcher (2004b) and Kembo (2000) add that teachers should know and use the language comfortably in class, with Kembo (2000) also emphasising that teachers gain this comfort through training, as speaking a language fluently does not necessarily mean that the teacher can read and write the language.

Related to teacher placement is the assigning of teachers to teach different classes. It is a common practice in many countries and/or schools to assign the most qualified teachers to teach upper classes and the least qualified to teach lower classes. For instance, the Eritrean education authorities, in their 2002 evaluation of reading and reading instruction, identified the need to strengthen MT in Grade 1 as well as English from Grade 6 onwards. The poor performance here was attributed to “inadequate pre-reading instruction, poorly designed and used primers, and no practice in reading connected text in Grade 1” (Dutcher, 2003:4). In addition, it was found that the least experienced teachers were assigned to Grade 1 (Dutcher, 2003:4); the recommendation was made of assigning the best prepared teachers to teach Grade 1. (Note that if the best teachers are assigned to the critical classes (P1 to P4) in an early-exit bilingual programme, learners would possibly be better prepared to transition to a L2 as a LoLT, but this is not to contest that early-exit programmes are nevertheless discouraged by scholars.)

In conclusion, the practice of teacher preparation, which involves pre-service, in-service, on-the-job training as well as teacher recruitment and placement, is critical for the success of any MT education model. Literacy development in a familiar language which later facilitates and/or enables transfer of skills to a L2 can obviously not take place unless teachers are well prepared to teach and teach through those languages familiar to the learners.

2.6 Classroom and/or educational strategies facilitating transition from mother tongue to second language

As pointed out in the foregoing sections, transitional bilingual programmes, specifically early-exit programmes – where a L2 is introduced as LoLT before learners have learned the required academic vocabulary in the L2 – have weaknesses. There is a need to devise means of helping learners whose LoLT is their L2 to improve their performance in both their L2s and in L2 content subject areas (Short, Fidelman, & Louguit, 2012).

In the following discussion, I will discuss particular educational and language strategies that can be employed to help learners transition to learning through their L2s, namely sheltered instruction, translation, and codeswitching. (Note that whereas this discussion focuses on the period during or after transition, the integration of language and content in instruction in the

L2 *before* the transition is important; see Dutcher, 2004b:56). We will return to these strategies in Chapter 7 when the educational and language practices of Ugandan teachers are considered.

2.6.1 Sheltered instruction

Sheltered instruction is “designed to provide second language learners with the same high-quality, academically challenging content that native English speakers receive” (Hansen-Thomas, 2008:166). According to Short, Fidelman, and Louguit (2012:335), sheltered instruction is “the practice of integrating language development with techniques to make curricular topics more accessible to ELLs [English Language Learners – MES]”. It is thus an instruction method used to teach both language and content (Hansen-Thomas, 2008:166), with the aim to (i) provide access to mainstream, grade-level content, and (ii) promote the development of English language proficiency. When this method is well employed in transitional programmes, learners’ skills of reading, writing, listening, speaking and comprehension in the L2 are further developed (Short et al., 2012:335). This form of instruction can be handled by two teachers in a class (one of whom is specialised as an English L2 teacher and the other as a content area teacher) or by a single teacher trained to use this method of instruction.

The sheltered instruction strategy has greatly improved both language learning and content teaching for ELLs with limited English proficiency in the USA, who are required to access content in their L2s as well as improve their language skills in their L2s (Short et al., 2012). These learners can be likened to those in the African context who study English, French or Portuguese as subjects for only three or four years (with limited exposure to it in their communities) before the transition to these languages as LoLT occurs.

Sheltered instruction allows ELLs to use their L1 in appropriate circumstances in class as long as this helps to clarify academic concepts in English (Hansen-Thomas, 2008). For instance, Hansen-Thomas explains that if learners are to read a book in a L2 and there is a version of this book in the L1 of the learners, a teacher will allow them to read it in their L1 and also discuss the salient features in it in their L1 to ensure comprehension.

Sheltered instruction requires that teachers should be careful in handling ELLs’ learning as their comprehension of what is being said can be hampered by, for instance, a fast rate of

speaking, the use of colloquialisms or high level-academic vocabulary, and failure to purposely distinguish homophones to the learners. These challenges can be overcome by teachers slowing down their speech, writing critical vocabulary on the blackboard, avoiding slang, and allowing learners to use their L1 and resources in an appropriate way ((Hansen-Thomas, 2008). In addition, teachers need to keep highlighting the vocabulary throughout the lesson (Echevarria, Richards-Tutor, Chinn, & Rattleff, 2011:430). In addition, sheltered instruction requires teachers to be mindful of learners' home experiences and their educational background, in addition to their abilities in their L1s and L2s (including their literacy capacities in both languages). It should be borne in mind that in most transitional bilingual programmes, particularly in early-exit programmes, learners have not yet necessarily developed the required vocabulary in L2 to follow instruction in the L2 only. This means that teachers should be mindful of the inability of learners to comprehend content or concepts in L2 without purposefully planned help.

2.6.2 Translation

Translation is another technique that teachers can make use of in helping learners to transition from the MT to a L2 as a LoLT. This teaching technique is well described by, for instance, Atkinson (1987), Cummins (2000c, 2007) and Manyak (2004, 2008). These authors indicate that well-prepared teachers can ably utilise translation as a teaching strategy to enhance children's learning to excellent levels. Learners will not only be able to master their MTs but also enlarge their vocabulary in the L2, and, in the end, be able to read, write and comprehend content in the L2.

Atkinson (1987:242), one of the advocates of translation in facilitating language acquisition, states that "once it is established what the learners want to say, the teacher can encourage them to find a way of expressing their meaning in English or, if necessary, help out", by, for instance, asking learners, "How do you say X in English?" In addition, the teacher can check for learners' comprehension of concepts by, for instance, asking them, "How do you say 'I've been waiting for ten minutes' in your language?" Manyak (2004) gives the example of a learner sharing a story in the learners' MT and the teacher requests other learners in class to translate that story into English. In such an environment of learning, Manyak explains, many learners are excited to do the translation exercise.

In the class in which Manyak conducted his study, students also engaged in news telling under the guidance of a teacher. Learners told their news in their MT while the teacher wrote in English what the learners had said. The teacher also at times asked learners to translate their peers' words into English. In doing so, learners were challenged to work together, exchanging views in the presence of their teacher. Manyak (2004:14) explains that this exercise enabled even "the most limited English-speaking students" to participate in the news telling activity (also see Cummins, 2007). According to Manyak (2004:17), the practice of translation expands learners' "linguistic repertoires and strategies for engaging in intercultural transactions", and the "use of translation not only facilitates basic language and literacy learning but also equips diverse students with valuable resources for life in the 21st century".

However, translation should be used with caution. Banda (2003) warns that when teachers use translation as a teaching technique and translate everything said in class into the learners' MT, they are not promoting learning as learners are not involved in developing new knowledge or even gaining proficiency in the L2. In the study that Banda conducted amongst university students, some students with limited English language proficiency reported, for instance, that their teacher would read a novel in English, but they would not pay attention because they knew the teacher would translate what had been read into their MT. In this case, translation was poorly employed and compromised rather than enhanced learners' acquisition of the L2. Banda cautions against a mere repetition of what was said in one language in another, and recommends that teachers rather contextualise what is represented in both languages in order to enable knowledge and concept acquisition.

In addition to using translation in the teaching and learning process, it is suggested that teachers in transitional classes and in classes following immediately after transition should have parallel corpora in different learning areas. It would also benefit learners if some of these vocabulary lists can be made visible in the classrooms so that learners can regularly consult them. Such carefully selected vocabulary (appearing in both languages simultaneously) can then also be referred to by the teacher in order to assist learners in their learning process.

2.6.3 *Codeswitching*

Codeswitching refers to “the use of two or more linguistic varieties in the same conversation” (Myers-Scotton, 1992). A number of researchers report that codeswitching is a common practice in many African classrooms (cf. Chimbganda & Mokgwathi, 2012). This practice is prominent in circumstances where a teacher shares a common MT (not English) with the learners and where the LoLT is English²² (cf. Heugh, 2011a; Nakayiza, 2012; Nyaga & Anthonissen, 2012; Probyn, 2009). In most African countries, MT programmes are based on the early-exit model which has been criticised for its inability to develop L2 proficiency among learners (Ouane & Glanz, 2006). As such, teachers who teach these learners during and after transition from MT to English as LoLT tend to codeswitch from the L2 to the MT to help the learners to access academic concepts and content in the L2 by use of their MTs. Researchers have opposing views on codeswitching, some viewing it as a good practice and others condemning it. Below, I attempt to present a balanced view on the use of codeswitching in the multilingual classroom.

In some contexts, codeswitching takes place to compensate for the language limitations of teachers and learners (Heugh, 2011a, 2011b; Nyaga & Anthonissen, 2012), whereas in other contexts, codeswitching is not allowed (Nakayiza, 2012; Rubdy, 2007) because of the belief that it impedes the acquisition of the L2. While in some contexts codeswitching is viewed as a scaffolding mechanism for transition (Jegede, 2011), in other contexts it is viewed as a weakness on the side of teachers (Probyn, 2009). Also, codeswitching is sometimes viewed as an educational practice that deprives learners of an opportunity to learn the L2 (He, 2012). However, He (2012) states that there has been a paradigm shift away from codeswitching as a negative phenomenon, and that this shift has partly been brought about by the empirical evidence that proper employment of the MT in L2 classrooms facilitates L2 acquisition, in addition to fulfilling other functions.

Cook (2001) states that there were many 20th century opponents to MT use in L2 classrooms, but that support for this practice is increasing. Also, even when there has been an “anti-L1-attitude” (Cook, 2001:404), teachers have often had to use MT in their classrooms even when policies stipulated otherwise. In this regard, Probyn (2009) states that codeswitching is at

²² Most African countries’ classrooms are multilingual, and learners and/or teachers may be speakers of more than one MT (see, e.g., Banda, 2009, 2010; Glanz, 2013; Heugh et al., 2007).

times a response to tensions and conflicts that exist in the classrooms, where teachers are expected to follow language policy (MT or L2 only) as well as fulfil community expectations (of high English proficiency for their children). This practice of codeswitching is found even in schools which claim to teach through MT only in all grades. Amongst those researchers who support the use of codeswitching in multilingual classrooms, there are some who point out that codeswitching should be employed deliberately if it is to be of benefit to learners. According to Turnbull and Arnett (2002), there is some consensus among scholars regarding teachers' use of MT in the L2 classroom, and that what is not clear is the quality of MT employed. In this regard, Jegede (2011) argues that for codeswitching to be effective and contribute to the learning process, the teacher needs to have sufficient competence in the languages concerned.

Various reasons have been advanced for the use of codeswitching by teachers, including that teachers codeswitch

- (i) to accommodate learners with limited English proficiency (Probyn, 2009);
- (ii) when giving instructions to learners; i.e., when they want to get the attention of every learner in class; or when they want to clarify instructions given to the learners to perform a certain task (Atkinson, 1987; Cook, 2001; Pan, 2010; Probyn, 2009; Turnbull & Arnet, 2002);
- (iii) when giving explanations or clarifying a point (Moore, 2002; Turnbull & Arnet, 2002);
- (iv) when explaining and/or teaching grammar issues (Cook, 2001; Pan, 2010; Turnbull & Arnet, 2002). Cook (2001) highlights that not many teachers with limited English proficiency feel comfortable explaining grammar issues in English;
- (v) when checking on learners' comprehension levels (Atkinson, 1987; Moore, 2002; Pan, 2010);
- (vi) when eliciting language from learners by, e.g., asking "How do you say X in English?" (Atkinson, 1987);
- (vii) when making jokes with learners (Pan, 2010; Probyn, 2009; Rubdy, 2007; Turnbull & Arnet, 2002) or otherwise building rapport (Ncoko, Osman, & Cockcroft, 2000; Rubdy, 2007);
- (viii) in expression of anger (Probyn, 2009);
- (ix) in disciplining and praising learners (Pan, 2010).

He (2012) claims that with the use of MTs in L2 learning, learners are made aware of the differences between the L1 and L2, and they can exploit that advantage to scaffold L2 learning. However, for the aims of codeswitching to be achieved, a teacher must purpose to plan for his/her actions in an upcoming lesson. In this regard, Probyn (2009) contends that teacher training has not been matched with practical needs of teaching bilingual classes, and this could be the reason why some teachers resort to unplanned codeswitching instead of using other methods of teaching bilingual classes.

Although codeswitching can be viewed as a teaching strategy (and not a mere incident in the classroom), dangers are posed by its overuse, namely that (i) learners may fail to realise that there are activities in class which require them to use English; (ii) learners may feel that they have not understood anything taught until a teacher has translated everything into their MT, and (iii) teachers and learners may fail to observe distinctions in structure or semantic equivalents in the two languages concerned, and may then end up using incorrect translations (Atkinson, 1987). Pan (2010) concurs with Atkinson (1987), stating that, although code-switching is justified, it should not be used without restrictions. The languages concerned should not be treated equally; instead, MT should only be used to facilitate L2 learning, with L2 learning remaining the ultimate goal.

To sum up this section, codeswitching as a teaching strategy is used by teachers to compensate for learners' lack of proficiency in their L2s. When this language strategy is carefully employed, learners are facilitated in accessing content but also build their L2 vocabulary. It is however also the case that some teachers are "forced" to use codeswitching to compensate for their own lack of proficiency in the L2, when they cannot sustain an explanation in the L2. Codeswitching of this nature may be harmful to learners, as they would have a poor model in their L2 learning.

2.7 Concluding discussion of transitional model trends

The current trend in MT education seems to be a preference for transitional models (especially early-exit models) by many countries. Early-exit models, as explained earlier, have been criticised for removing MT before the learners have mastered the L2 fully. In this form of bilingual education, MT is used as LoLT for 3 to 4 years. Benson (2008b) and

Gardner (2012) explain that a decision to follow a transitional model is often based on a common misconception of L2 acquisition, which can be summed up as the belief that the earlier one starts L2 learning, the more fluent one will necessarily become.

The preference for early-exit models can be explained by the fact that there is a desire for many parents to see their children acquire international languages such as English as early and as fast as possible. This is why Romaine (2013:13) points out that “in most parts of the world schooling is still virtually synonymous with learning a second language [English]”. English is a language of education, trade and commerce, politics, administration and a language of international communication (cf. Fafunwa et al., 1989; Kirkpatrick, 2013; Gardner, 2012). The predominance of English language has consequently led to a shift towards English as LoLT aimed at increasing proficiency and competitiveness in the global economy (Romaine, 2013).

Even though the majority of learners who speak international languages as MTs receive MT education, the global focus of MT education has been on learners that live in a community where the LoLT at their school is not their MT. UNESCO (1953) predicted the incapacity of some languages to be used as LoLT due to social, political, economic, and practical factors, for instance, lack of developed orthographies. MT education still faces these and other similar challenges globally today. Because of such inhibiting factors, some languages would and can only be employed “as a bridge to a second language while others may be used at all levels of education” (UNESCO, 1953:6; also see Kosonen & Young, 2009b for MT as a bridge language of instruction). Many scholars and international bodies such as the World Bank, Save the Children (UK) and UNESCO are in support of MT education for at least the early years of a child’s education. Most recommendations are supportive of transitional models.

Comparative studies conducted by various researchers have indicated that MT plays an important role in a learner’s educational achievement. It is important that MT education in African multilingual communities takes into account the nature of the multilingualism in them, as Banda (2009, 2010) has argued. If children in African contexts develop as multilinguals, and if “language is not everything in education, but without language, everything is nothing in education” (Wolff, 2006:50), then children’s linguistic repertoires in the African context should be considered if education is to be meaningful to African children.

Chapter 3

LANGUAGE POLICY, MOTHER TONGUE CURRICULUM, AND THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN UGANDA

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, an examination of the Ugandan language-in-education policy – as given in the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (Uganda Government, 1995, 2006), Government White Paper (Government of Uganda, 1992), the Ministry of Education and Sports' (2004, 2008) Education Sector Strategic Plan, and Kajubi (1989) – is presented. Also, a characterisation of the thematic curriculum, as given in NCDC (2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2006d, 2007a, 2007b, 2008, 2011), is given. These policy documents are discussed (i) concurrently as they both provide guidelines pertaining to the language-in-education policy in Uganda, and (ii) with reference to what has been presented in the previous chapter which outlined the transitional model on which the language-in-education policy of Uganda is based. In addition, a picture of how English language teaching has and is being handled in Ugandan schools is painted. This background on English is important to situate the study from MT to transition to English in Ugandan primary schools. Finally, at the end of the chapter, a summary of prior studies on MT education in Uganda is given.

3.2 The education system in Uganda today

The formal education system of Uganda is a four-tier model: seven years of primary education; four years of lower secondary education (Ordinary level); two years of upper secondary education (Higher School Certificate), and three years (or four to five years) of University education (UBOS, 2007; Uganda National Examinations Board, 2011). In each tier, English is the official language of examination.

In 1997, Uganda introduced so-called “Universal Primary Education”. The introduction of Universal Primary Education followed the Education For All²³ initiative launched in 1990 at the World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtein, Thailand (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1990). The goal of the Education For All is

²³ World Bank (2011) refers to Education For All as Learning For All.

to ensure that all children in any country have access to education by 2015. Universal Primary Education in Uganda entailed the elimination of primary school fees for up to four children in every family. This elimination of school fees brought about an instantaneous increase in school enrolment in Uganda (Grogan, 2008; World Bank, 2002).

Before the introduction of Universal Primary Education in 1997, the number of school-going children in Uganda stood at just over 3 million; by 2008, this number was 7 million (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2008:8). By 2010, the number of children accessing primary education alone had increased to 8.4 million (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2012). These increases have brought about many challenges – including inadequate teaching space due to the very large number of learners per class (Grogan, 2008; Kisembo, 2008; Read & Enyutu, 2004; World Bank, 2002), increased teacher-learner ratios (Altinyelken, 2010; World Bank, 2002), an insufficient number of qualified teachers – that put strain on the education system. Piper (2010) observes that, as much as the increase in school access since 1997 when Universal Primary Education was introduced in Uganda is appreciated, the quality of education in Uganda has been seriously affected. This occurred because there was not an accompanying increase in, for example, buildings, desks, teachers, and teaching and learning materials (cf. Piper & Miksick, 2011).

Although nursery education (pre-primary) is not included in the first tier of education (i.e., primary education) in Uganda, it is imperative to discuss nursery education as it has an effect on the nature of primary education for reasons pertaining to the choice of LoLT. The rest of this section is therefore devoted to a discussion of nursery education. Nursery education is usually not included in Uganda's formal government documents on education (for reasons set out below), but, aware of the fact that most private schools in Uganda have pre-primary sections, I made inquiries on the status of recognition of nursery sections/schools by the Ministry of Education and Sports. In response to my September 2012 email inquiry, an official responded that the Ministry of Education and Sports and the NCDC has developed "Early Learning Framework" (a syllabus) and a "Caregivers' Manual" (a teachers' guide) which it now recommends nursery schools to use. The official stated that the Ministry of Education and Sports "is trying to compile a list of nursery training institutions and we now inspect them – so yes, nursery education is now recognized". While this is not yet reflected in policy documents (cf. Ejuu, 2012; Uganda Child Rights NGO Network, 2006), there is

evidence on the NCDC website²⁴ that nursery education has begun to receive government attention.

In a study conducted by a private NGO, the Uganda Child Rights NGO Network (UCRNN; Uganda Child Rights NGO Network, 2006), nursery education in Uganda was found to have grown tremendously in the recent past, partly due to an increase in the number of working mothers who, because of a lack of readily available caregivers for their children, prefer to send them to nursery school. The majority of children enter nursery schools at the age of 3, some at 2½, and there are boarding nursery schools in both urban and rural areas. Placing very young children in boarding school has educational implications, also for the LoLT. At the time when they join boarding nursery schools,²⁵ the children are still in the process of acquiring their MT, but they need to start mastering English as English is invariably the LoLT in Ugandan nursery schools (cf. Kyeyune, 2003).

Also note that proficiency in English is the gatekeeper to P1 entry in private schools. This practice in private schools has a direct effect on the implementation of the MT education policy: since most private schools offer pre-primary education in English for two or three years, they usually do not switch to MT education in P1 through P3, and then later return to English in P4. Rather, these schools teach through the medium of English from nursery level until P7. At most, they may teach MT as a subject for the initial three years of primary school. In government schools, especially in rural areas, MT is indeed used as LoLT in P1 to P3 after which the transition to English as LoLT takes place. (Recall that government schools do not have pre-primary sections.) In this sense, learning through English in nursery school appears to dichotomise the implementation of the language-in-education policy. Such early instruction in a L2 before children have mastered their MT has been found to interrupt the development of MT proficiency and also affects cognitive-academic development (Benson, 2008; Cummins, 1992, 2000b, 2000c, 2005; Fafunwa et al., 1989; Fillmore, 1991).

For instance, Fillmore (1991) provides evidence of language erosion due to early L2 learning in Vietnam. Vietnamese-speaking children who go to pre-school at the ages of 4 and 5 attend

²⁴ www.ncdc.gov.ug/educ.html

²⁵ Note that those children who attend nursery schools but are not placed in boarding school are in a similar position language-wise to boarders: as UCRNN (2006) points out, these children are taken to school as early as 7:00 am and are collected after 5:00 or 6:00 pm when their parents return from work, so there is limited time available for interaction with their parents in their MTs. This practice is very common in urban areas.

English-medium schools. These children later completely lose their L1 and only communicate in English, even to their parents at home. The parents are usually pleased that their children can speak a prestigious language (English) at a young age, but when English then ceases to be the LoLT, learners may lose what appears to be competence in the L2 as well as the little language acquisition that had taken place in their MT (cf. Skutnabb-Kangas, 2011).

Regarding the curriculum followed in Ugandan nursery schools, UCRNN's (2006) survey shows that there is no unified curriculum (cf. Ejuu, 2012). Some nursery schools reported using the primary school curriculum. Other private schools, which are established under, for instance, religious affiliations, use "special" curricula to run their pre-primaries, such as *The Madrasa pre-school curriculum* (Madrasa Resource Centre Uganda, 2009). As UCRNN (2006:6) states, nursery education is intended to stimulate children for primary school enrolment, and entry to primary school should be determined by chronological age. However, nursery school children are now exposed to "academic learning", and chronological age at school entry is in some cases not given attention. For many learners in Uganda, fluency in English and knowledge of some "academic" issues determine readiness for entry to primary schools. Note that nursery education is not compulsory for Ugandan children (Ejuu, 2012). This leads to children with vastly different levels of school-readiness entering the P1 classrooms.

A further challenge with nursery schooling is a lack of trained teachers. UCRNN (2006) found that there are very few qualified teachers at this level of education and that the gap is bridged by untrained P7 and senior four learners who have dropped out of school. The period from 0 to 12 years is a critical age for developing mental abilities like memorisation, reasoning, thinking, and imagining, and this is a period during which children must receive the best of the available teachers (Fafunwa et al., 1989; Kennedy et al., 2012). This is not always the case in Ugandan nursery schools.

In concluding this section, the education structure of Uganda is dysfunctional in a way. The fact that there is no national language-in-education policy in place for nursery schools (and the fact that schooling at this level is not compulsory) may hamper the implementation of the existing language-in-education policy for primary school education.

3.3 Organisations promoting the development of local languages and mother tongue education in Uganda

Lewis et al. (2013:1) define language development as “the result of the series of on-going planned actions that language communities take to ensure that they can effectively use their languages to achieve their social, cultural, political, economic, and spiritual goals”. As indicated in Chapter 1, there are more than 41 languages spoken in Uganda. Various efforts have been put in place to develop Ugandan languages, particularly with the aim of employing them in the education system. In the next paragraphs, I describe these efforts.

Motivated by the second Millennium Development Goal (Universal Primary Education/Learning For All), which demands teaching and learning through a familiar language to enhance literacy acquisition, Uganda introduced MT education (in 2006/2007). In the same way, many civil societies, NGOs and individuals have made various efforts and employed various sets of strategies to develop literacy in Uganda, especially through advocating for MT education in the early years of learning. For instance, some organisations are probing: “Are our children learning?” (Mango Tree Lanŋo Literacy Project, 2010; Uwezo, 2010, 2011, 2012). Some of the efforts towards MT education and literacy in Uganda are outlined below.

First is the Multilingual Education Network-Uganda. This is an informal group of Ugandans with a mission of “providing a forum for interested individuals and organisations to promote home language-based multilingual education in Uganda” (Multilingual Education Network-Uganda minutes, February, 2012).²⁶ The group was formed in October 2009 and consists of individuals interested in the promotion of MT literacy, linguists from Ugandan universities, District Language Boards, local language publishers, NGO representatives, and representatives from government bodies, e.g., from the NCDC and the Ministry of Education and Sports (see Figure 2 below).

²⁶ Also see <http://ugandamle.wordpress.com/>

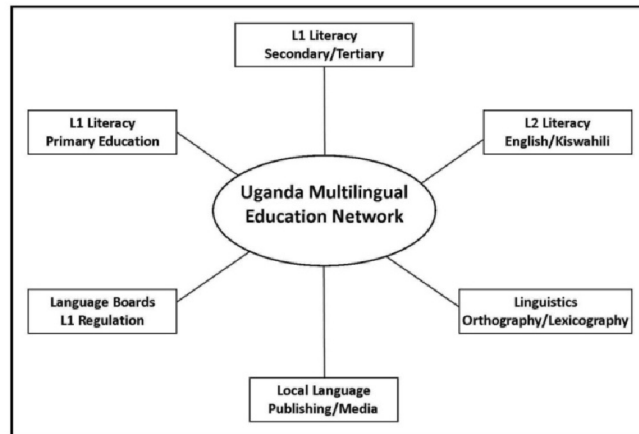


Figure 2: Flowchart for Multilingual Education Network-Uganda (Source: Craig Esbeck, Concept note for MLEN field outreach, 2013)

The main goal of this group is advocacy, particularly in the area of language education. The group meets four times per year to discuss pertinent issues concerning the challenges of MT education, to share field experiences and to consider the way forward by drawing up recommendations and action points. This network has, for instance, been instrumental in the formation of some District Language Boards and has also provided advice on the activities of District Language Boards and to the NCDC as regards language teaching.

Another organisation is Literacy and Adult Basic Education²⁷ which is an indigenous national organisation established in 1989. This organisation targets pre-school children aged 3 to 5 years, primary-school-going children, teachers of P1 to P3, parents with pre- and primary school children, women, and out-of-school girls. Literacy and Adult Basic Education operates in over 10 northern Ugandan districts. In one of its projects (“Strengthening knowledge and instruction through local language skills (SKILLS)”), it increases awareness and understanding among education stakeholders of the benefits of the use of MT as a LoLT, mainly in the early years of school. To concretise their work, Literacy and Adult Basic Education, in conjunction with civil society groups, initiated the writing and publication of an implementation strategy for advocacy of local languages in Uganda (Tumwebaze, 2012). In addition, Literacy and Adult Basic Education ran a four-year MT education project in six districts in the north western and northern regions of Uganda (2009-2013). The evaluation of the project indicates success in many aspects: increased school enrolment (of especially girls,

²⁷ See www.labeuganda.org

with 39% of all schoolchildren being female); increased acceptance of MT education; increased parental involvement in the education of their children, and increased capacity of District Language Boards (Heugh & Mulumba, 2013).

The Leblaᅇo Literacy Project is a project which set out to develop literacy acquisition in the Laᅇo sub-region in Uganda. One of the objectives of this project is “to develop simple assessment tools for parents, teachers, and administrators and teach them to use the tools so that they can easily measure pupils’ attainment of well-defined literacy benchmarks in Leblaᅇo” (Mango Tree Laᅇo Literacy Project, 2010, 2011, 2013; Craig Esbeck,²⁸ personal communication, 6 September 2012).

Mango Tree’s Northern Uganda Literacy Program has developed a local language and English literacy approach to boost literacy acquisition in P1 to P3 classrooms, also in the Laᅇo subregion in Uganda. In addition, through their programme Literacy Beyond The Classroom, they reach out to parents and the community at large to educate them about the benefit of MT education for their children. Among other activities are capacity building among teachers of Leblaᅇo, teaching methods of reading and writing in Leblaᅇo, production of simple literacy materials, guiding teachers in continuous assessment, and sensitising the community to the values of MT education (Mango Tree Laᅇo Literacy Project, 2011). As the Leblaᅇo Literacy Project has been successful, they have been able to work with the community and district officials in this region to set up a strong District Language Board which appears to be one of the most successful language boards in the country. This project also does learner literacy assessments, for example the 2010 one discussed in section 3.7.

SIL-International has also been instrumental in producing and developing language orthographies, literacy materials, and grammar books in Ugandan local languages for the last 12 years. SIL-International does applied linguistic research, orthography development, MT literacy material development, and Bible translations in Uganda (Nzogi, 2011; Trudell, Dowd, Piper, & Bloch, 2012). For example, they have assisted in developing orthographies and/or literacy materials for MT education through providing resources and technical know-how required for this purpose. The following languages have had their orthographies

²⁸ Esbeck is the Content and Strategy Director of Mango Tree's Northern Uganda Literacy Program (see <http://www.mangotreeuganda.org>).

developed by SIL: Amba, Aringa, Bwisi, Gumbira, Gungu, Gwere, Ik, Kupsapiny, Lajo, Ndrukpa, Nyole, Ma'di and Ruuli-Nyala (Nzogi, 2011).

Save the Children-Uganda aims to develop literacy through supporting MT education in the early childhood years. Among its many activities, this organisation has developed a strategy to promote literacy in MTs known as “Literacy Boost in Uganda”. This initiative’s major goal is for learners’ literacy abilities to be continuously developed in terms of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension. Their activities are largely centred in the northern part of Uganda.

The Education Local Expertise Centre (LEC), established in 2009, aims to sensitise parents and communities to and train them in matters pertaining to education. Other organisations promoting MTs in Uganda include Luganda Language Association (Ekibiina ky’Olulimi Oluganda) and the District Language Boards. One of the activities of the Luganda Language Association is writing literacy materials, whereas District Language Boards are officially responsible for the development of orthographies, literacy materials, etc. (Read & Enyutu, 2004). Unfortunately, the District Language Boards are unable to fully do their work due to lack of finances and technical support.

From the foregoing, it is clear that language development has largely been the responsibility of civil society organisations. It appears that governments do not usually finance the development of MTs; it is a task left to local communities (cf. Tollefson, 1991). As initially pointed out, many of these civil society organisations are motivated by the poor literacy acquisition levels among learners in Uganda. Working within the government of Uganda’s language-in-education policy, these organisations have greatly helped to sensitise the public to the value of MT education in their areas of operation. Much of the work of these organisations has been concentrated in the northern part of Uganda, a region that has suffered political turmoil for the last 27 years and thus receives more humanitarian aid than the rest of the country. In fact, great success in terms of acceptance, appreciation and employment of MTs as LoLT has been registered in this region. Much work in this regard still remains to be done in other parts of the country where MT education is not well understood and welcomed.

3.4 The language-in-education policy of Uganda: a historical overview

This section traces the history of MT education in Uganda. The use of MTs in Uganda's education system has its origin in the education endeavours of Protestant missionaries (arriving in Uganda in 1877) and Catholic missionaries (arriving in 1879) who introduced formal education into Uganda (Ssekamwa, 2000, 2008). The missionaries contributed to MT education by developing orthographies and grammars for Ugandan local languages and ultimately encouraged the use of MTs as LoLTs. As with most countries colonised by the British, education provided by the colonisers was given in MT for about six years, after which English was introduced (Abdulaziz, 2003; Bamgbose, 2004; Heugh, 2011a).

In 1924, the Phelps-Stokes Commission was appointed by the colonial government to review the education system in Uganda. This commission made recommendations on how education should proceed. In relation to the language of instruction, the following was pointed out (Bamgbose, 1983; Ssekamwa, 2000, 2008; Tumwebaze, 2012):

- (i) The tribal language should be used in the lower elementary standards or grades.
- (ii) A lingua franca of African origin should be introduced in the middle classes of the school if the area is occupied by large native groups speaking diverse languages.
- (iii) The language of the European control should be taught in the upper standards.

A survey of available literature reveals that these recommendations were not likely to have been considered for long, because, a few years later, the colonial government in Uganda wanted to administer Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania into a political entity they called the "Closer Union of East Africa" (Ssekamwa, 2000). Consequently, in 1926, the British administration under governor Geoffrey Gowers introduced Kiswahili as a "unifying language" and declared that Kiswahili be used as the LoLT in all Ugandan schools. Thereafter, Kiswahili was adopted as a national language in Uganda (Ssekamwa, 2000).

Gowers' plan was opposed by Ugandans for many reasons, as discussed by Ssekamwa (2000, 2008). The first thereof was that much effort had been put into developing local languages. Secondly, missionaries connected Kiswahili with Islam, because the language had been introduced to the region by Muslim Arabs. Missionaries regarded this move as competition for Christianity. Lastly, many Ugandans preferred English as national language or as LoLT (or as both), because it was a language of colonial administration.

For these and many other reasons, introducing Kiswahili as a unifying language and the attempt to unite East Africa ceased. Ssekamwa (2008) notes, however, that Kiswahili continued to be used in the police service and the army. The use of Kiswahili as a unifying language might have been successful had the colonial governors had an interest in supporting it as a language of education and government. However, Sir Philip Mitchell (Governor, 1935-1940) was instead a promoter of English in the education system in order to render an education system that could produce assistants to his British officials. The attempts to establish Kiswahili as a unifying language was revived in 1971 under the regime of Ugandan president Idi Amin, who declared it the national language of Uganda. However, no concrete measures, such as making the teaching of the language in schools compulsory or training teachers to teach (in) Kiswahili, were put in place to develop Kiswahili to national language status. Despite all these factors working against Kiswahili, the language is today taught in Ugandan schools (mostly at lower secondary level) and examined by the Uganda National Examinations Board. However, proposals are now being made by government to teach Kiswahili as a compulsory subject throughout the education system.

From the above, it appears that the attempts to introduce Kiswahili as LoLT in Ugandan primary schools in the 1920s and 1940s are likely to have had a negative impact on MT education in Uganda. As noted in Chapter 1, it is not clearly reported in the literature how and why efforts to develop and employ Ugandan languages in education have fluctuated. Nonetheless, a new language-in-education policy was passed in 1992, as will be explained in the following paragraphs.

In 1987, the government of Uganda appointed an Education Policy Review Commission to investigate the policies governing education in Uganda (Government of Uganda, 1992). The Commission made recommendations with regard to MT as a medium of instruction, basing its recommendations on pedagogical principles and experiences which indicate that children and adults learn better and faster if they are instructed in their own language (Kajubi, 1989). Regarding Kiswahili, the Commission proposed that it should be strengthened at secondary school level in order to prepare for the training of teachers who can teach (in) Kiswahili.

The Government supported the Commission's proposals in a Government White Paper published in 1992. The policy stipulates that:

- (i) In rural areas the medium of instruction from P1 to P4 will be the relevant local languages; and then P5 to P8 English will be the medium of instruction.
- (ii) In urban areas the medium of instruction will be English throughout the primary cycle.
- (iii) Kiswahili and English will be taught as compulsory subjects to all children throughout the primary cycle, in both rural and urban areas. Emphasis in terms of allocation of time and in the provision of instructional materials, facilities and teachers will, however, be gradually placed on Kiswahili as the language possessing greater capacity for uniting Ugandans and for assisting rapid social development.
- (iv) The relevant area language will also be taught as a subject in primary schools; this applies to both rural and urban areas. However, students may or may not offer this subject for PLE examination. UNEB will, nevertheless, provide for examination in all the five main Ugandan languages (Luo, Runyakitara, Luganda, Ateso/Akarimonjong and Lugbara) in PLE for those who study any of those languages as subject for examination.

(Government of Uganda, 1992:19).

The Government White Paper specifies that there should be strong emphasis on teaching Kiswahili in view of it becoming a medium of instruction and eventually a national language. But, as was the case in 1927 and again from 1971 to 1978, no concrete measures were put in place to develop Kiswahili teaching. Article 6 of the 2006 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda also supports mother tongue education in Uganda, stipulating that:

An official language is used as a medium of conducting official business.

- (1) English is the official language of Uganda.
- (2) Kiswahili is the second official language, to be used as Parliament may by law provide.
- (3) Any other language may be used in schools or other educational institutions or for any other purposes as Parliament may provide.

(Uganda Government, 2006:14)

Turning to urban schools: English is the medium of instruction throughout the primary cycle, as stipulated by the Ugandan government in the Government White Paper (Government of Uganda, 1992:16):

Government has considered from a scientific point of view and with a flexible attitude, the traditional arguments concerning the ease with which children are supposed to learn in their mother tongues. Government regards the issue of language and education instruction in a much more dynamic, realistic and progressive manner. It has noted the capacity of many Ugandan children – particularly in the growing urban centres where most of the good schools are located – to learn quickly and enthusiastically when they are taught in English, even if they learn it for the first time

in schools; and that children in the most malleable stage of their childhood have the highest capacity and desire to learn new languages.²⁹

Ouane and Glanz (2011:99) explain that the rationale for the new language-in-education policy in Uganda was “to develop a sense of belonging to and pride in indigenous cultures, but also to improve literacy results and academic learning results in general, which had been rather poor under the English-only language policy of the past”. It is therefore interesting that the government prescribes English-only education in urban schools.

Although the language-in-education policy was passed in 1992, its implementation only began in 2006. Bukenya (March 6, 2008) notes that subsequent to the launch of the Government White Paper in 1992, the language-in-education policy went through a number of steps including the development and trial-testing of the implementation of the local language syllabi for both Primary Teacher Colleges. (As will be discussed in Chapter 8, it appears that the preparations necessary for the introduction of MT education had not been done well.)

Between 1992 and 2005, various educational reviews were undertaken in Uganda in order to establish higher levels of educational achievement among Ugandan learners. On the government side, initially, it was UNEB alone that conducted reviews and assessments of educational achievement, revealing that children’s literacy skills (reading, writing, numeracy, and comprehension) were poor. These reviews were augmented by Read and Enyutu’s (2005) study which also revealed poor literacy skills amongst Ugandan learners.

Read and Enyutu’s (2005) study informed the rewriting of the subject curriculum into a thematic curriculum and invoked the reintroduction of MT education in 2006/2007 (see section 3.7). The work of revising the curriculum started in 2005 and was completed the following year (Altinyelken, 2010). This revision culminated in a curriculum known as the “thematic curriculum” (NCDC, 2006a, 2006c, 2011). The new curriculum requires that, wherever possible, learners should learn in their home language.

At the reintroduction of MT education, the Ministry of Education and Sports (2004, 2008) modified the language-in-education policy to allow for a planned transition from MT to

²⁹ Note that the Ugandan government’s argument is contradictory to what many scholars recommend regarding the time of introduction of a L2 as LoLT (cf. Dutcher, 1997; McLaughlin, 1992).

English as LoLT. Instead of having a sudden shift from MT to English in P4, this class has been made transitional. This modification places this policy into an early-exit model (discussed in section 2.2.2).

The Ministry of Education and Sports also indicated that all communities in Uganda would start to receive instruction in this new curriculum in their own languages once orthographies for these languages had been developed to facilitate this process. There are three criteria that have to be met for a language to be accepted as a LoLT, namely a language has to have (i) a community-based orthography, (ii) a Language Board to further handle the development of the language, and (iii) written materials to help in reading and/or instruction. However, Read and Enyutu (2005:16) recommended that for a language to be employed as a LoLT, it should have the following:

- (i) An established and approved orthography
- (ii) An established literature suitable for young learners in P1-4
- (iii) Evidence that there is the capacity to provide good quality language training to primary teachers in the proposed LOI(s) [language(s) of instruction – MES] i.e., via local language modules in a local PTC [Primary Teacher College – MES]
- (iv) Undertakings that the District will provide schools with the necessary reading support materials to underpin the early achievement of literacy.

By the time the language policy was passed, there were five area languages. By 2006/2007, these languages had grown to nine. Kateeba (2009) states that 26 further languages have developed their orthographies and attended to other necessities, and have submitted such documents to the NCDC for approval and subsequent inclusion to the list of MT languages which are used as LoLTs (Kateeba, 2009). This means that there are about 35 languages that meet the minimum requirements for use as LoLT.

Despite the fact that MT education was introduced in Uganda with anticipation of greatly improving literacy acquisition levels, many educational reviews of learners' performance still indicate the existence of literacy problems. The fact that MT education is restricted to the first three years of primary school indicates the hegemony of English (Stroud, 2002; Tollefson, 1991) with regard to other Ugandan languages. Studies such as this one are essential to inquire into the language policy, teaching practices, and language ideology among teachers in order to ascertain what might be undermining the development of literacy skills among Ugandan learners.

3.5 *Mother tongue curriculum in Uganda*

3.5.1 *Background to the introduction of the thematic curriculum*

The thematic curriculum is based on themes that contain knowledge areas which are familiar to the learner and employs child-centred approaches that promote learner participation particularly in their MT (Kateeba, 2009; NCDC, 2006a, 2006b). The fundamentals of this curriculum are discussed in tandem with a review of what literature suggests for such curricula implemented through MTs.

The thematic curriculum was launched in 2007 after a pilot phase of one year in 90 schools within 11 districts across the country (Altiyelken, 2010; NCDC, 2006d). The districts were selected based on the nine regional languages which had been approved as LoLTs by 2006. Previously, the primary school curriculum was taught in English with some schools instructing MT in an unplanned manner. The need for improving literacy levels of learners in lower primary necessitated a revision of the curriculum (Kateeba, 2009; NCDC, 2006a, 2006d; Read & Enyutu, 2004). The Ministry of Education and Sports in 2002 commissioned a study of learners' achievements and of challenges encountered in learning. This study was conducted by Read and Enyutu (2005). The structure of the primary school curriculum and the LoLT (NCDC, 2006a; Read & Enyutu, 2005) were pointed out as major problems (c. Penny, Ward, Read, & Bines, 2008).

The study report of Read and Enyutu (2005), which triggered the curriculum review, made the following recommendations from which the fundamentals (NCDC, 2006a) of the thematic curriculum were drawn:

- (i) The need to focus on rapid development of literacy, numeracy and life skills at lower primary;
- (ii) The treatment of concepts holistically, under themes of immediate meaning and relevance to the learner; and
- (iii) The treatment of learning experiences through the media, especially languages in which the learners were already proficient.

(NCDC, 2006a:4).

Kateeba (2009:1) states that “the philosophy behind this approach [the thematic curriculum – MES] is that children at an early age cannot differentiate one subject from another”. As such, the curriculum was revised and reorganised in order to do away with subjects in the early years of the learners' education (P1 to P3), in an attempt to allow Ugandan learners to learn

all their content in a holistic manner (NCDC, 2006d). In addition, the NCDC (2006a) explains that learning in local languages is interesting to the learners since they learn with confidence due to the fact that the language of learning is similar to that spoken at home.

The thematic curriculum was preferred because it is child-centred in nature. By child-centeredness is meant, amongst others, that children interact with one another during lessons (NCDC, 2007a). In order for children to interact freely with one another, it is imperative that they use a language which they can speak freely. The NCDC (2006a, 2006c, 2006d, 2008, 2011) states that the thematic curriculum is based on studies on MT education that found that children learn easily and fast when they are taught first through a familiar language (MT). Other countries that have curricula which are based on child-centred pedagogy include Botswana, South Africa, Namibia, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Kenya (Altinyelken, 2010, 2010b).

3.5.2 Characteristics of the thematic curriculum

The current primary school curriculum has three cycles: cycle 1, cycle 2, and cycle 3. Cycle 1 runs from P1 to P3. In these classes, the curriculum focuses on basic literacy skills, and MT is the LoLT. In addition, all learning materials are provided in languages familiar to the learners (thus in MT) (NCDC, 2006a:7). The NCDC (2006a) states that this use of MT as LoLT gives learners an opportunity to build a solid foundation in numeracy, literacy, and life skills. It is these skills that better prepare them to learn more complex material as they move through the higher classes, especially after P3 when they encounter subjects. In this first cycle, English and MT are taught as subjects. Some of the themes handled at this level are “our home”, “our school”, and “the human body”. The NCDC (2006a) states that the themes selected for these early years are those that reflect learners’ everyday activities in accordance with the national educational aims.

The curriculum further stipulates that all assessment or tests at this level are done in MT, except for English as a subject, and that when there is no dominant language amongst the local languages, the curriculum should be taught and assessed in English. One of the expected learning outcomes of cycle 1 is “sufficient skills in English to act as [a] basis for developing English as the medium of instruction in the upper primary cycle” (NCDC, 2006a:4). Similarly, the teacher’s guide for P1 to P3 (NCDC, 2008) states that for children to become

effective users of language, they should master the following language elements: the sound system, word building, sentence construction, and meaning. The curriculum also specifies that “most children should have developed a reading vocabulary of more than 800 words by the time they complete P3” (NCDC, 2008:25). As stated by the NCDC (2011), emphasis at the lower primary is placed on developing two languages, namely the MT (local language) and English.

Cycle 2 is the P4 class. This has been referred to as “the transition class” or a transitional year. At this stage, children are transitioned from use of MT as LoLT to English as LoLT and from a theme-based curriculum to a subject-based curriculum. In this regard, the NCDC (2011:3) states that “P4 is a bridge connecting lower primary where there are themes but no subjects, and upper primary where the content is arranged solely by subjects”. P4 is labelled a “unique class” because of its relation to the other two levels of primary school classes: P4 is related to the lower primary (P1 to P3) as there is development of a learner’s MT and English in P1 to P3 as well as in P4; but P4 is also related to the upper primary (P5 to P7) as in P4 there is a twofold switch, from MT as LoLT to English as LoLT and from a theme-based curriculum to a subject-based curriculum. The NCDC argues that the rationale for this transition is to guard against complete immersion into English as LoLT, i.e., to introduce English slowly. However, the NCDC’s (2011) follow-up interviews in schools indicate that teachers and head teachers are still not clear what is meant by P4 being a “transition” class.

As for the content, the curriculum guide indicates that new content or concepts will not be introduced in this fourth year. Furthermore, teachers and children will use local languages during learning and teaching processes, but there should be a steady increase in the use of English as LoLT. The NCDC (2006a:7) states that, with P4 being a transitional year, P4 teachers should start the school year using MT as LoLT and end it by using English as LoLT, with MT only being used to explain the most difficult concepts.

Instructional materials in P4 classes are to be provided in “simple English and all assessment will be in English” (NCDC, 2006a:7).³⁰ By the end of cycle 2, learners are expected to have achieved the following (NCDC, 2006a):

³⁰ Note that Gersten and Woodward (1995) and Ramirez (1992) have found that when children are taught in a language they do not understand well, material developers tend to write simplified materials for them. These materials are lacking in content quality, and also negatively affect the reading competence of these learners.

- (i) English skills, both oral and written, to a level in which learning can take place in English across all subjects;
- (ii) A transfer of all competences acquired in the first or familiar language into English;
- (iii) Building on the content, knowledge and competences already acquired through the theme-based curriculum but now transferred to a subject-based framework;
- (iv) Applying the developed skills and the ability to think creatively in English using knowledge and concepts already acquired in P1-P3.

(NCDC, 2006a:8).

Cycle 3 runs from P5 to P7. Kateeba (2009:2) and the NCDC (2006a:8) state that this cycle's curriculum is similar to that of P4, with subject-based teaching and with English as the LoLT. The curriculum for this cycle is not reviewed here as this study is entirely focused on lower classes that employ MT as LoLT. However, P5 class is of interest in this study to observe the language strategies teachers use in supporting learners' transition from MT as LoLT to English as LoLT.

Returning to the thematic curriculum: as stated above, the thematic curriculum is considered as constituting a child-centred approach to teaching and learning. The teacher is encouraged to place the learner at the centre of the learning process, and to emphasise the acquisition of life skills such as logical thinking, interpreting, communicating, participating, arguing, problem solving, etc. Teachers are required not to focus on acquisition of facts (as facts quickly become outdated) but rather on enabling children to acquire knowledge that will be useful to them in life.

The curriculum writers are of the opinion that children can develop the aforementioned life skills by employing the following methods: pair and group work, individual work, experimental work involving observation and recording as well as visiting the neighbouring community, and discussing and writing about their experiences outside of the classroom environment (NCDC, 2008). In addition, there are other activities suggested for the teacher to engage the children in, such as songs, games (including physical education), acting, and drawing. It is predicted that all of these skills and competencies are achievable with use of MT as LoLT.

Furthermore, the teachers' resource book (2006b) offers a list of vocabulary items related to different themes which teachers can make use of in their teaching. These terms form the metalanguage for the different themes ranging from school, home and environment to

Science and Mathematics. This list of vocabulary is not exhaustive and teachers are faced with the task of creating terms and expressions (see, e.g., Jokweni, 2004) in their respective languages (MTs) of teaching.

Another characteristic of the thematic curriculum is that of a class teacher system instead of a subject teacher system (NCDC, 2011). Prior to the introduction of the thematic curriculum and/or MT education, primary education made use of a subject-based curriculum from P1 through P7. This arrangement meant that there was subject specialisation among teachers: each teacher would teach a subject or two in any one class. However, on introducing MT education and the new curriculum, themes were preferred for the lower primary. According to the NCDC, this requires that one teacher is assigned to single-handedly manage all the thematic areas of the curriculum in a particular class. The NCDC reports that in some schools, teachers still use the subject specialisation approach in the lower primary even though the Ministry of Education and Sports recommends a class teacher system.

According to the NCDC (2006d), a class teacher system is superior to a subject teacher system as in the former the teacher would get to know his/her learners' strengths and weaknesses in different learning areas and attend to them accordingly. In addition, this practice enables individual teachers to work in pairs: according to the NCDC (2006d), the class teacher system allows a teacher to help another teacher by offering some of the learning areas such as Physical Education and Religious Education. This should be done with an understanding between the class teacher and the head teacher of the school (NCDC, 2006d). However, the NCDC (2011) found that, in practice, teachers neither plan their lessons together nor support one another. The available literature increasingly points out that the one-teacher-one-class approach to teaching and learning should be discouraged, as discussed below.

Benson (2004:216) suggests that one should "break the mould for the one teacher-one classroom model, which may be just as out-dated as the one nation-one language concept". Benson calls for team teaching in addition to encouraging specialisation in what teachers teach, for instance, L1 and L2 teaching. She argues that this would allow learners to identify certain teachers with certain languages or subjects. Benson adds that this practice saves lesson planning time and makes in-service training simpler. Recall that one of the challenges

reported by Altinyelken (2010) in the implementation of the thematic curriculum is the many learning areas – so many that teachers choose some and ignore others.³¹

Kembo (2000) argues that the practice of one-class-one-teacher is costly, not only to the learners but also to society. Kembo calls for the specialisation of individual teachers in subjects in which they have a positive attitude and have flexibility to try out various theoretical and practical approaches. She adds that this is particularly important as these primary school teachers lay the foundation for the language and literacy development of learners.

3.6 Transition to English medium education in Uganda

Before discussing the current curriculum guidelines for the teaching of English in Uganda, a brief description of the history of teaching English in Uganda is given, followed by a discussion of the challenges of teaching English as well as issues of teacher training in Uganda.

3.6.1 English language in Uganda's education system: a brief historical overview and some current challenges

In Uganda, English is the language of communication in administration, courts, commerce, and industry as well as a LoLT in education (Ssekamwa, 2000; Tembe, 2006). Ssekamwa (2000, 2008) and Tembe (2006) argue that the education system in Uganda has suffered due to the political upheavals of 1971 through 1986. Specifically, the expulsion of foreigners affected the education system as many foreign teachers had to flee the country, creating a gap in the education system. (In order to address the great need for teachers at the time, the government had hired teachers from Ghana, Pakistan, and Bangladesh; however, many left due to the termination of their contracts; Ssekamwa, 2008.) This left Uganda with a limited number of teachers, particularly English teachers. Also, there was a scarcity of textbooks and other learning materials. Gradually, teaching as a career ceased to “attract the best high school graduates, who preferred to go for more lucrative careers, such as law, medicine, or

³¹ It is possible that teachers leave out areas which they are not comfortable handling. Also, during teacher training, teachers have areas of preference; for instance, some choose English or Mathematics as majors while others specialise in Religious Studies or Social Studies.

business” (Tembe, 2006:858). Tembe (2006:858) observes that “Uganda has yet to recover from this shortfall, and increasingly so in English language teaching”.

In Uganda, English is taught (and acquired) as a L2. Teaching a language as a L2 requires learners to have exposure to it outside the classroom environment in order for them to have communicative competence (cf. Cummins, 2000a). In Uganda, there is limited exposure to the English language outside the classroom environment, especially in the rural areas. In these areas, the only exposure to the English language that most learners have is that which they receive from their teachers. Kyeyune (2003:174) states that “both parties [teachers and learners – MES]... have experienced it [English – MES] only in the very formal, academic and structured arrangement of the classroom. Learners’ interaction has only been with their non-native speaking teachers and a few textbooks. Moreover, this is usually done with the sole aim of passing examinations”. Mulumba and Masagazi (2012) have also observed that English in Uganda is used in formal settings and local languages are used in all informal settings, which, according to these authors, limits the acquisition of English.

As stated above, the only exposure to the English language that most learners have is that which they receive in their classrooms, yet Tembe (2006:858) states that in many cases the model given by teachers is a “poor one”. She observes that there are very few teachers in Uganda who have degrees in the English language.

The limited qualification of teachers in Uganda has posed a challenge to the teaching and acquisition of English. Part of the challenge may have to do with the nature of the candidates who join the teaching profession. Students who join the teaching profession as primary school teachers enter Primary Teachers Colleges after completion of senior (form) four (i.e., after 11 years of formal schooling). The usual entry requirement is for a candidate to have passed Mathematics and English at senior four level (Tembe, 2006). These teachers train for two years, and begin teaching afterwards, upon obtaining a grade III certificate. The majority of them does not upgrade to diploma or degree levels.

Since the teaching profession does not attract many, there is usually little motivation for teachers to upgrade their qualifications; some even completely leave the profession, opening the door for untrained persons to teach as a source of income. The majority of the unqualified teachers are found in rural private schools. This contributes to the low standards of English

taught in Uganda as seen from the poor performance of learners (Kyeyune, 2003) who are assessed in English at all levels of education. Experts recommend that L2 teaching be done by qualified persons, particularly those who have a native-like competence in that language (Heugh et al., 2007).

Kyeyune's (2003) study indicated that teachers take learners' competence in English for granted. Learners whose proficiency levels are below that which teachers expect of them are blamed for not caring about their school work or having a bad attitude towards the language (cf. Kyeyune, 2003). Amidst this blaming, learning of subject matter is expected to take place, and learners are expected to grasp all academic concepts through English. In such cases, learners tend to memorise without understanding what they are actually learning (cf. Heugh, 2011a; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2011). When asked in the Kyeyune (2003) study how they deal with the challenge of low English proficiency levels among learners, teachers responded that they expect learners to read English novels, which teachers viewed as good sources of English. However, teachers could not list particular novels which learners should read; instead, they said that it is the learners' responsibility to find suitable reading materials.

Teachers thus often do not view the improvement of the low English language proficiency of their learners as their responsibility. In addition, non-language teachers often do not view a lack of academic language on the part of their learners as a problem that is their responsibility to solve. In this regard, a Geography teacher in Kyeyune's (2003) study said,

For us in geography we are not interested in the language. We mark points and not language. Even in UNEB, we mark the points. If a student makes a point, he gets the marks. If he doesn't...

(Kyeyune, 2003:175).

When Kyeyune probed further, "Is it always easy to see the point?", a history teacher said, "You follow a marking scheme. That's all". Teachers thus do not necessarily consider it their task to develop their learners' English language proficiency; yet, as pointed out earlier, English is the language of examination at all levels of education in Uganda.

From the above, I draw three conclusions related to language development/acquisition: (i) teachers are unaware of the importance of academic language proficiency (or CALP); (ii) teachers do not distinguish between CALP and BICS (cf. Cummins, 1979, 2000a, 2000b); and (iii) the education system in Uganda seems to be examination oriented.

In summary, the challenges facing English language teaching and/or acquisition in Uganda are the following:

- (i) There is a limited number of teachers qualified to teach English (Odaet, 1990).
- (ii) Literature as a subject is optional. Literature would help learners acquire communicative vocabulary, but literature is only taught as a subject in some schools, and it becomes optional after senior two (Tembe, 2006).
- (iii) There is limited and/or poor exposure to learning English in Uganda.
- (iv) There are limited and/or poor reading materials available in English as a LoLT (Tembe, 2006).

3.6.2 Curriculum guidelines for the teaching of English

The success of transitional MT education programmes greatly depends on how the process of transition from the MT as LoLT to the L2 as LoLT is handled (cf. Cummins, 1979, 1992; Fafunwa et al., 1989; Heugh, 2011a). Because of the official status of English, curriculum guidelines stipulate that learners should be literate in this language by the end of P3 or by the middle of P4. It is further stipulated that English is “the most important predictor of a child’s future success in school and work after school” (NCDC, 2007b:39). Also, the NCDC reasons that the only reason why learning in the MT is encouraged is the “belief that children who read in their first language will learn faster and be more efficient readers in English once they have learned the language orally than those who only learn to read through English, a language they hardly know” (NCDC, 2007a:39).

Teachers are discouraged from using any local language and local signs in the English language lessons. The NCDC (2007b:40) reasons that “[a]s many children will only hear or observe English and signs in the English lesson, it is important they are exposed to a lot of English”. The NCDC’s argument for prohibiting teachers from using any local language in English lessons is contrary to what other scholars/researchers recommend. For instance, Atkinson (1987:242) argues for the place of translation in a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) class: “at early levels, a ratio of about 5 per cent native language to about 95 per cent target language may be more profitable”. Cummins (2000a) and Manyak (2004, 2006, 2008) also state the importance and role of translation in learning a L2, which allows even the weakest learner to acquire the vocabulary of the target language. Translation

provides support for learners to grow as bilinguals, which is usually the aim of bilingual education programmes.

By the end of P1, learners are expected to (i) be literate in their MT; (ii) have basic oral vocabulary of commonly used English words in the different themes; (iii) be able to construct a variety of English sentences in present tense and give descriptions in English as well, and (iv) be able to greet, talk about themselves, ask questions, etc. (NCDC, 2007b:39). The NCDC (2007a, 2007b, 2008) predicts that by the end of P1, a learner should have a vocabulary of approximately 200 English words, increasing to 500 by the end of P2 and 800 by the end of P3.³²

By the end of P2, the NCDC predicts that children will be able to, with the aid of their approximately 500 English words, write short, simple stories using their own sentences. Teachers are encouraged to guide and help the learners in planning the composition of such stories.

As stated above, learners are expected to have an English vocabulary of 800 words by the end of P3. This expectation is unrealistic³³ for two reasons: firstly, available literature indicates that in environments where children have far more exposure to English than Ugandan learners do, learners have a vocabulary of between 500 and 600 words by the end of their third year of formal schooling (Heugh, 2006, 2011b). Secondly, the 800³⁴ words are far below the required vocabulary for transition from MT to English as LoLT to occur successfully. (Van Ginkel, 2011 states that children would require between 7000 to 8000 words to be able to learn through it). In addition, the NCDC expects learners' number of words to increase by 300 words after every year, i.e., 200 in P1, 500 in P2, and 800 in P3. This expected rate of acquisition is not supported by the available literature on bilingual transitional education.

The NCDC (2007b) prescribes that the language in which teachers talk to learners in the classroom is the language through which learners learn to read. Should the language not be

³² For information on the teaching procedures for English recommended by the NCDC (2007b:39), consult Appendix L.

³³ With this high expectation, wrong yardsticks may be employed to measure learners' competence in L2 literacy. In the end, teachers may be blamed for not doing their work or learners for being uninterested.

³⁴ I am aware of studies on order of acquisition and vocabulary acquisition, however the scope of this dissertation does not allow for a discussion of these (see, e.g., Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997).

familiar to the learners, it is advised that teachers concentrate on oral development in that language first before formally introducing reading and writing to the learners in that language. The NCDC suggests play, acting, songs and rhymes as ways through which oral language can be developed.

Turning to what happens in transitional programmes: Heugh (2011a) narrates how children in MT education programmes develop linguistically as they progress through school. Children are usually exposed to literacy at their first encounter with the school where they are presented with simple stories that are written in a genre familiar to them. Likewise, during the first three years of schooling, there is limited reading and writing. Through the simple stories that children are exposed to, they begin to recognise letters of the alphabet, simple vocabulary and simple sentences plus other orthographical symbols, particularly by end of the second year. Heugh (2011a:121-122) states that at the beginning of the fourth year of formal schooling, children are expected to read more fluently as they are exposed to more unfamiliar discourse. In addition, learners have to “negotiate a cognitive leap from decoding familiar words in a text with a familiar predictable story-line to comprehending and interpreting texts involving unfamiliar concepts and unexpected outcomes (in Mathematics, History, Geography and Science)”.

Moreover, learners who continue learning in their MT after their fourth year of formal schooling have with them a linguistic store of about 7000 words or more in addition to other linguistic knowledge about their MT. At this stage, “they may not have learned to read all of the language items and structures they know to use orally, but they have an extensive reservoir from which to draw” (Heugh, 2011a:122). Heugh states that where children have to switch from L1 to L2 at the end of their third year of school, their linguistic reservoir in the L2 is too limited to be used in decoding what is taught in the L2. She explains this in reference to South African speakers of African languages who learn English as a L2 with about 500 words in English by the end of year three.

Given learners’ limited L2 vocabulary, they cannot, in their third or fourth year, yet express in their L2s all they know about the world or what is in their curriculum; in fact, they cannot yet understand/decode it (Heugh, 2011b). This has direct linguistic implications for the learners and the teacher. Heugh (2011a, 2011b) contends that limited L2 vocabulary, where the L2 is the LoLT, leads to (i) codeswitching, a practice very common in many multilingual

contexts (cf. Probyn, 2009), and (ii) teachers resorting to asking questions leaning towards the lower-order cognitive value. In addition, Heugh (2011a:144) points out that from what the available scholarship provides on early-exit bilingual programmes in Africa, the early linguistic advantage of learners in these programmes starts to disappear by the end of their fourth or fifth year of formal schooling (cf. Walter & Chuo, 2012). In the subsequent years of learning, learners depend on rote learning with very limited ability to apply and/or interpret what they learn in class.

In conclusion, it is laudable that the language-in-education policy of Uganda allows for a gradual transition from MT as LoLT to English. It is hoped that, if the necessary scaffolding is put in place, it will be possible for Uganda to enjoy the benefits of MT education which it set out to achieve. In the words of Braam (2012), “the language of teaching and learning is not the only factor that has a bearing on educational outcomes but, with knowledgeable, disciplined and caring teachers, it is probably the most significant variable”.

3.6.3 Literacy attainment guidelines for Uganda

In this section, literacy attainment guidelines in Uganda as given by the NCDC (2006c, 2007a, 2008, 2011) are discussed. The NCDC provides strategies on how teachers should plan and practically engage learners to attain listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

The need to develop literacy, numeracy, and life skills fast in lower primary classes motivated the introduction of MT education in Uganda (NCDC, 2006a). The NCDC (2007b:25) defines literacy as “the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, use printed and written materials”. Ouane and Glanz (2006:2) view literacy acquisition as “language acquisition but literacy is not necessary (sic) language learning. Language learning is different from learning through a language”. The NCDC argues that, for one to be fully competent and literate in a language, one must have a strong oral command of that language. In addition, when a school uses English as LoLT, it must be ensured that a learner has a strong oral command of the language before it can be used as a LoLT.

Literacy teaching in the lower primary classes, P1 through P3, takes place within an hour per school day and is referred to as “the literacy hour”. During this time, learners are expected to master the three elements of literacy, namely sound, structure, and meaning (NCDC, 2008,

2011:4). This hour is divided into 30 minutes of Literacy hour I and 30 minutes of Literacy hour II (NCDC, 2007a:31). “The first hour focuses on reading with presentations, practice, pre-reading activities and an emphasis on the sight words. The second-half focuses on pre-writing activities, drawing, labelling and developing handwriting” (NCDC, 2007a:31). Teachers are also encouraged to have every last 20 minutes of the literacy hour devoted to writing or what the NCDC (2007a:31) calls “pattern practice”.³⁵

Storytelling is another strand that the thematic curriculum provides as an avenue for developing literacy. The teacher can read a story to learners, tell a story from own experience, or invite a local storyteller to school. The NCDC prescribes that this is done to provide for extended development of the local linguistic heritage and development of children’s linguistic repertoires in other linguistic elements such as similes, proverbs, and cultural references. Through storytelling, learners can also begin to appreciate the extended time of listening and the literacy elements embedded in stories such as plot, dialogue, etc.

News reporting is one of the tasks that the NCDC (2006, 2008) suggests as a method to develop learners’ literacy skills.³⁶ The NCDC guidelines state that “the News lesson may generally be the first period of the day, since it is designed to draw on children’s immediate out-of-school experiences. Schools should provide 3 News periods and 2 Oral Literature periods per week” (NCDC, 2006b:11). The implications of these NCDC literacy guidelines are that a teacher has to be very creative in managing and directing the lesson. This is based on the reasoning that the thematic curriculum is learner-centred and therefore should employ learner-centred approaches to learning. Despite the fact that the NCDC has provided these guidelines, the NCDC (2011:4) reports that teachers still face challenges in handling the literacy hour. Teachers ask themselves these questions: “How do I handle the literacy hour? What should I be doing? When will the learners learn new things?” The NCDC notes that field reports indicated that teachers are still using the old methods of teaching literacy, i.e., the phonic and syllabic methods. The NCDC emphasises that such methods encourage rote learning, are teacher-centred, and do not encourage learner participation in the learning

³⁵ For information on the teaching practices prescribed by the NCDC (2007a), consult Appendix M.

³⁶ In this study, I made use of classroom observations and interviews to establish how teachers in Uganda make use of this news period, and how their scaffolding relates to that of the classroom vignettes that Manyak (2004, 2006, 2008) describes (see section 7.5).

process. This indicates that teachers have not been well-prepared to handle the thematic curriculum and/or MT education in Uganda (cf. Altinyelken, 2010).

3.7 Prior studies on language policy implementation in Ugandan schools

This section focuses on prior studies of MT education in Uganda. Most of the studies that have been conducted on MT education and/or the new curriculum have, to a great extent, focused on the challenges encountered in implementing the language policy and curriculum.

3.7.1 Studies prior to the 2006/2007 implementation of the 1992 language policy and the thematic curriculum

Sprenger-Tasch (2003) investigated the attitudes towards language use in schools among Ugandans with particular focus on Luganda, Kiswahili, and English. Most parents expressed an interest in wanting their children to learn in their MTs for cultural reasons. In addition, many parents believed that it was not possible to have upward mobility in Uganda without a proper command of English. Furthermore, the Sprenger-Tasch study revealed that some informants feared that if Ugandan indigenous languages were to be used as LoLTs, students would not be able to learn English properly. Sprenger-Tasch (2003:362) explains that this preference for English emanates from the colonial background which characterised English as a language of prestige, “the so-called chances of upward mobility it [English – MES] offers and sometimes lack of an alternative” (cf. Kembo, 2000).

Some participants in Sprenger-Tasch’s (2003) study also thought that it was expensive to develop African languages for educational purposes and, as such, they could be learned at lower primary level but not beyond. Sprenger-Tasch (2003:362) argues that “it seems, then, that the costs and efforts of more sustained mother tongue instruction are not yet weighed against the benefits of a better cognitive and emotional development of the children” (cf. also Fafunwa et al., 1989; Glanz, 2013).

Read and Enyutu (2005) did a survey to establish the dominant languages in Ugandan districts. From this study, there are districts with a clear dominant language which would be

used as a LoLT in schools. For instance, in the Rakai district in the south of the country³⁷, the dominant language is Luganda. In addition, they also established that there were other minority languages that were already being taught, but without fulfilling the following minimal requirements:

- (i) Established local language orthographies
- (ii) Suitable course materials and teaching/learning aids to support the acquisition of reading
- (iii) Reading books
- (iv) Teachers trained in the LoLT in use (or sometimes fluent or familiar with LoLT in use)
- (v) Well-developed reading and writing strategies

(Read & Enyutu, 2004:15).

These authors argue that with such practices operative in Ugandan schools, it is not surprising that literacy acquisition has remained a challenge in the country (also see Altinyelken, 2010; Tembe & Norton, 2008). Read and Enyutu (2005:16) proposed that the Ministry of Education and Sports (i) sets up a National Local Language Committee to review and approve developed orthographies³⁸, and (ii) asks all District Language Boards to submit their language policies to the Ministry of Education and Sports for approval and subsequent action thereafter. They added that for a language to be accepted as a LoLT, it would have an approved orthography, suitable literature for learners of P1 through P4, proof that the District Language Board would facilitate the training of teachers in local Primary Teacher Colleges, and assurance to the Ministry of Education and Sports that the District Language Board would provide the necessary reading materials to schools in support of literacy development.

As stated above, Read and Enyutu's (2005) study was central in the formulation of the thematic curriculum and the reintroduction of MT education in Uganda. These authors identified a need for the thematic curriculum, but they cautioned that this alone would not solve the problems of a lack of quality educational output. They suggested that the Ministry of Education and Sports ensures that there are (i) enough learning materials provided, (ii) pre-service and in-service teacher training, and (iii) supervision and mentoring of teachers. Supervision of teachers and schools was pointed out particularly because, by 2004, there was

³⁷ Although on a map one can find Rakai in the south of the country, it falls within the central region of Uganda (Buganda), and so in Uganda, it is said to be in the central region.

³⁸ Orthography development is still a challenge because the NCDC demands that a language needs a developed, but not an approved, orthography in order to be considered as LoLT (Kateeba, 2009). There is a need to set up a body that would assess the quality of recently developed orthographies.

a high rate of teacher absenteeism in primary schools, which had become a concern to parents (see also section 6.9.2 and 8.4).

Read and Enyutu (2005:5) observed that the majority of Ugandan children who enrol in primary schools do not obtain satisfactory literacy standards, that the dropout rate remained high at 22%, and that P6 test results indicate that only 20% of learners obtained the basic standard of literacy. Read and Enyutu (2005) reported that rural and urban learners experience different challenges in learning and acquiring languages. Urban learners are more exposed to written materials, libraries, television, and radio than are rural learners. In addition, urban learners are exposed to English outside of school, unlike rural learners who may never hear English spoken in their social circles. Read and Enyutu (2005) therefore proposed that since rural learners begin school with only oral knowledge of their languages, they need a supportive environment in the form of using a LoLT that is familiar to them (cf. Akinnaso, 1993; Barron, 2012; Benson, 2004, 2005; Dutcher, 2003; Kosonen & Young, 2009a), warning that “if this programme was not well supported by appropriate learning and teaching materials, it could undermine progress towards basic literacy, the development of learning in other subjects and later acquisition of literacy in English” (Read & Enyutu, 2004:7).

Read and Enyutu’s (2005:4) findings also pointed out a need for “(a) an immediate increase in the number of weekly hours allocated to literacy and numeracy in P1 and P3; and (b) immediate crash teacher upgrading programmes in the teaching of reading, number and life skills in lower primary grades”. As regards MT teaching, Read and Enyutu (2005:8) found that teachers face three challenges, namely (i) a lack of instructional materials; (ii) a lack of training in local language teaching, and (iii) an absence of trained reading specialists who, in turn, would train others.

As for parental attitude to literacy acquisition through MT, Read and Enyutu (2005), somewhat contrary to Sprenger-Tasch (2003), found that, as much as parents supported literacy acquisition through MTs, they valued literacy acquisition through English more than through MTs (cf. Tembe & Norton, 2008). They add that communities preferred to be consulted as to which LoLT should be used in their children’s school. Since they were not consulted, some parents now oppose district local language policies.

Regarding teacher training and preparation, Read and Enyutu (2005) reviewed the Primary Teacher College curriculum in Uganda and found that it does not include reading in the foundational courses. Out of the 180 hours of the 2-year course, only 17 hours were allocated to the teaching of reading and writing. In addition, “[t]here is little or no coverage of the approaches and issues related to the simultaneous learning of English and a local language in lower primary” (Read & Enyutu, 2004:18). Without proper teacher training and preparation (cf. Fafunwa, et al. 1989; Benson, 2008; Cohen & Ball, 1990), MT education in Uganda is bound to suffer.

Another relevant study is that of Tembe and Norton (2008, 2011) who investigated awareness of the Ugandan language policy in two communities, one rural and one urban, in Eastern Uganda. The research sites were one local primary school in each community. Tembe and Norton (2008, 2011) found that although the parents and community leaders were aware of the language policy, they “were ambivalent about its implementation in their school” (Tembe & Norton, 2008:35). To these communities, the importance of MTs was only identifiable in cultural maintenance and in promoting identity. Participants expressed a preference for English, which to them offers global citizenship, and for Luganda and Kiswahili, which are languages of wider communication in the area. Tembe and Norton called for more sensitisation of parents and communities to the advantages of using MT as LoLT. Similarly, Nabirye and De Schryver (2010:334) report that Iganga district teachers preferred to teach Luganda and English, arguing that “they are formalized and are easier to teach when compared to Lusoga”. This attitude towards Luganda stems from the colonial era that favoured Luganda as LoLT in different communities in Uganda, and since then some communities look down upon their own languages, preferring Luganda and English (Piper & Miksick, 2011).

3.7.2 Studies after the implementation of the language policy and mother tongue curriculum

Subsequent to the implementation of the language policy and the thematic curriculum, there have been further studies on the successes and challenges of MT education in Uganda. For instance, Kisembo (2008:3-5) reports on the achievements and challenges of implementing the local language policy and the new curriculum in the western part of Uganda in the annual

regional assembly on education and sports (organised by the Ministry of Education and Sports). In his report, Kisémbó largely focuses on challenges encountered during the two years after the implementation of MT education. Kisémbó observed that the NCDC guideline of one teacher per class was impractical. In one school in the Kibaale district, for example, one P1 class consisted of 230 learners who were handled by one teacher (cf. Businge, October 2012). With this number of learners, it is impossible for the teacher to use the required child-centred approach to teaching and learning. The NCDC also requires that the thematic curriculum should be evaluated continuously, a task that requires individual attention to each learner. With large numbers of learners per class, continuous assessment is impossible as teachers find it difficult to track the needs of each of their learners.

Furthermore, Kisémbó (2008:3-5) found the curriculum too content-rich and cannot be covered within the 30 minutes allocated for each lesson. He pointed out that this has made conceptualisation and assessment of what is learned difficult. Kisémbó (2008) also reports that many schools in the studied region lacked instructional materials, particularly local language materials.

Another challenge that Kisémbó reported is that private schools in western Uganda had shunned the language policy. Instead of using MT as LoLT, private schools were using English right from P1 and taught MT as a subject (cf. Businge, October 2012; Kagolo, April 30, 2012). Also, the training on and/or orientation concerning MT education given to the teachers and head teachers was unsatisfactory. In this regard, Kisémbó states that the head teachers, who are the immediate supervisors of the teachers, were not well prepared for the implementation of MT teaching in the sense that they did not understand how MT teaching should take place. This had caused difficulty in monitoring the teaching programme. In addition, Kisémbó (2008:5) observed that training was limited to P1 and P2 teachers, and that the work expected of the trained teachers was overwhelming.

Kisémbó's study also revealed the challenge of not having a primary school curriculum distinct from that of a nursery school curriculum. He notes that the curriculum of lower primary is almost identical to that of nursery school (cf. Uganda Child Rights NGO Network, 2006). This means that if a primary school has a nursery section, a learner who is promoted to P1 would be subjected to similar curriculum content to that already covered in nursery

school. Kisembo (2008:5) has referred to this as a “wastage of time for such pupils” and identified this as one of the reasons why some schools have rejected the thematic curriculum.

In another study, Altinyelken (2010) examined teachers’ perspectives on and implementation practices regarding the new curriculum. Altinyelken found that teachers’ implementation efforts were hampered by a number of challenges, such as overcrowded classrooms and a lack of instructional materials. He calls for increased attention to the implementation of the new curriculum.

Businge (October 2012) reflects on the acceptance of the thematic curriculum in Ugandan primary schools. He notes that for six years (from the initial implementation of MT education until the publication of his report), many schools have failed to appreciate and implement the new curriculum, “claiming that it instead weakens the pupils’ learning capacity” (Businge, October 2012). Businge points out the following challenges facing MT education: (i) inadequate staffing due to the one-teacher-one-class system; (ii) overcrowded classes; (iii) a lack of serious District Language Boards to oversee the development of language orthographies and teaching materials; (iv) some topics in the curriculum being too wide and others too shallow, and high levels of repetition in the curriculum, with the content continuing to overlap in various themes, and (v) most private schools having shunned the thematic curriculum, arguing that it is “shallow”.

Mango Tree’s Laṅo Literacy Project (2010:2) also highlights some issues in MT education in Uganda. This study was conducted in 2010 as a baseline literacy assessment in two northern Uganda districts. The study aimed at understanding the reading skills of P1 learners in their MT within the framework of the thematic curriculum. This assessment was done based on the Research Triangle Institute’s Early Grade Reading Assessment. The main findings were the following:

- (i) By the end of P1, a learner on average could only identify 9 out of the 42 letters of the Leblaṅo alphabet.
- (ii) Almost a third of the learners completing P1 could not identify a letter in the Leblaṅo alphabet.
- (iii) 92% of the P1 learners in this survey could not read one familiar word in Leblaṅo by the end of P1.
- (iv) By the end of P1, oral reading for learners was less than 1 word per minute.

(Mango Tree Laṅo Literacy Project, 2010).

One other study investigating MT in Uganda, as part of a larger study on the sociolinguistics of multilingualism, is that of Nakayiza (2012). She studied one widely spoken local majority language, Luganda, and one minority language, Luruuri-Lunyara. Nakayiza found that the official support of a few languages in Uganda has greatly affected the use of MTs in the country, especially in the area of education. She attributes the poor or underdeveloped state of MTs in Uganda to the absence of a central language planning body. Because of this, MT use in education is, in practice, receiving limited attention.

Like the study reported on in this dissertation, Nakayiza's (2012) study also involved classroom observations which aimed at understanding teachers' language practices in the classroom. She found that teachers in rural public schools use codeswitching between local languages and English but that this practice of codeswitching was not tolerated in urban schools, especially not in private schools.³⁹ She explains that rural teachers claimed to use local languages for their learners to understand the content better. In the process of teaching, teachers were observed to start a lesson in English but ended up translating everything into a local language.

Nakayiza observed P7 classes. From these observations, it transpired that some learners find it difficult to comprehend instructions given in English. For instance, a teacher asked a learner whether he/she would clean the blackboard, to which the learner responded "no". The teacher was astonished at this response and translated the request to the learner in Luganda. The learner at this point was able to understand the request and responded positively (cf. Okonkwo, 1983, for related examples). This suggests that Ugandan learners in P7 may not have developed sufficient English language skills to function as required in an academic context.

³⁹ In this regard, Nakayiza (2012:171) recounts the following:

In one school (the upper class girls' school) I was told of the story of the telephone nightmare where, after school, girls lined up on the only telephone booth in the school to call their parents because they are not allowed to have mobile phones. For those girls whose parents could not speak English, but only Luganda, it was a nightmare. To be heard by fellow students speaking Luganda on the telephone would attract bullying and also name calling. It was also mentioned that such students would even advise or trick their parents into not visiting them at school because of their fear of being heard speaking Luganda. Some parents also expressed the same fear to visit their children in such schools because of the worry of not speaking English since these schools are English only speaking environments.

3.8 Chapter conclusion

In this chapter, I gave a brief overview of the current Ugandan education system, the development of local Ugandan languages for use in MT education, and a historical overview of the language-in-education policy of the country. I also gave a brief exposition of the thematic curriculum and explained how this curriculum came into being. I furthermore set out the position of English in the Ugandan education system. Lastly, I reviewed all traceable studies on MT education in Uganda, both prior to and after the implementation in 2006 of MT education and the thematic curriculum. From these studies, it appears that the implementation of MT education and the thematic curriculum in Uganda has not been without its challenges. The present study aims to add to the body of literature on MT education in Uganda. In the next chapter, I discuss the methodology of this study.

Chapter 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I give an exposition of the methodology used in seeking answers to the research questions in this study. The participants, the methods, tools, and data analysis approaches used in the study as well as the challenges encountered during the study are discussed. This study is situated within the theoretical framework provided by studies on bilingual/multilingual education, and it is focused specifically on the early-exit transitional bilingual model.

4.2 Research protocol

Throughout this study, I adhered to the ethical guidelines of the Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities), Stellenbosch University (see Appendix A), and the Uganda National Council of Science and Technology (see Appendices B, C, and D). I also requested a letter of introduction from the Head of the Department of African Languages under which I work at Makerere University (see Appendix E). After preselecting potential participating schools (see section 4.4), I took these documents with me to the head teachers or school directors⁴⁰ to seek permission for conducting this study in their schools. I set up appointments with these persons during which I explained the objectives of this study. I also gave them a copy of my letter of introduction. Afterwards, head teachers or directors then introduced me to the teachers, whom I then invited to complete a questionnaire (see section 4.7.2) and asked

⁴⁰ Note that the hierarchy of power in private and government schools differs: for government schools, permission for access was obtained from the head teachers, whereas in private schools, directors or the school owners must give permission to the head teacher to allow a study such as this one to take place there. For instance, in RakaiRP-C (see footnote 43 for an explanation of school code names), upon my arrival to seek permission to conduct this study, the director of the school quickly summoned a meeting of all teachers to introduce me to them, and also asked me to explain the objectives of my study during this meeting. It was here that he also asked me to hand out the questionnaires to the teachers who were willing to complete them (since private schools have more than one teacher per class). After the meeting, I came to an agreement with the director and the head teacher on when I would start the classroom observations. In the majority of cases, it was the director at this school who physically took me to the classes where I would conduct my observations. This director was also a teacher in the upper classes, P6 and P7. For RakaiRP-D, the school director introduced me to the Director of Studies, who was then instructed to introduce me to the teachers. In contrast, in government schools, my first point of call was always the head teacher.

to allow me to observe their classroom activities (see section 4.7.3) and later interview them (see section 4.7.4).

It is an ethical requirement to have an information form explaining to participants the objectives of the research as well as any possible risks and/or benefits that may come from participating in the research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Such an information letter and a consent form were attached to the front of every questionnaire, and all participating teachers signed the form, agreeing to complete the questionnaire as well as to allow me to observe their classroom activities and/or to participate in an interview (see Creswell & Clark, 2011).

After data collection, interview and classroom observation data were transcribed and coded (see section 4.7.2), and questionnaire data was analysed qualitatively and quantitatively (see section 4.7.3). In adherence to ethical guidelines, all names, whether school names or persons' names, were replaced with pseudonyms during data transcription, analysis and reporting in order to secure the anonymity of the participating persons and institutions.

4.3 *Study design*

This is an ethnographic, multi-methods survey study focusing on teachers' understanding and management of the transition from MT as LoLT to English as LoLT. This study is multi-methods as both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analysed. McCarty (2011:3) argues that "participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis are the primary methods in the ethnographic toolkit" (cf. Hornberger & Johnson, 2011). She adds that some researchers supplement these methods with sociolinguistic surveys and assessment data. The sociolinguistic survey in this study took the form of a questionnaire. This study involved collecting data in natural school and classroom environments in both rural and urban primary schools (government and private) in Uganda. The data collection took place in the months of September to November 2012, and entailed document analysis, administering of teacher questionnaires, classroom observations, individual follow-up teacher interviews and note-taking.

Survey studies are usually quantitative in nature and aim to provide a broad overview of a representative sample of a large population (Mouton, 2001:152). While survey studies are more comprehensive and more representative than studying individuals, thereby allowing for

breadth rather than depth (Gillham, 2007:8), as Johnson, Wright and Marsden (2010) point out, they have limitations in that they are usually conducted with time and resource constraints that limit the available methodological options. This is, however, not to say that the findings from such studies are not reliable. As pointed out by Marsden and Wright (2010), findings from studies such as this one can be used to understand as well as predict what is happening in similar contexts. As a result, solutions to the identified challenges can be sought from the resulting evidence.

Multi-method (also called “mixed methods”) approaches to research have the potential of enriching as well as cross-validating research findings (Gillham, 2007:102). In this regard, Denscombe (2008:273) states that the use of mixed methods (i) improves the accuracy of data; (ii) offers a more complete picture of the phenomenon under investigation than would a single-method approach; (iii) is a means of avoiding biases intrinsic to single-method approaches as the use of more than one method compensates for weaknesses of single, individual methods, and (iv) aids sampling (for instance, questionnaires can be used to screen potential participants who might be approached for, say, follow-up interviews).

A multi-method approach was chosen because (i) data from surveys allows for generalisations of sample statistics to estimate population parameters within calculable margins of error, and (ii) the methods used within this approach, for instance questionnaires, elicit reliable answers to questions on a wide variety of topics (Marsden & Wright, 2010:3-4), each of which feeds into the other thereby enabling me to obtain comprehensive answers to my research questions. Multi-method research helps in addressing both the “what” (pertaining to numerical and quantitative data) and the “how” or “why” (pertaining to qualitative data) types of research questions (Cohen et al., 2011:25).

Furthermore, ethnography allows one to explore the micro-level of language policy and planning and investigate the interpersonal relationships, conversations, language ideologies, attitudes, aspirations, and everyday life of communities, individuals, schools, and the nation at large versus what is stipulated in language policy and in language planning efforts (Canagarajah, 2011, 2006; Hornberger & Johnson, 2011). In other words, the work of ethnography is to unravel “what is” in terms of language use (Canagarajah, 2011). McCarty (2011:3) contends that it is through these methods that we learn of the “situated logic” of

implicit and explicit policy making, offering insights into “why practice takes shape the way it does”.

Furthermore, Martin-Jones (2011:232) observes that through ethnography one can

capture the specific local ways in which language policies and new forms of language education are made and remade, by teachers and students, in the daily routines of educational life. Ethnography also gives us insights into the ways in which particular policies or language programs are interpreted by teachers, students, and parents, and how these understandings guide their actions.

In the same way, Hornberger and Johnson (2011:275) explain that ethnography can (i) inform the development of language policy and planning by providing data to all the various processes of language policy and planning, viz. creation, interpretation, and appropriation (cf. Johnson, 2009); (ii) provide information on how top-down language policy and planning is implemented in particular contexts, and (iii) “uncover the indistinct voices, covert motivations, embedded ideologies, invisible instances, or unintended consequences of LPP [language policy and planning – MES]” – issues that “are not always predictable based on the macro-level policy text alone” (Hornberger & Johnson, 2011:278). An ethnographer can perform a study covertly or overtly (Bryman, 2012). This study took an overt approach in that participating teachers knew that I was carrying out research, but it is highly unlikely that this in any way compromised data collection: given the fact that I spent a lot of time with teachers almost on a daily basis, they in a way viewed me as a member of the staff. For instance, I was at school in time for the start of the school day and remained until the end of the school day. During this time, I sat in on their classes, interacted with learners, had everyday conversations with teachers, and had tea and food with them. These social interactions (in addition to the classroom and interview sessions) not only built rapport, but also provided opportunities to explore teachers’ ways of thinking, believing, interpretation and implementation of the language-in-education policy in the study schools.

4.4 Selection of schools

The study was carried out in 10 primary schools located in three different districts in Uganda:

- (i) two urban schools from Kampala district, the capital of Uganda, in which questionnaire and interview data were collected;

- (ii) four schools in Rakai rural district in the central part of Uganda (called “central” although this district lies adjacent to the border with Tanzania to the south), in which questionnaire and interview data were collected and in which classroom observations took place, and
- (iii) four schools in Oyam rural district in northern Uganda, in which questionnaire data was collected.

Three different districts were included in order to obtain a more generalised picture of the level of linguistic diversity in Ugandan primary schools. The rural schools in Rakai district were included in this study for what they can disclose on (i) linguistic diversity in the country as a whole, and (ii) the differences between rural and urban primary schools in terms of dealing with linguistic diversity (by comparing the questionnaire and interview data obtained in these schools to those obtained in the urban Kampala schools). The schools in Oyam district were included in order to allow a comparison, in terms of multilingualism in rural schools, with the schools in Rakai district. Kampala schools were studied in order to establish (i) whether urban schools are (as is often believed) too multilingual to allow for MT education, and (ii) how their levels of multilingualism compare with those of the rural schools.

Selection of schools was therefore based on four criteria:

- (i) The location of the schools: all schools offering MT education are located in rural areas.
- (ii) Districts in which the thematic curriculum was piloted: Rakai and Kampala districts participated in this pilot.
- (iii) Convenience and accessibility: as some teachers in Rakai district knew that I hail from this area, it took me less time to establish trust and rapport with respondents in this district (cf. Chimbutane, 2011).
- (iv) Language used in the classroom: Rakai district was specifically chosen because it is one of the 111 districts in the country (in 2012), which has Baganda (speakers of Luganda (or Ganda) Bantu JE15) as dominant speakers (Read & Enyutu, 2004). Being a Luganda speaker, I would have found it difficult to understand and interpret classroom activities if I had chosen a non-Luganda-speaking district.

Data on the transition to English as LoLT was collected in Rakai rural district (in two government and two private schools)⁴¹ and in Kampala urban district (in one government and one private school).⁴² Although the language policy and the curriculum stipulate that only rural schools need to select a dominant local language to be used as LoLT from P1 to P3, I thought it wise also to elicit urban teachers' perceptions on the relevance of MTs in urban children's learning. (As stated above, this was done by means of questionnaires and follow-up interviews only; no classroom observation took place in the Kampala schools.) Data was therefore collected in urban schools to fulfil four goals: (i) to compare the nature of multilingualism in urban areas with that found in rural areas; (ii) to elicit urban teachers' knowledge of MT and its importance in education; (iii) to identify the challenges that urban school teachers face as regards LoLT, and (iv) to capture urban teachers' comments of the current language-in-education policy.

Kampala district was selected as an urban district in this study due to the fact that it is the capital city of the country. It was predicted that Kampala, being the capital city, would attract more ethnic groups than would other urban areas. Given the reasoning that urban areas are far more multilingual than rural areas (and thus face practical problems in providing MT education), it was assumed that Kampala would provide the best picture of multilingual schools in urban Uganda. The Kampala schools were purposefully selected. KampalaUG-W⁴³ was selected because of its location in the middle of the city while KampalaUP-U was selected because of easy access to school ownership. I should point out that urban private schools are not easy to access; for one to gain entry to them, there is a need for a middle person. The owners of KampalaUP-U were known to me, and so it was easy to negotiate entry to it. For KampalaUG-W, the head teacher at first denied access (stating that her school is being overused by researchers), but upon careful explanations of the intention of my study, she allowed me to give her questionnaires so that she could distribute them to the teachers.

⁴¹ I should mention that initially I did not anticipate that it would be necessary to study both private and government schools. However, soon after I began the data collection process, it became clear that I needed to study both sets of schools because of their unique characteristics (in terms of LoLTs, teacher recruitment, learner corps, etc.), as will become apparent in the next chapters.

⁴² Note that such data was not collected in Oyam district; here, only data on the language profiles of learners, teachers, and schools was collected, for comparative purposes (as stated above).

⁴³ For ease of reference, each school will receive a code indicating the district in which it occurs (Kampala, Oyam or Rakai), whether it is a rural (R) or urban (U) school, whether it is a government (G) or private (P) school, and a letter to distinguish it from every other participating school. KampalaUP-W is thus an urban (U) private (P) school in Kampala district.

She also gave me her contact number so that I could enquire from her as to whether the questionnaires had been completed.

I gained access to the Rakai schools (RakaiRG-A, RakaiRG-B, RakaiRP-C and RakaiRP-D) fairly easily. Prior to the data collection, I explained to one of my relatives (a resident in the Rakai study area) my intention to conduct this study. I described to him the types of schools I was looking for, and he advised me on possible study schools. As the head teachers (for government schools) and school directors (for private schools) were known to my relative in person, it was easy for me to work through him to negotiate access to these schools. He accompanied me to each study school when I went for my first appointment with the head teachers and school directors, in order to introduce me to them. Government schools were specifically selected based on the known learner corps in the schools. (My relative could brief me on the trend of education in this area, particularly on learner enrolment in government versus private schools.) Because it was known to many teachers at the schools in Rakai district that I am a Luganda speaker who hails from this district, it was also not difficult to recruit participating teachers in these schools.

In order to allow for a comparison between rural schools in different rural areas, I also selected four schools (all of them government schools) from Oyam district in the northern part of Uganda. Here, one teacher per school was asked to complete an abridged version of the questionnaire supplied to the teachers in Rakai district. Access to the schools in Oyam district was gained through a colleague at Makerere University. During the period from September to November 2012, the British Council⁴⁴ conducted training for rural primary school teachers in a Certificate in Primary English Language Teaching. I therefore used this opportunity to ask my colleague, who not only hailed from the northern region of Uganda but was also conducting the training in Oyam district, to distribute the questionnaires on my behalf during the time he conducted the training, and return them to me upon completion.

4.5 Selection of teachers

The data for this study was obtained from one population group, namely primary school teachers. These teachers fall into two categories: those who teach P1, P2, and P3, and those

⁴⁴ See <http://www.britishcouncil.ug/british-council-supports-primary-school-teachers-and-learners-of-english>

who teach P4 and P5. In total, 39 teachers were purposively selected to participate in the study: 21 from Rakai district; 14 from Kampala district, and four from Oyam district. The selection was purposive in the sense that a teacher was selected because of teaching in a certain class.

P1 to P3 class teachers were selected due to the information they could provide on the nature of multilingualism in the first years of schooling and on how teachers of beginner learners start off with MT education in preparation for the transition to English that will occur after three years, and finally to learn about their experience with MT education. P4 and P5 teachers were selected due to the information they could provide on:

- (i) how transition is managed in these first two years after the initiation of the use of English as LoLT;
- (ii) the challenges encountered in the process of transition on the side of teachers;
- (iii) the challenges encountered in the process of transition on the side of learners;
- (iv) whether the switch from MT as LoLT to English as LoLT has an effect on the learners' language competence, cognitive skills and classroom participation compared to how they were in the lower classes where MT only was used as LoLT;
- (v) whether the introduction of English as LoLT from P4 onwards has an effect on whether or not learners remain in the education system;
- (vi) what language competence, be it MT or English, teachers of P4 and P5 expect learners to enter P4 and P5 with;
- (vii) how the transition class (P4) is handled (for instance, whether there is a 50/50 use of English and MT), and
- (viii) whether the teachers observe the transfer of concepts and/or knowledge of what was learnt in P1 to P3 in the process of broadening the learners' vocabulary in the higher classes⁴⁵.

4.6 Research context

Before proceeding to the data collection methods, I give a brief outline of the research context. This background is essential in interpreting the findings in this research context. I

⁴⁵ See, for instance, Cummins (2001) and NCDC (2006a, 2006b) regarding the explanation that after transition, learners do not need to relearn that which they have learnt in the lower classes; they only need to broaden their vocabulary with which to articulate the learnt concepts and knowledge.

begin with the schools in Rakai⁴⁶ district: Rakai-RG-A and RakaiRG-B are government-owned schools, but RakaiRG-A is attached to the Anglican Church and RakaiRG-B is attached to the Catholic Church. RakaiRP-C and RakaiRP-D are privately owned. All government primary schools are run under the Universal Primary Education programme introduced in 1997 (see section 3.2), so children who attend government schools (in this case, RakaiRG-A and RakaiRG-B) do not pay schools fees. Soon after the introduction of Universal Primary Education, as stated in section 3.2, learner numbers in government schools were very high, but as time has gone by, government school learner numbers have shrunk whereas those of private schools have grown. Learner numbers in RakaiRG-B are higher than those of RakaiRG-A (see section 5.2.1.1 for learner enrolments).

The lower primary section of RakaiRG-A and RakaiRG-B (P1-P3) are run under a one-teacher-one-classroom arrangement. It is thus required that a single teacher handles all curriculum areas single-handedly. In P4 to P7, classes are run by more than one teacher and each teacher has one or more subjects in an allocated class. Another characteristic of government schools is that there is no pre-primary section as, in Uganda, pre-primary education is not compulsory (as stated in section 3.2).

Another contextual element in RakaiRG-A and RakaiRG-B is related to school times. Officially, all government primary schools start classes at 8:30 am; for P1 and P2, classes and the school day ends at 1:00 pm. For P3 to P7, classes end at 4.30 pm, and thereafter games and sports take place until 5:00 pm. I observed, however, that this policy is more strictly observed in RakaiRG-B than in RakaiRG-A: for the period I conducted this study, all classes at RakaiRG-A ended at 1:00 pm and, after lunch, children engaged in either music, dance or drama, or participated in sports and games until the end of the school day at 5:00 pm.

Turning to the private schools in Rakai district: in RakaiRP-C and RakaiRP-D, the learner corps is far larger than those of the government schools (see section 5.2.1.1). The teacher-student ratios in private schools are also greater than those in government schools (see section 5.2.1.1 for learner numbers per class). Furthermore, all children who attend private schools pay school fees, and both of these schools have a pre-primary section. In other words,

⁴⁶ In terms of distance, Rakai district is about 190km away from Kampala. I have avoided giving locational details of individual schools as in doing so I might inadvertently reveal the identity of the schools to those familiar with the study areas, which will breach research ethics principles.

children who join a P1 class in RakaiRP-C and RakaiRP-D had to have attended pre-primary while those in government schools did not.

As for school hours, private schools in this study area started lessons at 8:00 am for all classes. The school day for P1 and P2 learners ended at 1:00 pm whereas P3 to P7 learners were released at 5:00 pm. P1 to P3 classes in RakaiRP-C and RakaiRG-D had more than one teacher each, and their curriculum was taught in the form of subjects, e.g., Mathematics, English, and Social Studies.

Turning to the urban study schools: KampalaUG-W is a large government-owned school located in the middle of the capital, Kampala. The school has a very large learner corps (see section 5.2.1.3), and the head teacher of the school informed me that most classes in this school are divided into more than one class per grade. In addition, this school has a pre-primary section unlike rural government primary schools (such as RakaiRG-A and RakaiRG-B). However, I should mention that the pre-primary section located at this school is privately owned.

KampalaUP-U is a relatively small privately-owned school with only four classes (P1 to P4) and a pre-primary section. The school is located in the suburbs of Kampala but within the same district as KampalaUG-W. These two schools are about 2km apart, and the learner corps for this school is smaller than that of KampalaUG-W.

The schools in Oyam district are all government owned. The learner corps in these schools are larger than those of the rural schools in Rakai district (see section 5.2.1.2).

4.7 Data collection methods

Various methods were used to collect a range of data from the four rural Rakai schools. When planning this study, the main source of data was to be questionnaires, however, field experiences dictated otherwise. For reasons discussed below, teacher questionnaires were supplemented with classroom observations and interviews, and the latter two methods yielded richer data than did the questionnaires.

Visual inspection of the completed questionnaires which were collected from teachers revealed that some teachers had hurriedly completed them (particularly the parts containing

open-ended questions) and some teachers' responses appeared to be guesses or responses copied from other participating teachers. Also, it was apparent that certain responses were not necessarily truthful (see example below). I therefore decided to supplement the data obtained via teacher questionnaires with classroom observations and teacher interviews in order to capture as much data as possible to compensate for the gaps left by the questionnaire data. This also prompted me to revise the observation guide which I had developed earlier. This experience has led me to regard the questionnaires as data sources for teachers' perceptions about the language policy and curriculum, and the classroom observations and interviews as data sources for teachers' classroom practices. (Previously, I had thought that I would be able to gather reliable data on classroom practices by means of questionnaires.)

I mention this here because I found discrepancies between what some teachers reported on the questionnaire and what actually happened in class. For instance, in RakaiRG-A, one P2 teacher indicated on the questionnaire that there were 70 learners in her class. However, for the entire period that I conducted classroom observations in this class, there were never more than 20 learners present. In the follow-up interviews, the teacher stated that absenteeism was a serious problem in her class. Whereas it is indeed the case that learner absenteeism in rural government schools is high (as will be explained in the data analysis chapters), this teacher appeared to exaggerate the number of learners in her class. All other classes in her school had less than 30 learners, and therefore it is unlikely that her class would have 70 learners of which at least 50 are absent per day.

This study therefore used varied methods (specifically classroom observations and interviews) to provide qualitative data on teachers' practices and attitudes towards MT teaching and the curriculum, and questionnaires to provide statistical data that could be triangulated with the qualitative data. The classroom observations (and school visits in general) were supplemented by taking field notes to record observable behaviour of teachers in and outside of the classroom. The methods in the ethnographic toolkit and how each was employed in the study are discussed below.

4.7.1 Document analysis

Available and accessible policy documents on MT education and LoLT and Ugandan curriculum documents were consulted. These documents provide an understanding of the

language-in-education policy as well as curriculum guidelines on how the policy is supposed to be implemented in both urban and rural schools. Johnson (2009) and Ricento and Hornberger (1996) encourage the studying of language policy at various levels. For instance, Ricento and Hornberger (1996) use the metaphor of an onion to show how language policies are made and implemented. Each of the layers contains its policies which should be studied because it is these that the implementers (e.g., teachers) interpret and put into practice. Other informative, international literature relevant to this study was also consulted in order to ascertain how Uganda's policy and curriculum stipulations resonate with international practice, particularly in the following areas as regards the transitional model operative in Uganda: (i) the amount of time allocated to both MT and English as subjects; (ii) the language competency expected of a learner at the time transition is initiated, and (iii) the language techniques expected of teachers in P4, the transitional class.

Thomas and Mohan (2011:40) state that "policy documents are general statements of intention, and do not serve as guarantee of implementation or action". For this reason, it was important to review the policy and curriculum documents to establish how teachers understand and interpret policy guidelines and how they convert them into action (Johnson, 2009; Thomas & Mohan, 2011).

There were two documents that I was not able to access, namely two Ministry of Education and Sports circulars that were sent to schools at the time of rolling out the new curriculum and MT education. Kateeba (2009:4) summarises the information in these circulars as follows:

[t]o ensure that the language policy is adhered to and that the Thematic Curriculum is well implemented, the MOES [Ministry of Education and Sports – MES] sent circulars to all schools in Uganda (Circular no 1/2005 of 10/1/005, 3/05 and 10/01/05). The first circular gave prominence to literacy (all the four language skills) on the time table, which otherwise had been missing on time table (sic) for lower classes. The second circular emphasized the use of local languages and listed the 6 languages that already have the requirements for languages.

I am confident that the information that might have been missed out in the analysis of these two documents is well captured in the policy guidelines and from the reports collected from teachers in the form of classroom observations and/or interviews.

4.7.2 Questionnaires

Questionnaires⁴⁷ were given to 39 teachers to complete. These questionnaires contained both statistical and open-ended questions. These questions sought to collect descriptor data on the teachers and schools; the language diversity of the learners; teachers' knowledge of MT and the value of MT education; challenges in MT teaching; language policy and practice in Uganda, and the thematic curriculum. The questionnaires were also intended to elicit suggestions from teachers on how to improve the implementation of the policy and the curriculum. Questionnaires were employed because they allow for the collection of data from a large population at the same time (Marsden & Wright, 2010).

For the rural schools in Rakai district, 22 teachers were given questionnaires of which 21 were returned. The questionnaires were only distributed to teachers who indicated that they were willing to provide answers to the questions. Minimal resistance was experienced in one school (RakaiRP-D) where some teachers, especially those of P4 and P5, stated that they did not have time to complete the questionnaire. In this school, questionnaire data is thus less complete than in the other participating Rakai schools. In this district, 13 teachers from P1 through P3 completed the questionnaire (four from RakaiRG-A and three each from RakaiRG-B, RakaiRP-C and RakaiRP-D), and eight teachers from P4 and P5 completed the questionnaire (one from RakaiGR-A,⁴⁸ three from RakaiRG-B, and two each from RakaiPR-C and RakaiPR-D). As regards the urban schools in Kampala, six teachers from KampalaUP-U⁴⁹ and eight teachers from KampalaUG-W completed the questionnaire. Because I did not hand out all the questionnaires personally in this district (as explained in section 4.4), I cannot verify exactly how many questionnaires were distributed. In Oyam district, 10 questionnaires were handed out and 4 were returned, one each from all four schools.

Questionnaires from the Rakai schools were directly returned to me by individual teachers (when I visited the schools for classroom observations) while those in the two Kampala schools were collected from the head teachers' offices and those from the Oyam schools were collected and returned to me by my Makerere colleague. Some teachers in the Rakai schools

⁴⁷ See Appendices F, G, H and I.

⁴⁸ The questionnaire for the second teacher was not returned. This teacher was reported to have experienced problems that kept him away from school for the entire period during which data was collected.

⁴⁹ KampalaUP-U is thus an urban (U) private (P) school in Kampala district, and KampalaUG-W is thus an urban (U) government (G) school in Kampala district.

were not comfortable completing the questionnaire in English and thus asked for an option of completing some questions in Luganda. A few teachers had difficulty interpreting some question(s), so they asked to speak with me personally so that I could explain what the question aimed to solicit from them. Because I was conscious of biasing the responses, I limited myself in such cases to only translating the questions into Luganda. The colleague I asked to administer questionnaires to Oyam district teachers reported no challenge from teachers in completing them.

One of the weaknesses of questionnaires is that “they are often constructed in such a way that they feed into and pre-empt existing prejudices and preconceived attitudes. They often only skim the surface and render information which is substantial and of little meaningful value” (Heugh et al., 2007:86). For this reason, and because the accuracy of some of the answers was doubted, the questionnaire data was supplemented with data collected by means of other methods, as described below.

4.7.3 Classroom observations

As stated above, classroom observations were carried out in the four rural schools in Rakai district. I observed five classes in each school, thus 20 classrooms were observed in total. I visited each classroom for recorded observation at least once, but in many cases more than once, resulting in a total of 36 classroom observations. This total excludes the school and classroom visits I made for familiarisation and rapport-building purposes. Classroom observations were carried out with help of an observation guide to ensure consistency and to remain focused on what to look for during the lesson (see Appendix K). In addition, an audio-recorder was used to capture the classroom activities during observation (cf. Walsh, 2011). Classroom observations were done in order to ascertain which (linguistic) strategies teachers use in the process of teaching MT and English (for P1 through P3) and which strategies teachers employ in helping learners to transition from MT as LoLT to English as LoLT (for P4 and P5).

Other issues that classroom observations helped to capture included the time-consciousness of teachers before and during the lesson; whether or not the teacher appeared prepared for the lesson; whether or not the teachers made use of the vocabulary list provided by the NCDC (in the teachers’ resource books); and whether or not teachers codeswitched or employed other

linguistic strategies to enhance learning in the classroom.⁵⁰ The audio-recorded classroom vignettes were later transcribed and translated where necessary (see section 4.7).

There were teachers who initially seemed to resist my visits to their classes. Even when a teacher showed the typical signs of being about to enter a classroom to teach (such as having a piece of chalk and a textbook with him/her), some claimed that they were not ready to have me visit their class. I later learnt that even though I had truthfully introduced myself as not being a Ministry of Education and Sports official, some teachers doubted at first whether this was indeed the case. They were, however, later convinced as they saw me visiting the school frequently, a practice in which Ministry officials do not engage.⁵¹ Upon re-explaining the purpose of my classroom visit, these teachers would, without fail, allow me to observe their classes, but most of them would say that I was welcome to observe if I wanted to but that they did not have with them their scheme of work and lesson plans. As will be discussed in section 8.4, my observations revealed that many teachers did not prepare prior to class. Some teachers started off their lessons by silently reading a textbook for 2 to 5 minutes before turning to the class to teach the part of the lesson that they had just read; this cycle was repeated several times until end of the lesson. This, as well as some other practices, such as requesting the class to repeat one word for several minutes, was taken as a sign of a lack of preparation. Note that when Ministry officials indicate that (and when) they will be visiting a particular school, teachers take time off to prepare lessons. Some teachers' initial refusal for me to enter their class is thus probably related to the fact that they did not do any (special) preparation for the class. This acted in my favour, though, as I could then observe what these teachers usually do. The "preparation" they might have done might have made their classroom behaviour and delivery unnatural and unrepresentative of what they do while not being observed.

⁵⁰ Later on, during the individual follow-up interviews, the teacher would be asked to give an explanation of such behaviour.

⁵¹ In this regard, in a recent newspaper article on the New Vision website titled '*Strict inspection will improve quality of education*' (author unknown, March 23, 2014; see <http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/653826--strict-inspections-will-improve-quality-of-education.html>), the President of Uganda was quoted saying that lack of strict supervision by the Ministry of Education and Sports was undermining the quality of education in the country. He said "the one who sets the trap while hunting should check on it regularly for any catch. That is why the issue of supervision is very important". The reporter added that, "[a]ccording to a value for money audit report on the inspection of primary schools by the Office of the Auditor General, it was noted that schools were not regularly inspected" (author unknown, March 23, 2014).

During classroom observations, I sat amongst the learners. In private schools, there were no free desks because of the high number of learners, so I shared a desk with learners. In government schools, teachers put me alone at a desk, as there were many unoccupied desks because of the small number of learners. Some teachers introduced me to their learners as a fellow learner who had come to school to learn English, while others introduced me as a visitor. In order to minimise the distortions that a foreign person would bring to a classroom environment, I visited each class at least four times. At first, I appeared as a stranger to the learners but, since I frequently visited their classrooms, the learners appeared to grow used to my presence. I did not observe learners exhibiting abnormal behaviour because of my presence: they talked freely, shouted, played, and moved around in class. At times, I got to class ahead of the teachers (10 or 15 minutes earlier – as I will later explain, many teachers in government schools enter class late), so learners acted as if I was one of them since I sat in class and waited for the teacher with them.

The subjects or learning areas observed included English, Luganda (MT), Mathematics, Social Studies, Religious Education, Reading, and Science. Classroom observations provided very rich data as I was able to see teachers naturally and normally engaged in MT as a subject, and teaching using MT as a LoLT for various parts of the curriculum as well as teaching English. Many of the observations did not concur with what was reported on the questionnaires. For instance, some teachers indicated on the questionnaires that they did not switch between MT and English in their lessons, particularly not in the English lessons, but classroom observations showed otherwise.

During lessons, some teachers voluntarily came to me to explain why they were doing certain things the way they did. Others asked me for the correct spelling of certain words, some for Luganda and others for English. Yet others came to my desk at the end of the lesson and began to talk to me about different aspects of the lesson. I used such opportunities to ask them some of the questions on my interview guide, as explained below.

4.7.4 Follow-up interviews

Interviews (see interview guide, Appendix J) were conducted following the classroom observations of individual teachers in rural Rakai district, although not all observed teachers were interviewed (cf. Denscombe, 2008). It is important to point out that most teachers were

not comfortable exchanging views with me in English, and thus all interviews were conducted in Luganda. These were later translated into English (see section 4.7.2).

Interview as a research method is usually used alongside other methods (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) for enrichment and capturing reasons and/or explanations for certain aspects. In total, eight interviews were conducted of which five were solicited and three were unsolicited. The unsolicited interviews occurred during or directly after classroom observations. As explained above, at the end of the lesson or when a teacher had given the learners an exercise to complete, some teachers would approach me and ask me some questions which led to a discussive interview.⁵²

From the questionnaire data and from the classroom observations, it was possible to identify teachers who would provide detailed and enriching information on teachers' classroom behaviour. In the process of conducting interviews with individual teachers, there were two instances where other teachers joined in the interview. Since these interviews were conducted as an everyday conversation, either in the staff room or outside on the school grounds, other teachers could easily join in the conversation. For instance, in RakaiGR-A, I had an interview at lunch time with a P4/5 teacher in a shady spot outside. Two more teachers came and joined the interview which I left to flow naturally. I did not find this distracting; rather, the teachers were able to discuss and answer the questions I had and they reminded each other of certain things or events,⁵³ e.g., when they had had training/orientation in the thematic curriculum. In a way, I found that other teachers joining the interview increased the quality of the interview data.

P1 and P2 teachers were interviewed to gain insights into why they conducted their classes the way they did. Before the classroom observation and interview, it had already been established (by means of the questionnaire) how multilingual a particular class was, and so teachers were interviewed on how they managed the nature of multilingualism in the process of teaching MT and using MT as a LoLT. The interviews were intended to obtain a more in-depth understanding of how teachers perceive the language policy and the curriculum plus

⁵² These situations are captured in the classroom transcriptions; see, for instance, pp. 54-62 of the transcript of a P3 Religious Education lesson from RakaiGR-A, and pp. 86-88 of the transcript of a P1 *Kubala* (Mathematics) lesson at RakaiGR-B.

⁵³ In effect, this then became a focus group discussion. For the sake of simplicity, and because the multi-teacher interviews were not necessarily conducted with more than one teacher present throughout the interview, I continue to call these "interviews" rather than "focus group discussions".

(for P4 and P5 teachers) the challenges they encountered in transitioning from MT to English as LoLT. The data from interviews helped in filling gaps and providing answers to unanswered questions from the questionnaires.

All interviews were audio-recorded to avoid disruptions to the interview caused by realtime transcriptions thereof, and to enhance the accuracy of the record of the interview. Such audio-recording helps the interviewer “to concentrate on the topic and the dynamics of the interview” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:179). As stated above, I used an interview guide to help keep me focused and organised (see Creswell & Clark, 2011). In addition, I took notes during and after classroom observations and interviews. These notes were comprehensive but in the form of an outline which I later expanded at the time of organising the data for analysis (see section 4.7). These notes helped to remind me of certain observable behaviour which enhanced the data captured in the classroom observations and interviews.

4.7.5 *Field notes*

I took notes from the time I prepared to identify study schools until all classroom observations and interviews had been completed. Notes involved observations which captured non-verbal cues and other critical incidents in and outside class. For instance, during lessons, I took note of orthographical errors that teachers made. After class, I would discuss such errors with teachers in order to gain an understanding of their proficiency in writing Luganda.

Notes also helped me in identifying helpful participants when I needed follow-up interviews or further probing of what happens in and at school in general. These notes were later helpful during the transcription stages. Notes provided guiding posts on identifying critical issues in the data. In addition, I was able to interpret and contextualise the recorded classroom discourse by means of my notes. After transcription, I expanded on these notes in the form of themes that I thought out and formulated from the data (see the following sections).

4.8 Data management and analysis

4.8.1 Introduction

In this section, I explain the process of data management and analysis. Audio recordings of classroom activities and interviews were backed up daily on a computer as well as on an external hard-drive for security reasons. These password-protected recordings were later transcribed and coded. Themes were then generated, and the writing of the dissertation (in the data analysis chapters) was done thematically. Accordingly, this study employed a theme-based data analysis, as explained in the next sections.

4.8.2 Transcription and translation of recorded classroom observations and interviews

As recommended by Walsh (2011), both the recorded classroom observations and the interviews were transcribed shortly after conducting them. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009:180) reason that it is advisable for researchers to do their own transcribing “in order to secure the many details relevant to their specific analysis”. These authors add that

[r]esearchers who transcribe their own interviews will learn much about their own interviewing style; to some extent they will have social and emotional aspects of the interview situation present or reawakened during transcription, and will already have started the analysis of the meaning of what was said.

(Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:180)

For this reason, all recordings were transcribed by me. To enhance transcription speed, I used a PotPlayer audio/video player with which one can set up keyboard shortcuts in MS Word without having to go back to the media player to stop, play, or go backwards or forwards. The transcripts of the 28 hours of recording totalled 635 MS Word pages. While transcribing, I started to note those areas which appeared intriguing and could constitute compelling examples of some phenomena that I was interested in in the study. These were helpful later, at the time of reading and re-reading for coding and theming purposes. I kept separate files for each of the four schools' transcripts.

After transcription, I translated the data (totalling 748 pages). The task of translation assisted me in becoming even more familiar with the data as I “experienced” or familiarised myself with the data four times: firstly, while attending the classes where these recordings were made or while conducting the interviews; secondly, while transcribing (and thus listening to)

the recordings; thirdly, while translating (during which I at times had to go back and listen to the recordings again), and fourthly, while going through the data to code and generate themes. This familiarity with my data (reading and re-reading) helped me to identify extracts or portions thereof that carried answers to the research questions of the study (cf. Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Transcribed interviews and classroom observations were labelled as such and assigned a heading, accessible from the navigation panel in an MS Word document. In addition, the headings carried names to indicate the subject/learning area and the class from which it was taken. All interview and classroom observation transcripts of the same school were kept in one document (one such document per school) because interviews followed classroom observations, and some of the issues I asked teachers to speak about during the interviews pertained to what had happened in the classroom lessons. This allowed for easier identification of themes, issues and examples, as well as it being easier to relate classroom observation issues with teachers' interview insights that I looked for during the data analysis and writing process.

4.8.3 Coding and theming transcripts (thematic coding)

4.8.3.1 Codes and coding

By definition, a code is a “word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldana, 2009:3). Bryman (2012) states that some authors view a code and a theme as the same thing, however he explains that themes are built on codes. Bryman says that coding entails going through data (e.g., interview transcripts) and categorising responses, and that coding helps in interpreting what is going on in the data in relation to the research objectives. In this study, codes were assigned in three stages: at listening and reading for accuracy, at translation, and at the stage of searching for themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). (See steps of identifying themes below.)

Saldana (2009:4) states that codes help to “condense data” but not to “reduce it”. Codes condense the data in that portions of data are assigned a word or sentence representing large chunks of texts, and by merely looking at the codes, the data appears condensed – it is

through these codes that one can “see all the data”. Saldana (2009:4), with reference to Basit (2003:145), explains that “coding and analysis are not synonymous, though coding is a crucial aspect of analysis”. Saldana argues that there are no specific steps to coding and that the process is cyclical. This also means that one can code in one’s own way as long as one adheres to the principles (this is expounded on later in this section). The essence of this coding is to help in identifying patterns in the data which inform the analysis. Furthermore, Saldana adds that codes provide clues to categorisation of data, which we can also call “themes”.

In this study, when coding the classroom observation data I collected in RakaiRP-D in a P1 English lesson, for example, I coded the relevant data: “Teacher checks to see whether learners know these items in Luganda (OT1.DP1.12)”; when coding a P2 English lesson in RakaiRP-D, I used the code “Teachers switch to Luganda in English lesson to check comprehension” (OT4.DP2.122)”, and when coding an interview I had with a P1 teacher in RakaiRG-B, I coded “Teachers did not get enough training (IT1.BP1.1)”. The coding adopted in this study was thus a combination of identifying themes (discussed below) and immediately supplying a code, where, by using the latter, I could locate such an issue in the transcripts. The data codes indicated whether something (a theme in the form of a sentence, word or a chunk of transcript, cf. Bryman, 2012; Saldana, 2009) was captured in a classroom observation or during an interview, the class in which it occurred, and the number of the page on which it is located within the transcripts files. For instance, for transcript OT1.DP1.12 referred to above comprises ‘O’ for (classroom) observation, ‘T’ for transcript, ‘1’ for the number of the transcript, ‘A’ for the school label (in this case a shorthand form of “school RakaiRP-D, a rural primary school in Rakai district”), ‘P’ for primary, ‘1’ for P1 and ‘12’ for page number 12 of the transcript. Thus, this code can be read as observation transcript 1, school RakaiGR-A, class P1 on page 12. These codes were later used in citing and tracing the source of examples. In addition, the codes were helpful in cross-referencing and in referring to locations of issues discussed in the transcripts during the writing of the dissertation. Also, the reader can use these codes for accessing the location of certain information within the transcripts.

When reporting and referring to individual/particular teachers who were participants in this study, I assigned them code names for anonymity purposes. Codes such as A1, B2, U1 and

W9, etc. have been used to refer to respondents/teachers. These codes relate to the schools from which respondents/teachers come: if a respondent is from RakaiRG-A, they will have a code such as A1, A3, etc. Learners have also been assigned codes: L for singular and Ls for many. Where a learner's name was mentioned in class (by the teacher or fellow learners), it is replaced with a pseudonym in the dissertation in accordance with the promise of confidentiality alluded to earlier. After coding, the next step was that of identifying themes as discussed in the next section.

4.8.3.2 Themes and theming

As mentioned earlier, this study employed themes to analyse data. Thematic data analysis is defined as “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006:79), where a theme is “an outcome of coding, categorisation, and analytic reflection” (Saldana, 2009:13). The latter two are arrived at by reading and re-reading (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006) the already coded data which then informs the development of themes and categories of data. Bryman (2012) also says that reflections on the data guide theme identification across data sets. (Recall that this study had various data sets relating to the various methods used.) Bryman (2012) states that theming is the attaching of names to pieces of text in transcripts representing a particular phenomenon. In this regard, Saldana (2009) states that themes are only signposts to facilitate data analysis. This means that the “name” or “sign post” guides the researcher in the writing process when tracing where particular issues are located in the transcripts (for instance in extracting examples).

Braun and Clarke (2006) state that there are two ways of coming up with themes in data management. The first is deductive and the second is inductive. This study employed an inductive approach in that the themes identified related to the data and that this data was specifically collected to answer questions posed in this particular study, as opposed to the deductive approach in which the data determines the process of identifying themes. Braun and Clarke (2006:11) state that thematic data analysis is, so far, the most “useful in capturing the complexities of meaning within a textual data set”. These authors view this method as credible as it draws from a range of theoretical and methodological approaches but with a sole end of a true and fair representation of participants' voices and experiences. Braun and Clarke (2006) contend that the most common methods used in this research approach are

interviews texts, focus group discussions and qualitative field notes (cf. the methods researchers recommend for ethnographic studies in section 4.6). This implies that thematic data analysis is well suited for an ethnographic study such as this one.

I was aided in the identification of themes by the questionnaires that were sectionalised thematically. The themes on the questionnaire (e.g., knowledge of mother tongue and its importance; challenges in transition from mother tongue to English; language policy and practices in Uganda) were also helpful in identifying themes in the transcripts – I looked for portions of data which related to such issues. Furthermore, the interviews were also conducted along particular lines, e.g., challenges in teaching MT as a subject; how a teacher felt about using MT as LoLT but he/she was trained through English (see Appendix J).

After identifying the themes in the transcripts, I looked at the closed (quantitative data) and open-ended questions on the questionnaire and marked/coded them as objective (i), objective (ii), objective (iii), etc. depending on the objective of this study to which the question related. This was done to ease the process of writing up the questionnaire results. Open-ended questions were then entered into an Excel spreadsheet and respondents' answers were entered against their codes, e.g., A1, B2, U3, W8, etc. for each particular question. These were very easy to compare as similar and differing answers to particular questions were easily identifiable. After transcription, translation and entering quantitative data into SPSS, I typed out all field notes (those taken during classroom observations and outside of the classrooms) thematically. This I did following the "issues" identified in the transcripts of the classroom observations and interviews. All themes and issues related to such themes were coded within the transcripts by using the comments function accessible from the review drop-down menu in MS Word. Whenever I identified a theme, I immediately supplied a code to the relevant portion of data, making use of numbers and letters as explained in the previous section.

When the time came for me to analyse particular themes, it was easy to find data (in the form of transcripts or by using codes) from different data sets, i.e., from the quantitative questionnaire data (which was already marked out on questionnaires and entered into SPSS), qualitative questionnaire data (entered into Excel spreadsheets), interview transcripts (coded and themed), field notes (typed out under themes/subheadings) and/or observation transcripts (coded and themed).

I used themes to develop an outline of chapters for the dissertation, taking care to refer to objectives and research questions. Each objective was addressed and/or research question answered in a particular data chapter (see Chapters 5 through 8). It was then possible for me to refer to the transcripts, field notes, qualitative questionnaire data and quantitative questionnaire data to source examples in the form of extracts or codes when I was doing the analysis and interpretation of findings, as all the data had been coded, themed and outlined thematically as explained above.

Note that some scholars argue that there are no properly outlined, specific steps to coding and/or identifying themes, and that there are merely principles with which a researcher should comply (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Saldana, 2009). Braun and Clarke (2006:89) however provide six steps of thematic analysis. I outline these steps below while indicating how I followed them in this study (cf. also Srivastava & Thomson, 2009); this serves as a summary of how especially the qualitative data was treated.

- (i) Familiarising oneself with the data: this step includes transcribing, reading and re-reading the data while jotting down the initial ideas. I complied to this by conducting the classroom observations and interviews myself and by transcribing and translating the data myself (cf. Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) (see section 4.7.2)
- (ii) Generating initial codes: this step involves coding intriguing features of data. I did this in field-note taking and at the time of transcribing, translating and re-reading the data. In addition, at the end of every day of observing and interviewing respondents, I listened to the recordings and noted interesting issues before I embarked on transcription later at the end of the data collection stage.
- (iii) Searching for themes (i.e., searching data for patterned or repeated meanings; Braun & Clarke, 2006): this step involves collecting potential themes and collating relevant data to each theme. I did this at the time of translating the transcripts during which I identified themes as well as noted data portions which appeared to be compelling examples and potential examples to some issues (some of these data portions were words and others were larger chunks). I highlighted these by using different colours and by making comments and assigning codes to locate where such an identified theme is located in the transcripts. I continued to identify themes when I was typing out my field notes. At this stage, I looked for those classroom and interview extracts/portions which corresponded with the notes I took during

classroom observations. The last search for themes occurred when I planned and drew up the outline of each data analysis chapter. Upon drawing up these outlines, I developed sections and subsections (paying attention to research questions and objectives) under which I assigned codes and/or pasted (in a systematic manner) portions of transcripts (be they from classroom observations or interviews).

- (iv) Reviewing themes: this step generates a thematic “map” of the analysis. Themes here can also be subsumed. While writing this dissertation, I developed a comprehensive chapter outline (of Chapters 5 to 8) in which I answered the different research questions. At this stage, I also merged some sections of the earlier outline in (iii) above.
- (v) Defining and naming themes: this is done through an ongoing analysis where specific themes are refined and specific names for each theme generated. During this step, I had to move some themes and sub-themes to other (sub-)sections and merge others, the latter only appearing as examples.
- (vi) Producing the report: this is the analysis stage. Here, example extracts are produced in the discussion, and reference to literature is made, which leads to the production of a scholarly report of the analysis.

While writing this dissertation, the fifth and sixth steps were recurrent. Sections and parts of some chapters, including example extracts, had to be moved around and some completely removed and replaced with others which appeared to carry more compelling examples. Reviewing the literature was also an ongoing process, as each “newly discovered” relevant source was read and included in the dissertation drafts throughout the study period.

4.8.4 Questionnaire data

I made a visual inspection of each completed questionnaire upon receiving it, in order to identify potential interviewees based on the questionnaire responses as well as the classroom observations. Only after analysing the interview and classroom observation data did I analyse the questionnaire data. Recall that I had already coded/marked each question as they related to particular objectives and/or themes. The data obtained from the questionnaires was of two types, quantitative and qualitative. As explained above, I prepared the quantitative data for analysis by entering data points into Excel spreadsheets and assigning codes for statistical

analysis. This data was then exported to the SPSS programme and analysed statistically (see below). Hereafter, I tabulated the qualitative data into Excel spreadsheets so that I could easily follow the opinions of the teachers on the same topics, whether their opinions were the same or differed.

The quantitative data for the questionnaire was checked for any possible errors by a professional who was familiar with SPSS. When there were no errors reported, I proceeded with the analysis thereof.

4.8.5 Data analysis

Data analysis was done within a triangulation design. Triangulation procedures are a means of collecting and analysing complementary data on the same topic (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Denscombe, 2008), making use of various research methods “in tandem” (Denscombe, 2008:274). The data collected by means of various methods, as stated earlier, was analysed thematically. Braun and Clarke (2006:15) state that thematic data analyses “comprise a bit of everything” but that we borrow “what we feel are the more useful techniques from each theoretical and methodological camp and adapt them to an applied research context”. By doing so, the findings of the study are deemed trustworthy (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In sum, having used four core methods in this study, I had four data sets, namely questionnaire data, classroom observation data, interview data and field notes data.

Through a theme-based analysis, teachers’ ways of thinking, believing, feeling, and valuing, and their emotions towards the language policy and the curriculum, were arrived at (cf. Blommaert, 2005; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Gee, 2005). This focus situates this study in phenomenological studies which inquire how people make sense of the world around them (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Bryman, 2012). In addition, triangulation as a method was used to draw connections and/or disconnections between what the teachers reported on in the questionnaires and in interviews and what was observed in the classrooms, on the one hand, and what the language policy and curriculum demand of the teachers’ practices in their classrooms, on the other. Quantitative data was analysed by means of descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies (in percentages) and means/medians. Field notes in the form of descriptive details of observable behaviour as well as my reflections and insights were used to enrich the arguments and evidence found in the qualitative and the quantitative data.

Finally, the findings based on this data were cross-referenced by current international literature (cf. Bryman, 2012) on MT education in multilingual contexts similar, in some respects, to that in Uganda.

4.9 Validity and reliability of the research findings

Shenton (2004) states that some scholars question the validity of qualitative work, however he hastens to add that it is possible to incorporate measures that can help to address issues of validity and reliability of qualitative work. The strength of a study is gauged by its validity (Creswell & Clark, 2007, 2011). Shenton (2004) states that there are four questions asked when assessing the validity and reliability of a study. These questions pertain to the following (note that different terms may be used to refer to the same notion): (i) credibility or internal validity; (ii) transferability, external validity or generalisability; (iii) dependability or reliability, and (iv) confirmability or objectivity of the findings. There are various ways of establishing the validity of research, and three were employed in this study to increase the credibility and validity of the study findings.

4.9.1 Use of the triangulation method

Triangulation, briefly discussed above, which involves using various methods to analyse data, helps increase validity and reliability in the sense that all methods used cross-validate one another. The weaknesses or shortcomings in one method are thus compensated for by another method (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Denscombe, 2008; Gillham, 2007). Document analysis, questionnaires, classroom observations, interviews and field notes are different sources of data used in an integrated manner in this study.

4.9.2 Inter-transcriber reliability and translation checking

Transcriber reliability refers to how accurate one's transcription is (e.g., Breen, Dilley, Kraemer, & Gibson, 2012). In this study, I employed a second transcriber to determine how reliable my transcriptions were. A colleague, who works with the Centre for Language and Communication Services at Makerere University⁵⁴ and who has experience in transcribing

⁵⁴ See <http://clcs.mak.ac.ug/>

recordings, transcribed one full audio recording of a classroom observation of a P1 Social Studies class in RakaiRP-C. The inter-transcriber reliability was 98.6%; I transcribed the recording of 27.39 minutes in 2,184 words and my colleague in 2,214 words.

Similarly, all the translations were checked and proofread by a colleague from Makerere University. This person is a practising translator of English documents into Luganda and vice versa. The checking and proofreading indicated that my renditions of Luganda to English were accurate in all instances.

4.9.3 Peer debriefing

The results of this study have undergone peer debriefing (see Creswell & Clark, 2007). Debriefing in this study has been done in two ways. The first is that I have had two supervisors who have acted as the main debriefers. They have considered various issues in this study during the planning phases as well as during the progression of the study, and they provided essential feedback in clarifying areas of uncertainty. Secondly, parts of the study's results have been presented in the form of scientific talks at public seminars, colloquia, and conferences, including the Linguistics seminar held at Makerere University (November 2012); the annual Joint Conference of the Linguistics Society of Southern Africa, Southern African Applied Linguistics Association and the South African Association of Language Teachers hosted by Stellenbosch University (July 2013); the Multidisciplinary Approaches in Language Policy and Planning Conference hosted by the University of Calgary (September 2013); the colloquium *SAIDE'S African Storybook project: Research for social change* held at Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study (October 2013); the AILA-Europe Junior Researcher Meeting in Applied Linguistics held at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland (May 2014), and several PhD colloquia at Stellenbosch University (2013/2014). In all these fora, feedback was received from different local and international scholars in the field, which helped in clarifying and validating the study findings. These findings are presented in Chapters 5 to 8.

Chapter 5

LANGUAGE PROFILES OF SCHOOLS, CLASSROOMS AND TEACHERS

5.1 Introduction

Chapters 2 and 3 reviewed the available scholarship on bilingual education with particular focus on the transitional model. In addition, researchers' recommendations on what should be done to make transitional models beneficial to learners were highlighted. In this and the next three chapters, answers to the research questions of this study are proposed and analysed against this backdrop and the research context outlined in the previous chapter. I also discuss, by triangulating the results, the implications of these findings for the language-in-education policy and the quality of education in Uganda using the ethnographic toolkit as presented in Chapter 4 – document analysis, questionnaires, interviews, participant classroom observations and note taking.

Objective (i) of this dissertation was to compile the language profiles of study schools with a focus on individual classrooms and teachers. This was done for two reasons:

- (i) Aware that the language policy of Uganda stipulates that urban communities are far more multilingual than rural areas, a linguistic profile of learners, teachers, and schools was necessary to see how multilingual they are in practice.
- (ii) Aware that in many African communities, it is possible for children to grow up with multiple languages which can all be regarded as their L1, a record of linguistic profiles of learners was called for.

Such language diversity profiles will help us to understand the extent to which the practice (or disregard) of MT education in various types of schools in Uganda is informed by the nature of the multilingualism found in them. A related aspect is the proficiency of learners in their various languages. Teachers were asked to rate this proficiency, and these results are also presented in this chapter.

5.2 Language profiles of schools

5.2.1 Language profiles of rural schools in Rakai district

As explained in the previous chapter, there were four study schools in Rakai district. Two of these were government schools (RakaiRG-A and RakaiRG-B) and two were private schools (RakaiRP-C and RakaiRP-D). The following tables show the languages spoken in these schools together with the number of learners for each language⁵⁵ in different classrooms. Teachers were asked to provide this data on questionnaires.

Table 1: Languages spoken by learners in RakaiGR-A

Please list all the languages that the learners speak and indicate the number of learners for each language				
Classes	Luganda	Runyankore	Runyarwanda	Rurundi
P1 (n = 70)	53	-	8	9
P2 (n = 50)	35	-	6	9
P3 (n = 41)	33	-	-	8
P4 (n = 35)	35	-	-	-
P5 (n = 31)	28	3	-	-

Table 2: Languages spoken by learners in RakaiRG-B

Please list all the languages that the learners speak and indicate the number of learners for each language				
Classes	Luganda	Runyankore	Runyarwanda	Rurundi
P1 (n = 60)	60	-	-	-
P2 (n = 50)	50	-	-	-
P3 (n = 54)	40	-	10	4
P4 (n = 54)	54	-	-	-
P5 (n = 32)	32	-	-	-

Table 3: Languages spoken by learners in RakaiRP-C

Please list all the languages that the learners speak and indicate the number of learners for each language					
Classes	Luganda	Runyankore	Runyarwanda	Rurundi	Rukiga
P1 (n = 104)	104	-	-	-	-
P2 (n = 84)	77	7	-	-	3
P3 (n = 84)	75	5	4	-	-
P4 (n = 54)	54	-	-	-	-
P5 (n = 32)	32	-	-	-	-

⁵⁵ Some people regard Runyankore and Rukiga as a single language. One can find a speaker of Runyankore referring to themselves as a speaker of Runyankore-Rukiga, while another would simply say that they speak Rukiga and/or Runyankore. In the linguistic profiles of the urban schools, some teachers labelled their learners as speakers of Runyankore-Rukiga while others were labelled as speakers of Rukiga or Runyankore. These two languages are mutually intelligible, which causes people to regard them as one language. However, Lewis, Simons, & Fennig (2013) treat them as different languages.

Table 4: Languages spoken by learners in RakaiRP-D

Please list all the languages that the learners speak and indicate the number of learners for each language					
Classes	Luganda	Runyankore	Runyarwanda	Rukiga	Kiswahili
P1 (n = 46)	42	-	-	-	4
P2 (n = 65)	40	10	-	15	-
P3 (n = 84)	84	-	-	-	-
P4 (n = 71)	71	-	-	-	-
P5 (n = 70)	70	-	-	-	-

As can be seen from these tables, all four study schools in this area had learners speaking various languages: Luganda (Ganda), Runyoro (Nyoro), Runyarwanda (Rwanda), Rurundi (Rundi), Rukiga (Kiga/Chiga), and Kiswahili. There were four languages spoken by learners in RakaiRG-A and RakaiRG-B whereas RakaiRP-C and RakaiRP-D had five languages each. However, the dominant language in each of these schools and in each of the classrooms is clearly Luganda. When asked to indicate the language spoken by most learners in the school, Luganda was identified by all the participating teachers as the dominant language.

5.2.2 Language profiles of rural schools in Oyam district

Recall that four schools (all government owned) were selected from Oyam district, a rural district in northern Uganda. The following table illustrates the linguistic repertoires of these four schools.

Table 5: Languages spoken by learners in northern comparative schools (Oyam district)

Please list all the languages that the learners speak and indicate the number of learners for each language					
Schools:classes	Luo	Laŋo	Kiswahili	Acholi	Luganda
OyamRG-N1: P5 (n = 147)	130	-	17	-	-
OyamRG-N2: P4 (n = 110)	110	-	-	-	-
OyamRG-N3: P4 (n = 96)	-	95	-	1	-
OyamRG-N4:P4 (n = 255)	-	243	-	12	1

All four schools had a clear dominant language in each of the classes sampled. OyamRG-N1 and OyamRG-N2 had Luo as the dominant language whereas OyamRG-N3 and OyamRG-N4 had Laŋo. As was the case for the four rural schools in Rakai district, the schools in Oyam district were less multilingual than schools in urban areas (see section 5.2.3). Bearing in mind the current language-in-education policy, which states that a rural school selects a dominant language as LoLT, MT education should be possible in all four schools in Oyam district.

5.2.3 Language profiles of urban schools in Kampala

For urban schools, teachers were asked to list all the languages that learners speak, indicating the number of learners for each language in the classes they taught. The data obtained is tabulated below.

Table 6: Languages spoken by learners in urban KampalaUP-U

Please list all the languages the learners speak and indicate the number of learners for each language								
Classes	Luganda	Swahili	Runyankore-Rukiga	Lusoga	Ateso	Runya-rwanda	Tigirinya	Sunju
P1 (n = 21)	21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
P2 (n = 16)	11	2	-	-	-	1	1	-
P3 (n = 23)	12	-	3	2	3	-	-	3

Table 7: Languages spoken by learners in urban KampalaUG-W

Please list all the languages the learners speak and indicate the number of learners for each language								
Classes	Luganda	Swahili	Runyankore-Rukiga	Lusoga	Ateso	Luo	Rutooro	Japadohola
P1 (n = 80)	80	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
P2 (n = 98)	98	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
P3 (n=105)	*	-	*	*	*	*	*	-
P4 (n= 96)	40	6	30	-	10	-	3	7

* The respondent for the P3 class in this school listed the languages spoken by learners (see those asterisked) but did not indicate the number of learners for each of those identified languages.

As can be seen from Tables 6 and 7, a total of 11 languages were identified as spoken by learners in the urban schools: eight in KampalaUG-W and eight in KampalaUP-U, with five of these overlapping between the two schools. Of these 11 languages, two are foreign languages: Tigirinya is of Eritrean origin, and Sunju is of Somalian origin. The presence of the Somalian language can be explained on account of the past political insurgencies in Somalia which led to some Somalis coming to Uganda as refugees. There is no clear explanation for the presence of an Eritrean language in Kampala schools, apart from present-day migration practices around the world.

There are thus more languages spoken in the urban schools than in rural schools, a finding that confirms the fact that urban areas are more multilingual than rural areas. Kampala is the capital city of both the country and the region inhabited by the Baganda people, who speak Luganda, a language of wider communication. As such, the lingua franca in Kampala is Luganda (rather than English).

5.3 Learners' language proficiency as reported by their teachers

In this section, I discuss learners' language proficiency as rated by their classroom teachers as well as comments on this proficiency made by teachers during the follow-up interviews. I discuss proficiency in MT first and then proficiency in English.

5.3.1 Learners' proficiency in their mother tongues

5.3.1.1 Learners proficiency in their mother tongues prior to school entry

Teachers in Rakai district reported that although some of the learners have MTs other than Luganda, these learners are fluent in Luganda. Since Luganda is the dominant language in this district (cf. Read & Enyutu, 2004), children learn it from playmates in the villages, and they are proficient in Luganda by the time they enter school.

An example (see Extract 1 below) in this case is learners whose MT is Runyarwanda (Rwanda). Rwanda is the neighbouring country to the south-west of Uganda. Rwandan asylum seekers settled in Rakai district in 1994 when they fled from Rwanda because of the genocide that marred their country at that time. Parents and/or grandparents of these children have now been in Rakai district for two decades. Teachers reported no difficulty in using Luganda as LoLT to these children. Banda (2009, 2010), Heugh et al. (2007), and Ouane and Glanz (2010) have observed that in Africa, some children who grow up in multilingual communities have two (or more) languages in which they have proficiency similar to that of MT speakers. In other words, children have multi-language competencies upon enrolment in school, and their linguistic repertoires can easily be accommodated in education. In the follow-up interviews, I asked teachers whether they have learners in their classes who do not know Luganda. The following extract⁵⁶ from an interview conducted in RakaiRG-A is representative of teachers' responses:

⁵⁶ In all extracts, transcriptions of what was said in Luganda and the English translations thereof appear in bold type-face (the Luganda unitalicised and the English translation italicised), whereas what was said in English appears in unformatted (regular) type-face in the transcription and in unbolded italics when it forms part of the translation. Lugandan names also appear in bold. In all instances, what had been said was transcribed verbatim, and translations attempt to give an accurate rendition of how what was said was said (rather than making use of so-called "standard English". "MS" refers to me, "T" to "teacher", and "L(s)" to "learner(s)".

Extract 1: *Teachers' opinions about learners' language repertoires*

- ₁MS:** Kati mu ssomero mulimukko abaana abajjamu nga tamanyidde ddala ku Luganda? Nga kati ne mumufuna nga mu P1 oba mu P2 awo?
Do you get any learners joining this school without any knowledge of Luganda; say those who come to join P1 or P2?
- ₂T3:** Edda, edda ng'abagundi bali baakajja oluusi, Abanyarwanda, baavanga eri mu Kigera.
Some time back when these people had just come; the Banyarwanda came from Kigera.
- ₃T1:** Kati baayiga tekikyali kizibu kyabwe.
But they are now conversant; this is no longer a problem to them. [Referring to refugees who came from Rwanda in 1994 – MES]
- ₄MS:** Mhm.
Yes.
- ₅T3:** Eech, bajjanga.
Yes, they used to come.
- ₆T1:** Olulimi baalumanya, kati abaliwo bazaaliranwa baamwo.
They know the language, and those who are around now are natives in this area.
- ₇T3:** Baaluyiga dda, nabo balumanyi. Ekyo tekikyali kizibu kyabwe.
They learnt the language. It is no longer a problem to them.

IT1.AP1/4.134

Learners whose MT was reported to be Kiswahili are nationals of Tanzania, a neighbouring country south of Uganda and a few kilometres away from Rakai district in which this study was conducted. Teachers reported that some children from Tanzania have recently begun to come to Uganda to undertake their primary education in Uganda. Such learners mostly join private schools, as can be seen in Table 4 where there are four learners in P1 whose MT is Kiswahili.

5.3.1.2 Learners' proficiency in their mother tongues prior to transitioning to English as language of learning and teaching

Specific questions were set on the questionnaire to ascertain how rural P1 to P3 teachers rated learners' fluency in their MTs. Most respondents (9/13; 69.2%) stated that learners could read and speak their MTs well. However, only a small majority (7/13; 53.8%) thought that learners could write their MTs well. As will be explained in Chapter 8, most teachers unreservedly mentioned that they found MT teaching a challenge, and the classroom observations confirmed that they had great challenges writing in MT. It could be that teachers projected their own limitations in writing in MT onto their learners.

5.3.1.3 Learners' proficiency in MT after transitioning to English as language of learning and teaching

Rural P4 and P5 teachers were requested to rate their learners' writing and reading abilities in MT on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is very poor and 10 is excellent. These learners would be those who are in the process of transitioning (P4 learners) or have completed their transition from MT to English as LoLT (P5 learners). One of the eight teachers chose not to respond to this question on the questionnaire. The others rated their learners as follows: two teachers each gave a rating of 5 and 6, one gave a rating of 7, and another two gave a rating of 8 (the mean rating was 7.43). Based on these ratings, it appears that teachers rated the P4 and P5 learners' MT proficiency between average and very good. Rural P4 and P5 teachers were also asked directly whether their learners could read, speak and write their MT well, and the responses here were less favourable. The majority (6/8; 75%) of respondents thought that learners could not read their MT well. This response contradicts the ratings given by the P1 to P3 teachers, of whom 69.2% (9/13) thought that their learners could read and speak their MT well. In the area of writing, 87.5% (7/8) of respondents indicated that learners in P4 and P5 could not write their MT well, compared to a small minority of P1 to P3 teachers (12.5%; 3/8) who thought the same of their learners. When one considers the teachers' statement that they find MT teaching challenging (see section 8.4), it is to be somewhat expected that their learners would not be good readers and/or writers of that language which their teachers find problematic to deliver in class. One should also add that since some teachers reported not teaching MT as a subject (see section 6.3), it is predictable that they would be of the opinion that their learners cannot read and/or write their MTs well.

5.3.2 Learners' proficiency in English as language of learning and teaching

5.3.2.1 Learners' proficiency in English prior to transitioning to English as language of learning and teaching

When rural teachers were asked to evaluate their learners' performance in English in terms of reading and speaking, five of the 13 P1 to P3 respondents (38.5%) indicated that their learners could read but not speak English. As regards speaking and writing, all 13 respondents (100%) disagreed with the statement that their learners can speak English but cannot write it well. When such an evaluation is measured against what curriculum and policy guidelines expect of learners' fluency in English after P3, the result indicates that

learners are not necessarily meeting the expectations. The NCDC predicted that by the end of P3, learners would have an English vocabulary of 800 words, and that when learners have this vocabulary size, they will be able to communicate academically and socially in English. But, as indicated in Chapters 2 and 3, this number of words is unrealistically high, for the following reasons.

Firstly, the NCDC's prediction is not supported in literature. As stated in section 3.6.2, available evidence, as found in Heugh (2006, 2011a) and Van Ginkel (2011), provides that a non-English-speaking learner in a relatively well-resourced environment like South Africa would acquire a vocabulary of about 500 to 600 English words (Heugh, 2006, 2011a) by the end of the third year of school. Given that schools in Uganda are generally not as well-resourced as many schools in South Africa, it is doubtful whether learners in Uganda could acquire an English vocabulary equivalent to that of learners in South Africa. It is also important to remember that learners in Uganda (in both rural and urban areas) are not exposed to English to the same extent as many learners in South Africa are. This limits Ugandan learners' opportunities to learn the language.

Secondly, if a language is to be used as LoLT, learners require a vocabulary of somewhere in the range of 7000 to 8000 words (Van Ginkel, 2011) in that language. This lexis is required if L2 learners are to compete academically with native speakers of that language. This criterion is not met by Ugandan learners by the time they complete P3. This means that the timing of the transition from MT to English (at the end of the third year) is probably unrealistic.

When asking teachers whether learners would need more time to learn English before it would be used as a LoLT, they were almost equally divided between Yes and No as an answer; a small majority, (7/13) 53.8%, thought that these learners did not need more time to learn English. However, P4 and P5 teachers complained of learners' inadequacy in English (see Chapter 7), which could be an indication that children do indeed require more time to learn English. These complaints were voiced not only in the interviews (e.g., IT2.BP5.7) but also during lessons. Heugh and Mulumba (2013) also report that by end of P4 learners are not ready to transition to English as LoLT in the northern and north western regions of Uganda where the Literacy and Adult Basic Education organisation operates (see section 3.3).

Teachers were asked to report on expectations regarding learners' proficiency in English before transition. Specifically, P1 to P3 teachers were requested to indicate whether their learners were expected to be fluent in English at the end of P3. 69.2% of the respondents (9/13) believed that their learners were not expected to be fluent in English after P3. Only four teachers (30.8%) thought the opposite. Two of these four were government school teachers and the other two were private school teachers. This data implies one of two things: (i) that teachers were ignorant of the language policy demands, or (ii) that teachers knew of the language policy stipulations but thought that the goals set therein were not achievable within three years.

5.3.2.2 Learners' proficiency in English after transitioning to English as language of learning and teaching

Rural P4 and P5 teachers were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 10, their learners' performance in English. The mean of these teachers' responses, 6.57, indicates that learner performance in English is evaluated as good but not necessarily very good (and somewhat lower than the mean for the MT, which was 7.43). The majority of respondents (75%; 6/8) considered their learners good at reading English but poor at speaking it. These responses correspond to those of P1 and P3 teachers who believed that their learners could read but not speak English. The P4 and P5 teachers' responses match what was observed in the classrooms regarding learners' fluency in English, as will be discussed later.

It is interesting to note that when P4 and P5 respondents were required to indicate whether they considered it relevant for their learners to have more time to learn English before English can be used as LoLT, 62.5% (5/8) of the respondents did not think it necessary. This response from P4 and P5 teachers was very similar to that of P1 to P3 teachers (see section 5.3.2.1). During the debriefing sessions, after having completed the questionnaire, P1 to P3, P4 and P5 teachers indicated that learners did not need more time to learn English but rather that they needed to have it as a LoLT in order to master it well. Teachers thought that when English was used as a LoLT, it could be acquired easier than when it was taught as a subject. The extract below, taken from a P5 teacher in RakaiRG-B, is representative of teachers' beliefs concerning the learning of English.

Extract 2: *Teacher's opinion about learners' fluency in English*

- ¹MS: Naye nga level yaabwe ey'abayizi aba P5 ogiraba otya? Ey'Oluzungu, mu kuwandiika ne mu kwogera kwennyini.
But how do you evaluate the learners' level in P5? Their abilities in English - in writing and speaking?
- ²T: Oluzungu lwabwe lutono.
Their English vocabulary is small.
- ³MS: Lutono?
Small vocabulary?
- ⁴T: Mhm.
Yes.
- ⁵MS: Olowooza nti singa baawebwayokko, singa policy yali nti basomere Olungereza nga subject nga bwe kiri mu P1 to P3 ne bagamba nti basome Olungereza nga subject okumala emyaka nga etaanu kyandiyizizza okubongerako ku bumanyi bwabwe obw'Olungereza?
Do you think if the policy was to be that they study English for five years from P1 to P3 it would help to increase their competence in English?
- ⁶T: Nga subject kwe kugamba nga ebirala babisoma mu lulimi lwabwe oluzaaliranwa?
As a subject but learning the rest in their mother tongues?
- ⁷MS: Yee. Kyandibadde kitya awo?
Yes. How would it be in such a case?
- ⁸T: Nze ekintu ekyo engeri gye nkirabamu, kwe kugamba Oluzungu luno baba beetaagisa okusoma mu Luzungu, olw'ensonga enkulu nti ebibuuzo bye babuuzababibuuzamu mu Luzungu.
From my point of view, for English, it is proper that they study through English because of one major reason: the exams they sit at the end of the day are in English.
- ⁹MS: Ebya P7?
P7 exams?
- ¹⁰T: Mhm. Kaakati ng'abaana Oluzungu bwe baba tebalumanyidde, ekitegeeza nti ebibuuzo baba bateekwa okubigwa.
Yes, since they would not be used to the English language, they are bound to fail the exams.

IT2.BP5.7-8

In turn 8 of Extract 2, the respondent states that it is not preferable to have MT as LoLT and English as a subject; rather, English should be the LoLT. The justification for this statement is that the examinations at the end of primary school are written in English, a point to which we will return in Chapter 6. The same teacher considered private schools to be at an advantage because learners in private schools have more years of learning English than government school learners who did not attend pre-school (IT2.BP5.10). This teacher could be seen as implying that the only way for government schools to catch up and perhaps close the two- or three-year gap between their learners and those in private schools is to use English as LoLT. Recall that government schools do not have a pre-primary section and entry to government schools is not restricted whereas entry to private schools (in P1) is conditional upon passing an interview in English (see section 3.2 and 8.3 for details on pre-primary schooling). This might explain why teachers in government schools prefer teaching other curriculum areas at the expense of MT as a subject, in anticipation that their learners would

catch up with those in private schools who they regard as already having the “advantage” of pre-primary schooling.

In follow-up interviews, teachers recounted that by the time learners were promoted to P4, they had not yet acquired the requisite English language skills. I illustrate this with classroom vignettes. The first one is that of a learner in P4 (RakaiRG-B): in this class, one learner was a time keeper who left class to go and ring the bell at break time. As I walked out of the class with the teacher, we met this learner returning to class and the following conversation ensued:

- ₁T: So you are the school time keeper?
₂L: Yes.
₃T: What is the time?
₄L: **Nnya kitundu.**
Ten thirty.

Source: Field notes

This conversation indicates that the learner comprehended the teachers’ question but lacked the English vocabulary to respond. This scenario is similar to what was observed in classroom lessons. For example, in a P5 Religious Education lesson in RakaiRG-B, the teacher asked learners questions in English but they responded in Luganda, as illustrated below.

Extract 3: *Learners responding to English questions in MT*

- ₁T: Now, there are some, the people who write the gospel are called the gospel wri⁵⁷...
₂LS: Writers
₃T: The gospel writers. We have the gospel writers. Who have ever heard of them? Uhm? NAKAYIMA, have you ever heard of a gospel writer? Man, do you know any one of one? Uhm tell me.
₄L2: **Matayo.**
Matthew.
₅T: **Matayo** is what in English? **Matayo** is what in English?
₆L3: **Matthew.**
₇T: Is Matthew. Clap for him.
₈LS: [Learners clap hands].
₉T: This is Matthew. Matthew is the first gospel writer. The gospel according to Matthew. Then another gospel writer we have? These four gospel writers were writing about Jes⁵⁷...
₁₀LS: Jesus.
₁₁T: They were writing about Jesus. Then number two? Yes, no, yes girl.
₁₂L4: **Lukka.**
Luke
₁₃T: **Lukka** is what in English? **Lukka** is what in English? Yes? Uhm? Uh? I can write who? **Lukka** is? **Lukka** is Luke. **Lukka** is Lu⁵⁷...

⁵⁷ This symbol is used to mark rising intonation (see section 7.4.1).

- 14Ls: Luke.
 15T: Is Luke, is l-u-k-e. **Gamba** Luke.
Is Luke, is l-u-k-e. You say, Luke.
 16Ls: Luke.
 17T: Luke
 18Ls: Luke.
 19T: This is another gospel writer. Another one? Yes girl.
 20L5: **Mariko.**
Mark.
 21T: Who?
 22L5: **Mariko.**
Mark.
 23T: **Mariko** is what? **Mariko** is? **Mariko** is? Is what? You don't know?
 Ls: Yes.
 24T: **Mariko** is Mark. Is^?
 25Ls: Mark.
 26T: Is Mark. This is another gospel wri^...
 27Ls: Writer.
 28T: Writer. The gospel according to Mark, the gospel according to Luke, the gospel according to Matthew and the gospel, the last one is about who? The last one. Yes?
 29L6: **Yowaana.**
John
 30T: Yes, **Yowaana** is what? Thank you, you clap for him, for her.
 31Ls: [Learners clap hands].
 32T: **Uhm, mu Luzungu** it is what? Don't look there, look at me. Yes, yes? Tell me girl, you seem to be with the answer. Tell me. **Uhm? Uhm?**
Yes, what is it in English? Don't look there, look at me. yes, yes? Tell me girl, you seem to be with the answer. Tell me. Yes? Yes?
 33L6: **Yowaana.**
John.
 34T: **Yowaana** but in English **Yowaana** is^...
 35L7: **Yoweri.**
Joel.
 36Ls: [Learners laugh.]
 37T: Is who? Is who? You can laugh but you do not have an answer. Yes, yes.
 38L8: **Yona.**
Jonah.
 39T: Is not **Yona**. **Yona** is another person. He was another person but **Yowaana** is^... Yes, Sam, **Yowaana** is who? In your villages don't have people like **Yowaana**? They are written as what in English? Yes? Is? Speak up.
 40L9: [Inaudible].
 41T: Is?
 42L9: I don't know.
 43T: **Yowaana** is? How many Johns do we have in this class? Those who are called John rise up your hands. Nobody called John?
 44Ls: Yes.
 45T: Are you called John? Yes? You are called John?

OT1.BP5.260-262

As can be seen from Extract 3, learners understand the teacher's English questions and comments but provide their core answers in Luganda. The next extract was taken from the same lesson. The teacher asked learners questions in English but all learners' responses were again in Luganda (see turns 2, 4 and 6). This is typical of the P4 and P5 classes that I observed in government schools.

Extract 4: *Learners responding to English questions in MT*

- ₁T: Nobody knows any miracle? **Ekisooka?** Sam, give me one miracle performed by Jesus. **Ekisooka? Aaah, mmwe answer yammwe erabika si nkyamu.** Speak up, speak up
Nobody knows any miracle? First? Sam, give me one miracle performed by Jesus. First? Yes, your answer seems not to be wrong. Speak up, speak up.
- ₂L1: **Yazuukiza Lazaaro.**
He raised Lazarus from the dead.
- ₃T: Speak up again.
- ₄L1: **Yazukiza Lazaaro.**
He raised Lazarus from the dead.
- ₅T: Speak up again.
- ₆L1: **Yazuukiza Lazaaro.**
He raised Lazarus from the dead.

OT1.BP5.263

In the extract that follows (taken from a P5 Mathematics lesson in RakaiRG-A), the teacher was checking an exercise that learners had previously attempted in their books. It emerged in this revision exercise that learners did not know what vowels are, and not one of the learners had written down the set of vowels in answer to the question as to what vowels are. The teacher then asked learners many times what vowels are before they attempted an answer; they responded only after he had invited them to answer in Luganda (see turn 3).

Extract 5: *P5 learners struggling to name English vowels*

- ₁T: **Buna.** Let's go to... **Uhm, si katuufu eyo lwakugendayo naye. Wakuutizakuutiza! Uhm?** Now let's come to another number. Y is a set of vowel letters. They ask, y is a set of vowel letters. So, what are vowel letters? What are vowel letters? All of us I see that you left blank that number. Eeh, you left blank. The problem is what? English. Vowel letters **ziriwa?** Blank. **Eriwa** vowel letter? **Uhm, uhm...** that is not vowel letters. Vowel letters **eyiyo eriwa?** Blank, **yalekawo** blank. Blank, **ekitegeeza tugenda kuddayo mu P1 tumanye** what are vowel^....
Four. Let's go to [unclear]. Yes? That is not right even when we continue to that part. Your work is dirty! Now let's come to another number. Y is a set of vowel letters. They ask, y is a set of vowel letters. So, what are vowel letters? What are vowel letters? All of us I see that you left blank that number. Eeh, you left blank. The problem is what? English. Where are the vowel letters? Blank. Where is the vowel letter? Yes, yes... that is not vowel letters. Where is your vowel letters? Blank, you left it blank. Blank; that means we are going to go back to P1 so that we know what are vowel^....
- ₂LS: Letters.
- ₃T: What are vowel letters? **Ne bw'oba okamanyi mu Luganda kambuulire. Ze tuyita** vowel letters **ze ziriwa?**
What are vowel letters? Even if you know it in Luganda, tell me. Which letters do we call vowels?
- ₄L1: [Speaks but inaudibly].
- ₅T: **Wangi? Ze nnyukuta ezikola zitya? Ze nnyukuta ezikola ki? Siwulira bulungi.**
Yes? Those are letters which do what? Letters which do what? I cannot hear you well.
- ₆L1: [Speaks but inaudibly].
- ₇T: **Ez'ensuusuba?**
Odd letters?
- ₈L2: **Enjogeza.**
Vowels.

OT8.AP5.93

We also see in turn 1 that the teacher says that the learners' problem was English. The teacher was aware that, even though he was not officially allowed to use Luganda in this class, the learners had not mastered English sufficiently to cope with the content of the lesson. In the debriefing session that followed, the teacher spoke as follows about P5 learners' fluency in English.

Extract 6: *Teacher's opinion about P5 learners' fluency in English*

- ₁MS: **Naye kati level yaabwe ey'Oluzungu ogiraba otya?**
Alright, alright, how would you evaluate their level of English competence?
- ₂T: **Level [ey'Olungereza – MES] ekyali nzibuzibu.**
Their level [of English – MES] is still problematic.
- ₃MS: **Uhm.**
Yes.
- ₄T: **Era bw'oba totabudde, onnyuka nga bwe wazze!**
If you happen not to codeswitch, you will leave class just as you came in!
- ₅MS: **Uhm.**
Yes.
- ₆T: **Naye bw'oteekamu kali mpola mpola bagenda basika (...).**
But if you codeswitch a little, they go on picking up something slowly (...).

IT1.AP4.116

According to this respondent, not even P5 learners were fully ready to use English as a LoLT. Accordingly, codeswitching was inevitable after P3. Regarding these cases, Arthur (2001:334), quoting Osaki (1991:76), says that “[t]eachers who insist on using English only end up talking to themselves, with very little student input”.

Turning now to the northern rural schools (in Oyam district): the P4 and P5 teachers in this district were also asked how they rated their learners' English reading and speaking skills after P3. The following were the teachers' responses:⁵⁸

Respondent N1: Fair.

Respondent N3: Fair.

Respondent N2: Learners can understand instructions given in English.

Respondent N4: After P3 they can read and speak their local language very well.

These responses are similar to those of rural teachers in Rakai district. The Rakai teachers indicated that P4 and P5 learners in government schools could understand the instructions and/or questions given in English but that they mostly responded in Luganda. Respondent N2 says something similar about the northern comparative schools. It is interesting to note that

⁵⁸ Where questionnaire responses are reported, English written responses are given verbatim, whereas Lugandan written responses are given in translated form only.

Respondent N4 avoided commenting on how learners performed in English but rather commented on (probably) the best side of these learners, which is that “*they can read and speak their local language very well*”. Teachers from Rakai rural schools also thought that learners did better in MT than English.

In summary, the classroom vignettes, interviews, and questionnaire data indicate that learners’ levels of English did not enable them to learn through English only. Learners’ comprehension in English was developing as they were able to understand what teachers asked in class, but they lacked the vocabulary to respond in English. This confirms the findings of earlier studies that MT education for three years, with English offered as a subject during this time, even in well-resourced environments, is not enough. Literature indicates that at least 4 years are required to develop cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), even for economically advantaged children (see Cummins, 1991:72). Basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS), i.e., “peer-appropriate conversational L2”, are usually attained within a considerably shorter period (on average after two years of exposure to the L2 in the L2 context). The question that arises is: if learners aiming to learn their L2s in well-resourced environments require at least 2 years to acquire communicative competence (BICS) and at least 4 years to gain academic competence (CALP), how many years does a learner in a relatively poorly resourced environment, like that of Uganda, require? The NCDC’s (2008) prediction of learners acquiring a vocabulary of 800 words by the end of P3 appears not only unrealistic but also inaccessible to rural Ugandan children. Children therefore appear to need more time to learn English before it can be used as LoLT.⁵⁹

5.3.2.3 A comparison of government and private school learners’ fluency in English: observations from the classroom environment

In the previous section, I have discussed teachers’ ratings of their learners’ competence in both MT and English in terms of writing, reading, and speaking. In this section, I compare what classroom observations revealed about the English competence of learners in rural government and rural private schools.

⁵⁹ Also see Desai’s (2012) study in which she found that children were not ready to switch from isiXhosa to English as the LoLT by Grade 4 in the South African context, where the exposure to English is more prominent, and the resources in both MTs and English are more available in this country than in Uganda.

From the classroom observations of English taught as a subject, there are three conclusions that can be drawn about learners' English fluency. Firstly, private school learners appeared to be faring better in communicative English than their peers in government schools. Secondly, private school learners were able to engage their teachers to clarify lesson content that was not clear to them, and they did this in English. Thirdly, private school learners interacted with one another and with their teachers in English, albeit with some grammatical errors. In addition, private school learners responded to questions directed at them with a certain degree of confidence in English. It therefore seems that learners in private schools were more fluent in communicative English than learners in government schools. This conclusion is based on classroom observations contained in extracts such as the following (from a P5 English lesson in a private school in rural Rakai district):

Extract 7: *Learners asking the teacher to clarify his position*

- ₁L: Teacher, are you not the one who told us that...
₂T: Yes.
₃L1: You have told us that we should take affirmative for affirmative. Now the boy has said that won't you?
₄T: It is his answer.

OT1.CP5.102

In this extract, a learner in turns 1 and 3 was reminding the teacher of something the latter had told them earlier in the lesson. According to this learner, the teacher appeared to be changing what he had previously said, so the learner asked the teacher to clarify his position. On another occasion in the same lesson, the teacher made a grammatical mistake; the learners were able to notice it and brought it to the attention of the teacher in a playful manner (see Extract 8).

Extract 8: *Learners correcting their teacher over a grammatical error*

- ₁KAMALA: Teacher, I have not understood.
₂T: You have not understood but you will understood.
₃KAMALA: Understood?
₄T: You cannot understood at this time completely.
₅KAMALA: [Laughs] Teacher you cannot do what?
₆L1: Understood.
₇T: You cannot under... oh, sorry, sorry!
₈LS: [Learners laugh]
₉T: Then now you are very, at least you can identify a problem. So, you will understand slowly.

OT1.CP5.109

In the extract that follows, learners in the same class were not satisfied with what the teacher had shared with them. They engaged the teacher with many questions until the teacher promised to address the matter again in the next lesson.

Extract 9: *Learners challenging their teacher in an English lesson*

- ¹T: So, in the next question we shall see how we form question and answer tags of such types. Derrick, I think that's when you will get contented, and also **IGA**.
- ²L1: Me, I will not get contented.
- ³T: [Laughs]
- ⁴L2: Sir, it seems the answers we have given are the same answers we are going to give in commanding.
- ⁵T: But you will see how they come. Okay?
- ⁶L1: Won't you? That is commanding. Teacher what if I say, "Will you?" Is that commanding?
- ⁷T: "Will you". That is part of this, request.
- ⁸L1: No, Teacher, can be "Will you".
- ⁹T: What?
- ¹⁰L2: It can be "Will you" when you are commanding.
- ¹¹T: When you are doing what?
- ¹²Ls: Commanding.
- ¹³T: Commanding?
- ¹⁴L1: You can say, "Sit down, will you?" [Learners think that tone may play part here as that is the case in Luganda – MES].
- ¹⁵Ls: Yes, yes, Teacher.
- ¹⁶T: When we are using this, you say, "Sit down". So you can't make a command with that. "Sit down".
- ¹⁷Ls: "Will you?"
- ¹⁸T: Will this be a request?
- ¹⁹Ls: No.
- ²⁰T: Yes?
- ²¹Ls: No.
- ²²T: When you say, "Sit down", is it a request?
- ²³Ls: Yes/No.
- ²⁴L1: Yes, Teacher, is it a request?
- ²⁵T: "Sit down please", which of the two is a request?
- ²⁶Ls: Both of them.
- ²⁷T: Both of them? Which of the two shows politeness?
- ²⁸Ls: The first one/the second one is the one.
- ²⁹T: Then who says that both of them show politeness? You tell someone, "Sit down", and then "Sit down please". You first wait. Derrick, what are you saying?
- ³⁰Derrick: "Please sit down".
- ³¹T: If somebody says, "Sit down" [*with strong voice*]. And someone says "Sit down" [*with soft voice*]. Okay, let us take that this one shows some command, this one does not show.
- ³²Ls: It shows.
- ³³T: It shows?
- ³⁴Ls: Yes.
- ³⁵L1: "Sit down please". Can't I say, "Sit down please".
- ³⁶L1: Teacher, for me I am saying this, the way how you can talk something that is the way how you can show politeness.
- ³⁷T: Bring out something, it either can show politeness or it depends on the way you have brought it out.
- ³⁸L1: Because I can come and say, "Sit down please" and the other will come....
- ³⁹T: So, your facial expression is what shows that it is a request or?
- ⁴⁰Ls: Command.
- ⁴¹T: If I come and say, "Sit down please" when the face is very tough, then it is what?
- ⁴²L2: But, Teacher, you are laughing.

- 43L1: Yes, "Sit down please. Don't waste time".
 44T: So, since the lesson has already left or gone, we must come back for this next what?
 45LS: Next lesson.

OT1.CP5.110-112

In the above extract, the teacher told the learners about the next English grammar issue they were going to discuss (turn 1), stating that the issue was to help settle the case that had been bothering them. But in turn 2, learner L1 said that he would not become satisfied.⁶⁰ In turns 4 to 43, the learners argued with their teacher on pertinent issues about question tags, requests, and commands in English. In turn 36, learner L1 argued his case by bringing in tone as determinant as to whether a sentence indicated politeness or not. The debate and arguments that these learners engaged in with their teacher indicated that their spoken English language skills were well developed.

By contrast, government school learners gave the impression that they were limited in their communicative skills (BICS) in English. The following extract taken from a P5 class in RakaiRG-B indicates that learners would not talk to their teacher in English. The teacher made a mistake during the English lesson, but learners, when correcting their teacher, spoke to him in Luganda (see turns 1 and 2). This being an English lesson in P5 (where the LoLT is English only, by policy stipulation), one would expect learners to address their teacher in English.⁶¹

Extract 10: *P5 learners in RakaiRG-B do not speak back to their teacher in English*

- 1LS: Teacher **ekyo okizzeemu.**
Teacher, you have repeated that.
 2T: **Eeh?**
Yes?
 3LS: **Okizzeemu.**
You have repeated it.

OT3.BP5.282-283

It was however observed that the English comprehension skills of these learners had developed significantly more than their English expressive skills. The above extract and the one below illustrate this.

⁶⁰ This classroom interaction can be likened to that reported in Chimbutane (2011), where learners challenged the teacher's authority in the learners' L1.

⁶¹ Also see OT8.AP5.93 (Extract 5).

Extract 11: *P5 learners responding to English questions in MT*

- ₁T: Now, the word “gospel” means what? Means what? Who can try? What? Uhm? “Gospel” means what? You seem to be with the answer. Uhm?
- ₂L1: Be bawandiisi b’enjiri.
They are the gospel writers.
- ₃T: Munnaffe, she has asked that **be** bawandiisi be ki? [Ungrammatical construction – MES]
Our colleague, she says they are the writers of what?
- ₄Ls: B’enjiri.
Of gospel.

OT1.BP5.260

One of the possible explanations for this difference between the English communicative competence of learners in private schools and that of learners in government schools is the opportunity for the latter to practise speaking English. Recall that private school learners were not allowed to speak their MTs at school (learners interacted with one another and with their teachers in and outside class in English), whereas government school learners used Luganda on the school compound and in their small talk in class. These differences in communicative competence and academic English pose a challenge to the transition to English as LoLT in Uganda. It behoves curriculum designers and teachers to devise means of creating opportunities for learners to practise speaking English. However, this has to be done with caution, as practising speaking English should not be done by denying learners the opportunity to speak their MT in their day-to-day interactions at school. The educational strategies to help learners improve their spoken English language abilities should take into consideration that rural learners, unlike urban learners, have very limited exposure to this language.

It is also a challenge for teachers to be exemplars to their learners in speaking and acquiring English language. As the NCDC (2007b) mentions, to some learners in rural areas, teachers could be the only people they might ever hear speak English. If teachers are good models, chances are that learners will learn from them; if they are bad models, learners are likely to perform poorly in communicative English. Consequently, learners’ transition from MT to English as LoLT may be complicated. In the following section, I discuss the language profiles and observed language proficiency of the teachers who participated in this study.

5.4 Language profiles of individual teachers

In an attempt to understand teachers' linguistic repertoires, one question in the questionnaire required teachers to indicate their MT and another required them to show which of the learners' MTs they were able to speak and/or write.

5.4.1 Language profiles of rural teachers in Rakai district

All P1 to P3 teachers in Rakai district had Luganda as their MT, and indicated Luganda as the only language they could speak and/or write. This means that teachers shared a MT with the majority of their learners. All eight P4 and P5 teachers in this district had Luganda as their MT. As regards the learners' languages which teachers were able to speak and/or write, seven out of the eight teachers were speakers and/or writers of only one of the learners' MTs, namely Luganda. Only one teacher was able to speak and/or write an additional language, namely Kiswahili.

5.4.2 Language profiles of rural teachers in Oyam district

Recall that in the rural comparative schools in Oyam district, five languages were identified as spoken by learners. Teachers spoke only two of those languages; two teachers each indicated that they spoke Luo and Laŋo.⁶² Lucas and Katz (1994) suggest that, as much as it is desirable for a teacher to speak the language of their learners, sometimes it is impossible. Those teachers who do not speak the language of their learners can make use of the learners themselves during the teaching and learning process (Lucas & Katz, 1994). This can be done through, for instance, grouping learners in class according to their native languages. This same practice is also recommended by Klaus (2003) and Manyak (2004, 2006, 2008). I will return to this later at the end of this chapter.

⁶² According to Lewis et al. (2013), Acholi is also known as Luo. There are no percentages given of mutual intelligibility between these languages, but the authors mark Acholi as sharing lexical similarity with Laŋo. Note that two teachers in Oyam district indicated that they speak Luo, but no one indicated that they spoke Acholi.

5.4.3 Language profiles of urban teachers in Kampala

Nine of the 14 Kampala respondents (64.3%) had Luganda as their MT and five (36.7%) were speakers of other languages, namely Lusoga (1), Rutooro (2), Lusaamya (1) and Lumasaaba (1). This data indicates that urban schools are more multilingual than rural schools, not only among learners but also among teachers. Furthermore, teachers were also required to indicate which of the learners' MTs they spoke and/or were able to write. Their responses indicated that of the 11 languages identified in urban schools as spoken by learners, teachers spoke and/or were able to write in four. In the case of nine teachers, this was Luganda only; in the case of two, a combination of Luganda and Kiswahili; and in the case of one each, a combination of Luganda and Lusoga and of Luganda and Runyankore. One of the respondents did not indicate the language(s) spoken.

The above urban teachers' linguistic repertoires indicate that some urban teachers are speakers of and possess MTs other than Luganda, a language spoken by majority of learners in the studied urban schools. By contrast, all teachers from rural schools were speakers of and possessed Luganda as their MT. A possible explanation for this difference can be drawn from the rich teaching (and other economic) opportunities in schools in urban areas which attract teachers from different parts of the country. In addition, when teachers from elsewhere arrive in Kampala, the sociolinguistic demands in the city force them to learn Luganda (if they do not know it already). Furthermore, it is a common practice for speakers of minority languages to learn a majority local and/or international language. The majority local language in Uganda is Luganda, which is also the dominant language in Kampala. This explains why all teachers in urban schools are able to speak Luganda even if this language is not their MT.

I should also point out that English language is a first language to only a very small minority of children in Uganda who are exclusively located in Kampala. The overwhelming majority of children in Uganda learn English as a second and/or foreign language. English is formally learnt in schools with very limited exposure in communities (cf. Heugh & Mulumba, 2013; Rosendal, 2010). Thus, even though the language-in-education policy (Government of Uganda, 1992) insists on urban schools using English with the assumption that they learn (through) the language easily, children in urban areas should be learning with difficulty as almost none of them have English as MT.

5.4.4 *Teachers as models of English language learning/acquisition*

Stroud (2002) observes that the language input to which learners are exposed determines the nature of the output of the same language. As stated above, in the case of learners in rural areas where there is very limited or no exposure to English outside the school, teachers often serve as the sole source of input. Learners assume that that which they hear from their teachers is correct, and that is what they will then acquire. In this regard, Kirkpatrick (2013:14) says that

[a]t present there are literally millions of young primary children across the world being forced to learn English – and often taught by teachers whose own English proficiency is inadequate for the task – who have no need or opportunity to use the language outside the classroom. It is not surprising that so many of these children end as failed English language learners. But by allowing them to learn English once they are more mature and confident in their own identities and cultures they will be able to understand that English is an international language of communication and that this is the reason why it is worth learning.

As Kirkpatrick observes, even teachers sometimes have no other opportunities outside of the school environment to practise speaking English. As a result, they may have no opportunities to advance their English skills, and they might not be good models for learners of English. This also means that learners may not be better English speakers than their teachers. In this study, a number of teachers, particularly male teachers, were observed making errors⁶³ when speaking English. Some of these errors were grammatical and others phonological in nature. While acknowledging cross-linguistic transfer, there are certain pronunciation issues that can be addressed early on while learning a L2, even if one may not achieve native speaker proficiency. As there are very few teachers qualified to teach English in Uganda (see section 7.2.1 for teachers' qualifications), the teaching of this language is in the hands of formally underqualified persons who did not receive training in English pronunciation and who are not necessarily aware of the features of their English pronunciation.⁶⁴ In this study, the teachers' greatest challenge was observed to be the pronunciation of /ð/, /θ/, /ʃ/, and /r/: /ð/ as in *together* is frequently pronounced as [z]; /θ/ as in *thick* as [s]; /ʃ/ as in *show* as [s], and /r/ as in *red* as [l] (cf. Fisher, 2000:60). Consider the following extracts for illustrations, both from P5 Mathematics lessons, the first from RakaiRP-D and the second from RakaiRP-A.

⁶³ Most of the errors the teachers made were systematic, but they did not seem to recognise them (see Smit, 2009).

⁶⁴ I am aware of the ongoing debate regarding normative English vs. English as a lingua franca (ELF), but given the scope of my study, no argument in this line is given in this dissertation.

Extract 12: *Teacher mispronounces /ð, r/*

- 1T: Finding cost price when profit and selling price are [a:la] ^...
 2Ls: Given.
 3T: When cost price and profit are [a:la] given. Are we together [tuge:za]?
 4Ls: Yes

OT1.DP5.62

Extract 13: *Teacher has a challenge pronouncing sounds /ʃ, ð/*

- T: Then it says, two thirds [sa:dizi] of the diagram, we have the diagram which looks like this one. Our diagram, now they want you to shade [se:di] two what?
 Ls: Two thirds [sa:dizi]

OT8.AP5.90

Some of the pronunciation challenges observed can be explained based on the phonetic differences between Luganda and English. For instance, Luganda has five vowels and no diphthongs whereas English has about 21 vowels as well as diphthongs (Roach, 2009). Luganda has no sounds /ʃ/, /h/, /ɹ/, /r⁶⁵/, /x/, or /q/, whereas English has the first three. For these reasons, L1 Luganda speakers might find native-like pronunciation of some English words challenging. Another factor that complicates the pronunciation of English words for Luganda speakers is the fact that Luganda is a Bantu language with a CVCV syllable structure. Luganda native speakers tend to change the syllable structure of English words to CVCV when they pronounce them, as in *shade* [se:di]. Also, English diphthongs are monophthongised and realised as a long vowel, as in *take* [te:ke].

Fisher (2000) gives an exposition of some of the linguistic features of Ugandan English. Lexical differences between Ugandan English and other varieties of English include that *extend* (v.) means “move up a little” in Ugandan English (cf. Fisher, 2000:59; also Extract 14 below)⁶⁶ and that *balance* (n.) means “change from a monetary transaction”. Examples of idiosyncratic challenges that teachers had with English lexical items are illustrated in Extracts 15 to 18 below. In Extract 15, a teacher incorrectly used the word *memorise* instead of *interpret* in both English (see turn 5) and Lugandanised form (see turn 9).

⁶⁵ Even though this sound’s conventional corresponding letter (i.e. ‘r’) is used in Lugandan orthography, the sound system of Luganda does not have the [r] sound.

⁶⁶ Relevant errors are underlined in the extracts referred to, and only underlined errors were corrected in the translated lines (where these appear).

Extract 14: *A teacher exhibiting English lexical errors*

- ₁T: Just extend a bit up. **Leero ggwe onoosoma? Ndaba bwonna obwongo bukuli eri. Kati** now face this way. Put your mind this way. Uhm, clear? Now class P5, P5 yes?
Just extend a bit up [aiming to say “move up” or “move over”]. **Will you learn today? I can see that your mind is outside. Now** now face this way. Put your mind this way. Uhm, clear?
Now, class P5, P5 yes?
- ₂LS: Yes

OT1.BP5.259

Extract 15: *A teacher mispronounces English sounds*

- ₁T: These questions are very very simple if you can read and understand. Are we together [tuge:za]?
- ₂LS: Yes.
- ₃T: Yes because you are the ones who have given me these what, formula. Formulae **ezo mmwe mukoze ki?**
Yes because you are the ones who have given me these what, formula. It is you who have given me those formulae?
- ₄LS: **Ffe abazikuwadde.**
It is we who have given them to you.
- ₅T: **Mmwe muzimpadde. Nnaakuwaddeko n’emu?** So after reading, a pupil bought a book at fifteen thousand shillings. Sold it and made a loss of three thousand. Are we together [tuge:za]? From there, if you can read and memorise automatically, you must get the for^...
It is you who have given me the answers. Have I give you any? So after reading a pupil bought a book at fifteen thousand shillings. Sold it and made a loss of three thousand. Are we together? From there if you can read and memorise automatically you must get the for^...
- ₆LS: The formula.
- ₇T: Out of that que^...
- ₈LS: Question.
- ₉T: **Eeh, ani amaze okumemorizinga?** Then you give me the formula. We are looking for the formula. You read and understand. **Ahaa, NAKINTU,** give us the formula.
Yes, who has finished memorising? Then you give me the formula. We are looking for the formula. You read and understand. Yes, NAKINTU, give us the formula.

OT1.DP5.80

Extract 15 and Extracts 16, 17, and 18 below were taken from the same teacher with the same class in RakaiRG-B. Although there are lexical errors present (such as *came* the storm instead of *calmed* the storm and *form* that good English instead of *put/say* that in good English), grammar errors are also apparent (see underlined portions). It was not possible for me to determine whether learners actually grasped what this teacher meant.

Extract 16: *Teacher makes lexical and grammatical errors (1)*

- ₁T: Is who? Is who? You can laugh, but you do not have an answer. Yes, yes.
- ₂L8: **Yona.**
John.
- ₃T: **Is not Yona. Yona** is another person. He was another person but **Yowaana** is^... Yes, Sam, **Yowaana** is who? In your villages, don’t have people like **Yowaana**? They are written as what in English? Yes? Is^...? Speak up.

OT1.BP5.262

Extract 17: *Teacher makes lexical and grammatical errors (2)*

- ¹T: About this man, Jesus. Therefore, all these people, all these ones, were writing their good news about Jesus Christ as the saviour. Therefore in the teaching, in their writings, now we are going to look at, why do people come on to know that Jesus is the son of God. There are some things Jesus made which tell, told people that he is a son of God. And now we are going to look at the miracles. The mira[^]...
- ²LS: Miracles.

OT1.BP5.263

Extract 18: *Teacher makes lexical and grammatical errors (3)*

- ¹T: Can you boy tell me how did Jesus came, calmed the storm? Explain to your fellow pupils so that they can understand. Stand up. You can explain to them in Luganda. Stand up, stand up. OK, it was when Jesus was with his disciples, are we clear?
- ²LS: Yes.
- ³T: And they were on the net in the boat, then they there was a lot of storm, uhm? And the boat was about to turn over. Uhm? Therefore Jesus, these disciples told Jesus to wake up, then Jesus after waking up, then he came [calmed] the storm. And the lake remaining without any other sto[^]...
- ⁴LS: Storm.
- ⁵T: That was another miracle performed by Jesus. Thank you. Yes, another miracle?
- ⁶L4: [Inaudible].
- ⁷T: Yes? Uhm, who can form that good English? He resurrected Laza[^]...
- ⁸LS: **Lazaaro.**
Lazarus.
- ⁹T: Lazarus. From the what? From the dea[^]...
- ¹⁰LS: Dead.
- ¹¹T: From the dead. Clear?
- ¹²LS: Yes.
- ¹³T: Let us assume that after immediately your mother has died, and then Jesus came and the priest come in here, then everybody can be up. Another miracle performed by Jesus Christ? Yes? **Uhm**, come on.
- ¹⁴L5: **Yazibula omuzibe w'amaaso.**
He opened the eyes of the blind man.
- ¹⁵T: Who can form that good English? He, then we can say, a blind man is not a sick man? A blind man is not a sick man? Is a sick man, not so?
- ¹⁶LS: Yes.
- ¹⁷T: I think we can take the good example, he healed the evil spirit or he healed the si[^]...
- ¹⁸LS: The sick.

OT1.BP5.266

Also note that learners were constrained in their participation in this class, possibly because it was in English. When asking for explanations (as in turn 1), learners did not respond. (It is possible that learners had the answer but could not give it in English.) Elsewhere, as in turns 8 and 14, learners gave answers in Luganda. This classroom is in contrast to one in RakaiRP-D where good teaching practice was observed during an English lesson. Here, the teacher was attempting to guide learners on how to pronounce English words. Consider Extract 19.

Extract 19: *Teacher guides learners on how to pronounce words*

- ₁T: Who has said 'basket' [basike:ti]?
₂Ls: NAMUDDU.
₃T: Who has said [basike:ti]? **Uhm?**
₄Ls: Basket, ball, rope, handbag, necklace.
₅T: Boys.
₆Ls: Pot, mat, basket, ball, rope, handbag, necklace.
₇T: **Ahaa**, only these ones. Let everybody look here. Pot.
₈Ls: Pot [pot].
₉T: Pot [pot]
₁₀Ls: Pot [pot].
₁₁T: P-o-t.
₁₂Ls: P-o-t [pot].
₁₃T: P-o-t [with laziness, imitating learners]:[po:ti]
₁₄Ls: P-o-t.

OT1.DP1.7-8

In Extract 19, the teacher insisted that the correct pronunciation of the word *basket* is [báskət], not [basike:ti] as some learners were pronouncing it. In turn 1, the teacher recognised that there was a learner in class who was mispronouncing the word. Learners identified their classmate, Namuddu, as the one who mispronounced the word. In turn 4, the teacher pointed at various words written on the blackboard, and learners pronounced them as she listened. She also attempted to ensure that all learners made use of correct pronunciation. For example, in turn 5, boys were asked to pronounce the word list as a group. After this, she went over the words again as learners repeated after her. In turn 13, we also note that when the right pronunciation was not forthcoming, the teacher recognised it, imitated learners' pronunciation and guided them on the proper articulation of the word.

A close look at the teachers in this study reveals that the female teachers were more proficient in speaking English than their male counterparts. The pronunciation and grammatical challenges reported here are all from male teachers while the good practices observed came from a female teacher. These observations could be taken to indicate that there is a need for teachers to receive training in the basics of English language teaching (see section 7.3.3 for a discussion on sheltered instruction). This is especially the case for teachers of rural learners who have very little or no exposure to English outside the school environment. This relates to Heugh et al.'s (2007:102) statement that "[t]he misinterpretation of the communicative approach to language teaching requires urgent attention. A cardinal principle of language teaching is that the teacher offers the best possible language model, not 'broken English'". In this regard, Kirkpatrick (2013) states that teachers should be multilinguals who have the

ability to use English as a lingua franca (see, e.g., Smit, 2010) and have an intercultural awareness. Whereas some authors like Heugh et al. (2007) argue that the L2 should be taught by teachers with near native-like proficiency, Kirkpatrick (2013) argues that learners today need multilingual models and intercultural competence in learning English. There is no need for learners of English to approximate a native English speaker's accent but the aim should be to use English to be understood in multilingual settings (Kirkpatrick, 2013), and that it is no longer necessary for children to learn English at an early age with the aim of acquiring a native-like accent. In brief, Kirkpatrick suggests that the learning of English should be delayed. While I agree with Kirkpatrick's view on learners of English not necessarily having to approximate native-like pronunciation, an attempt should be made to guide learners on how to access the phonetics of English in order to ensure their intelligibility when speaking English in non-local contexts. In addition, grammatical and idiomatic English expressions⁶⁷ should be modelled, otherwise learners may not be able to communicate successfully with those outside of their community.

As stated above, in Uganda's current context, learning and acquisition of English, particularly for rural learners, is mainly dependent on teachers. Regardless of whether learners are to learn the language at a younger or an older age, teachers are still the primary source of English language input in rural Uganda. There is thus a need to train and prepare English language teachers who can be good models of spoken and written English to the learners. Without proper input during the learning and acquisition of English, a variety of English may develop in Uganda that, if spoken to a person outside of the country, might be difficult to understand.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ One teacher (P4, RakaiRG-A) used *vocabulary* instead of *an unfamiliar word* (IT1.AP1.129). This is an instance of unsuccessful modelling of idiomatic English.

⁶⁸ I am not referring here to Ugandan English (see Fisher, 2000), which is an acknowledged New English.

5.5 Implications of learner and teacher language profiles for Uganda's MT education

The above linguistic repertoires of schools, learners and teachers have practical implications for the implementation of Uganda's MT education programme. In addition, these linguistic profiles have implications for learners' literacy acquisition.

From the data collected in rural schools, both government and private, it is clear that private schools are not "too multilingual" to offer MT education to learners. Private schools RakaiRP-C and RakaiRP-D have a clear dominant MT (Luganda) in all classes, so these schools should be able to teach through Luganda, the dominant local language in this area.

Recall that the intention of ascertaining the linguistic profile of urban schools was to establish how multilingual urban schools are compared to rural schools. This comparison would then be indicative of whether or not MT education is possible in urban schools, following the language-in-education criteria of choosing a dominant local language as LoLT. Based on the findings, MT education should be possible in at least some urban schools as there is a clear dominant language in all of the classes in the two urban schools studied. Certain questions on the questionnaire were asked in order to capture teachers' recognition of their classroom realities. For instance, urban teachers were asked whether MT education is impossible to implement in urban schools. Their answers to this question indicate equal division between those who agreed (50%) and those who disagreed (50%), with three of the seven agreeing strongly, and five of the seven disagreeing strongly. However, when the same teachers were asked to indicate whether learners should begin learning in their MT in their early years of schooling in urban schools, there was a shift in their answers: nine agreed (four of these strongly) and only five disagreed (one of these strongly). Thus there is an equal number of teachers (seven) who believed and do not believe that MT education is possible. However, when it came to the question which suggests that learners in urban schools should receive MT education during their early school career, those who supported the idea increased from seven to nine.

Helot (2012:214) states that "[p]aradoxically, although schools everywhere and especially in urban centres have seen a growing change in their populations, the increased visibility of linguistic diversity is not reflected in classroom practices". Helot (2012:14) also argues that

language diversity in schools should not be regarded as a burden, and states that one way of creating awareness of language diversity among children is by creating space in the classroom through available classroom pedagogical activities so that all learners' home languages can be used.⁶⁹ When a learner's language is left at the classroom door, their language appears inferior to the language of instruction, and they leave a great part of themselves outside of the classroom because all that they know is expressible in that language

⁶⁹ In all classroom observations conducted, from P1 to P5, there was only one teacher observed attempting to make use of all learners' languages in class. This teacher, during a Religious Studies class on bad behaviour, encouraged learners who speak other languages to say answers out loud in their languages, as illustrated in the extract below.

Extract A: *Learners feeling uneasy about speaking their MTs if it is not Luganda*

- 1T:** Otyo, mumanyi bya Luganda, ani abimanyi mu lulimi olulala olutali Luganda? Ani amanyiiyo nga bibiri mu lulimi olulala olutali Luganda? Eeh? Olulala olutali Luganda? Muno tulinamu Abaganda, tulinamu n'Abarundi....
[Enseko]
Okay, you know them in Luganda; who knows them in any other language apart from Luganda? Who knows at least two in another languages apart from Luganda? Another language other than Luganda. In this class we have Baganda, we have Barundi...
[Laughter]
- 2T:** Tulinamu muno abalala aboogera ennimi endala ezitali Luganda. Tebaliimu?
We have speakers of other languages other than Luganda. Don't we?
- 3Ls:** Mwebali.
We have them.
- 4T:** Eeh, lwaki nammwe temumbuulirayo ku mpisa zino embi, eyo bwe baziyata ewammwe? Mumbuulire! Nze sizimanyi bulungi naye mmanyi nti gye ziri. Kale ng'okutta, bakuyita batya? Baba bakuyita batya? Okutta omuntu bakuyita batya? [Teacher gets close to the learner who knows a different language].
Eeh, why don't you tell me about these bad behaviours in your languages? Tell me. I don't know quite well but what I know is that these behaviours have names in your languages. For instance killing, what is it called? What do you call it? What do you call killing a person in your language?
- 5Ls:** Teacher oyo talumanyi.
Teacher, that one doesn't know his language.
- 6T:** Iii, ani omulala alumanyi?
Iii, who else knows?
[Laughter]
- 7T:** Uhm, okweteerana. Mukimanyi? Kwekukola ki?
Okay, okweteerana. Do you know it? What does it mean?
- 8L1:** [Inaudible]
- 9T:** Kwe kukola kutya?
Which action does it refer to?
- 10L1:** Okulwana.
Fighting.
- 11T:** Okulwana, ekitegeeza bamanyi n'ennimi endala bano abaana.
Fighting. That means you children know other languages.

OT5.AP3.51

Note that the learners were not very comfortable speaking their other languages in this class. It also appears that there was a learner who might have lost his language, as the learners say in turn 6. Language attrition and loss are indeed possible, especially when such a language is not employed in the education system or when it is dominated by other languages in the community (cf. Hornberger, 2002).

(Cummins, 2005). Lucas and Katz (1994:554-556) describe the creative ways used by teachers in using MTs present in a classroom. From what Lucas and Katz (1994) list below, it is clear that, even when a teacher does not know learners' MTs, it is possible to devise ways of helping learners access their education in a familiar language. The following are some of the strategies a teacher can employ in a multilingual classroom.

- (i) Teachers create assignments that require learners of the same language to pair up – for example, a writing assignment in a learner's MT or a group of learners telling stories to themselves and later translating those stories for the rest of the class members (those who speak other languages).
- (ii) In classroom activities, a learner less fluent in English is paired with a speaker of the same MT who is more fluent in English so that the more fluent learner can help his/her less fluent classmate by, for example, translating for him/her.
- (iii) Teachers encourage learners to use bilingual dictionaries when they do not understand something in English and when there is no one to translate for them.
- (iv) Teachers encourage learners to get help at home from family members.
- (v) Teachers provide learners with materials in their native languages and encourage them to read them.
- (vi) Teachers engage in written communication with parents in the learners' MTs. (As the teacher does not know the MT of every learner, the teacher will need to ask the learners for assistance in drafting such communications.)
- (vii) Learners who excel in their MTs are rewarded.

Although this may not apply to all multilingual contexts, there is evidence to show that even in complex multilingual contexts, MT teaching can be attempted. (Also see Atkinson, 1987 for strategies of using MT in the classroom.)

Helot (2012:215) contends that language diversity or multilingualism in education should also take care of "how language is used in society, an awareness of the rights of minority speakers to be educated in their home languages and a recognition that many languages in the world today are endangered". The endangerment of languages in the world can partly be attributed to exclusion of some minority languages in education and in social circles. While, as Helot maintains, it is not possible to bring all languages into the school system, it is possible to use the available creative ways of making use of minority learners' languages in

the classroom so that they are not completely left out (Benson, 2008b; Lucas & Katz, 1994; Manyak, 2004, 2006, 2008).

Banda (2010:233), like Helot (2012) identifies “a need to take care of local multilingual realities in African school contexts”. Kamanda (2002), in recognising the linguistic nature of multilingualism in African communities, suggests that it might be difficult to respect the linguistic human right to MT based education. Banda (2009) however states that since many children in Africa grow up with not only one MT, such realities must be reflected in educational practices. Notice that in Extract 1 teachers have expressly indicated that even though some learners have a “different MT”, they are very fluent in Luganda. This is evidence that private schools in Rakai district have constructed multilingualism as a barrier to MT education where multilingualism need not necessarily be problematic for the implementation of MT education.

In sum, from the data obtained in this study, it is evident that rural private schools’ reasons for failing to implement the language-in-education policy (by failing to use MT as LoLT) are based on a constructed problem; they are not based on the true nature of the multilingualism in these schools. In addition, MT education in urban schools should be possible with decentralised language policies, such that schools which have clear dominant local languages, like those in this study, should be able to use MT as LoLT. In the next chapter, I discuss the findings on teachers’ attitudes towards, practices and perceptions of the language policy as well as the transition to English-medium education.

Chapter 6

TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS, PRACTICES REGARDING, AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE LANGUAGE POLICY AND TRANSITION TO ENGLISH-MEDIUM EDUCATION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings that relate to two objectives of the dissertation, namely objectives (ii) and (iii). Objective (ii) was to collect and understand teachers' views on and attitudes towards the language policy. Teachers' views and attitudes influence their practices (Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002; Tse, Shum, Ki, & Wong, 2001; Wang, 2008) and, as such, an understanding of their views on and attitudes towards the Ugandan language-in-education policy might illuminate existing practices in Ugandan schools. In this regard, I present teachers' general views on the Ugandan language-in-education policy, teachers' opinions on MT (both as a subject and as LoLT in schools), teachers' opinions on the thematic curriculum (as many teachers regard "MT education" and "thematic curriculum" as synonymous), and teachers' attitudes towards the learning of English.

Objective (iii) was to assess teachers' perceptions of what contributes to success or failure of the transfer of skills when transitioning from MT as LoLT to English as LoLT. In addition, teachers' experiences of whether a switch from MT as LoLT to English as LoLT would lead to learners dropping out of school or rather to their retention in the school system were tapped. Findings related to these objectives are presented in this chapter under the following themes: teachers' perceptions of transfer from MT to English (rural and urban teachers separately), teachers' perceptions of the teaching of English, and teachers' perceptions on the role (if any) that the language-in-education policy plays in the non-retention of learners. I then discuss the observed challenges faced by learners in acquiring literacy, learning English, and transitioning to English as LoLT. I conclude the chapter by providing a summary of the main findings reported in this chapter.

The data will be interpreted in view of the relevant theories and practices presented in the previous chapters. Note that, as this study follows the practice of triangulation, data from questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, and field notes are combined to meet the

two objectives. The questionnaire data represents teachers' perceptions and attitudes whereas the interview and observation data help to clarify why teachers hold such perceptions and have such attitudes (cf. Heugh et al., 2007:85-86).

6.2 Teachers' opinions on the language-in-education policy in general

Teachers gave their opinions on the Ugandan language-in-education policy as well as on the transition from MT to English as LoLT. The following views were expressed by P4 and P5 teachers⁷⁰ in the rural Rakai district.

- Respondent D2: The language policy is good but in time of workshop there is cheating by the trainers of implementers.
- Respondent B3: Languages should be given more time in form of pre-primary.
- Respondent B4: The language policy of Uganda is good because it has helped pupils to master their local languages.
- Respondent C5: The Ministry of Education should find means of availing schools with a variety of instructional materials relevant to the curriculum for the best flow of the policy.
- Respondent C6: I suggest that our mother tongue (Luganda) should be taught from P1-P7 and that can help them to perform well in O'level [Ordinary level – MES] and A'level [Advanced level – MES].
- Respondent D7: Language policy would not have been bad but my opinion is to make learners to attempt their exams in English to ease the work for the primary four teachers and primary five teachers.

These seven rural teachers held different views about the language policy, and these views were representative of the variety of views expressed during follow-up teacher interviews as well. Some responses were presented as opinions and others as suggestions. In urban schools, some respondents thought that MT education in urban schools was possible and would be beneficial to learners whereas others did not. Some of their opinions are given below.

- Respondent U1: To teach in local languages in all classes is possible.
- Respondent U2: The policy of teaching in MT in early years is a good start but like in other developed countries, we should do all that is possible to learn in our local languages up to university level, if we are to begin dreaming of national development and independence.
- Respondent W8: Language policy has been picked upon and learners are doing well but in urban schools it has been difficult because of many languages.
- Respondent W9: Mother tongue promotes the learning of second language.

⁷⁰ The teachers' views are presented verbatim; no attempt has been made to correct their English constructions.

Respondent W13: Some parts of Uganda language policy has picked up so well though it has been difficult in urban schools due to many languages spoken by the children.

Respondent W11: It would be better for the government to solve the problem of lack of national language first, i.e., get a national language, develop it through schools.

The last opinion (that expressed by Respondent W11) was that a national language is needed in Uganda for MT education to be possible in the country and that this language should be taught in and through schools. This teacher's proposal is similar to what is happening in Tanzania: Kiswahili is promoted as a language of education although this language is not the MT of many children in Tanzania (Heugh et al., 2007). A similar phenomenon was reported in South East Asian countries by Kirkpatrick (2013), i.e., a shift from multilingualism to the learning of one local language and English (also see Nyaga 2013 regarding practices of MT education in Kenya, and Shoba & Chimbutane's 2013 volume on the LoLT in the global South context). This practice denies many children MT education because the language they speak at home is not the language of the school system. Benson and Plüddemann (2010) call for a break from a monolingual approach which focuses on dominant languages only and a move towards a multilingual one.

In another open-ended question, urban teachers were asked to make suggestions for improvements to the language policy. The following were the suggestions that these teachers made.

Respondent U2: There is a need to change on the Eurocentric perception on African local languages, that we should study local languages to facilitate the learning of the "official languages" which are the foreign languages. What should be done is to study foreign languages in the way of facilitating our local languages such that after a period of time our languages will be powerful enough and independent and then we drop the foreign languages by replacing them with our local languages.

Respondent W8: I would suggest the teaching of Kiswahili to be introduced in the syllabus of Uganda because most of the East African countries use it as a means of communication.

Respondent W9: Much as there are many languages spoken in the city, the area language is Luganda.

Respondent W10: We should adopt a language like Swahili to be taught in all schools for the purpose of having easy communication with the rest of the people within the East African Community.

Respondent W10: Much about mother tongue should be done in homes to promote and preserve culture.
2. Schools to emphasise English for academic and international relationships.

Respondent W12: Local languages should be taught even in teacher training colleges such that there is no lack of manpower to those areas.

Respondent W13: It would be of great importance if also Kiswahili as a language is emphasised and taught right from our Ugandan nursery schools up to tertiary institutions because of our neighbouring countries and easy communication.

The teachers' perceptions presented above indicate that teachers are aware of the content of the Ugandan language-in-education policy. They are also aware of some of the policy provisions, e.g., that of choosing a dominant local language to be used as a LoLT in schools, and of the possible actions that can be taken to facilitate MT learning, for instance, that of training teachers in colleges in MT pedagogy, allowing ample time to train and prepare teachers, etc. The responses however also indicate that teachers are not (fully) convinced of the benefits of MT education. Many of them are of the opinion that if there was one Ugandan local language chosen and used all over the country, the problem of LoLT would be solved. Others suppose that the challenges that come with MT education can be avoided by adopting English or Kiswahili as the LoLT throughout Uganda. These proposals can be interpreted as characteristic of teachers' ignorance about the value for MT education and the difficulties children would face when they learn in such unfamiliar languages.

6.3 Mother tongue as a subject in schools

When discussing the teaching of MT as a school subject, I will make reference to the degree to which schools adhere to the language-in-education policy, to learners' participation in MT lessons, and to teachers' competence in MT teaching as determined through field observations.

6.3.1 Degree of consistency with the language-in-education policy

It has been observed that teachers sometimes follow the language-in-education policy and at other times not (see, e.g., Garcia, 2009), and Stroud (2001:340) remarks that "because curricula are so overloaded and oriented towards the promotion and valuation of content taught through the metropolitan languages, little productive time is left in which to attend to indigenous languages". In light hereof, teachers were asked in the questionnaire to report on whether MT⁷¹ is taught as a subject in their schools. For all the study schools in rural areas (both private and government), teachers reported that MT was taught as a subject from P1 through P3. In addition, all four rural northern Uganda (Oyam district) schools were reported to teach MT as a subject from P1 through P3. However, as pointed out earlier, teachers'

⁷¹ As pointed out in Chapter 1, recall that the definition of a MT is problematic in policy documents: some policy documents speak of "MT" and others of "local language", yet what is actually meant is "dominant local language".

views on the questionnaire varied from the explanations solicited during interviews. As the evidence below suggests, in practice, little attention is given to MT teaching.

Turning to the urban schools: urban teachers were asked whether any local languages were taught in their schools. Recall that the language-in-education policy requires urban schools to teach MT as a subject but use English as LoLT. Of the 14 urban respondents (who were recruited from two schools), nine (64.3%) indicated that Luganda was the MT taught in their schools, whereas five respondents (35.7%) indicated that no MT teaching took place in their schools. These responses demonstrate that teachers' responses were not in unison; teachers from the same school gave different responses regarding their school's implementation of the language-in-education policy. Specifically, five respondents from KampalaUP-W answered the question in the affirmative whereas three respondents from the same school disagreed. For KampalaUG-U, five respondents agreed that there was a local language taught in this school whereas one disagreed; the head teacher of KampalaUP-U informed me that MT (Luganda) was indeed taught as a subject in this school from P1 to P3.

The language policy also stipulates that MT should be kept as a subject after the transition to English as a LoLT has taken place. The questionnaire asked P1 to P3 rural teachers to indicate whether MT was taught as a subject after P3. The majority of respondents (92.3%) answered in the affirmative, with only one of the 14 respondents (7.7%) stating that MT was not taught as a subject from P4 onwards. In addition, teachers of P4 and P5 were asked to report whether MT was taught as a subject in the classes they taught. Of the eight respondents, six (75%) indicated that MT was taught whereas two (25%) indicated that it was not. For the northern comparative schools, all four teachers indicated that MT was taught as a subject after P3.

However, as indicated earlier, the views that teachers held on the questionnaires differed from those in interviews and from actual practices observed in their schools. In the interviews, respondents revealed that MT was not taught as a subject in rural schools after P3. In fact, in some schools, MT was not taught as a subject before P3, as illustrated by the following extracts. Extract 20 is from the interview with a P5 Science, English and Mathematics teacher from RakaiRG-B.

Extract 20: *Teaching of MT as a subject*

- 1MS:** Naye yo bagisoma?
But do they study it [Luganda subject – MES]?
- 2T:** Yo subject y’Oluganda eyo, tetambula bulungi kubanga okugisomesa tekuli regular ate era tebatuula na bigezo bino nti end of year oba end of term, tebakola bigezo bya Luganda.
The teaching of the subject Luganda is not moving on smoothly because its teaching is not regular and besides they do not sit end of year or end of term exams; they do not sit the Luganda exams.
- 3MS:** Mu P5?
In P5?
- 4T:** Mhm. Engeri gye tubeera nti tuli batonotono, nga bw’olabye abasomesa, twettanira nnyo bino ebigenda okubuuzibwa, bye tusinga okuteekako amaanyi. Kale weesanga nga babiwadde n’erinnya nti major subjects, zino minor subjects.
Yes. Since we are quite few just as you have observed the number of teachers, we concentrate on what is to be examined; that is where our energies are rested. You find that subjects are given names such as major subjects and minor subjects.
- 5MS:** Mhm.
Yes.
- 6T:** Kati omwana ng’ali bubi nnyo mu kubala, kizibu nnyo okugamba nti oli ave mu kumusomesa okubala ate adde mu Luganda.
If a child is badly off in Mathematics, it is very difficult for one to leave Mathematics and instead teach Luganda.
- 7MS:** Mhm.
Yes.
- 8T:** Nga tetulabayo abimubuuza. Kye kimu ku binafuya abantu okusomesa Oluganda.
And yet we do not anticipate anybody to examine him/her in that. That is one of the reasons that demotivate the teaching of Luganda as a subject.

IT2.BP5.8

Teachers from RakaiRG-A held the same view about the teaching of MT in their school, as can be seen from turns 4 to 6 and 11 to 12 of Extract 21.

Extract 21: *Teaching of MT as a subject after transition*

- 1MS:** Kati mu P4 ne mu P5 Oluganda musigala mukyalusomesa?
Do you then continue teaching Luganda in P4 and P5?
- 1T1:** Yee, kyandibadde nti wonna ppaka kumalako seven...
Yes, it would be the case that it is taught all the way to [P – MES] seven...
- 3T2:** Nga subject.
As a subject.
- 4T1:** Nga subject, naye lwakuba nti olumu munnange nga bw’omanyi n’abantu obudde...
As a subject, but my friend, as you know some people with time...
- 5T2:** Ate nga n’engeri gy’etali examinable ...
And also being an unexaminable subject...
- 6T1:** Kati ekyo kiwa abantu obunafu.
With that people become lazy.
- 7MS:** Eeh.
I see.
- 8T1:** Ne banafuwa. Abantu awo bajjamu obunafu n’agamba eeh...
They become lazy; at that point people become lazy saying...
- 9MS:** N’agamba nti lwaki obudde tubumalira wano ng’ate science ye wookubuuzibwa?
They ask a question, “Why do we waste time with this yet it is science that will be examined?”

- 10T1: **Ahaa. Kuba ky’ova olaba nti bw’ogenda mu gundi, twesiba ku major. Zino eziri major ze tukola ki?**
Yes. That’s why you find that when you go to this..., we only concentrate on majors. The major ones are what we do what?
- 11T3: Science, SST [Social Studies – MES].

IT1.AP4.122

From the above, we clearly see that schools/teachers mainly pay attention to the examined subjects, which do not include MT. This is a practice inconsistent with official policy. The policy stipulates that the relevant area languages should be taught as subjects in schools and that such subjects may be examined: “UNEB will, nevertheless, provide for examination in all the five main Ugandan languages (Luo, Runyakitara, Luganda, Ateso/Akarimonjong and Lugbara) in the Primary Leaving Examination⁷² for those who study any of those languages as subject for examination” (Government of Uganda, 1992:18-19). The “escape clause” “as subjects for examination” makes it possible for schools to discontinue or neglect MT teaching, stating that they choose not to have their learners study any language other than English “as subject for examination”. Note that in turn 4 of Extract 20, and turns 10 and 11 of Extract 21, teachers classify subjects as “majors” and “minors”. The examined subjects are the “majors” and the non-examined ones (e.g., MT) are the “minors”.

In the urban schools’ questionnaire, respondents were asked to provide reasons why MT is not taught as a subject in their schools. Some of the responses appear below.

- Respondent U2: The school administration and Ministry of Education deter teaching in urban schools giving false reasons that there are many languages in such areas.
- Respondent W4: Our school is a multilingual school. We cannot single out any particular local language. That is why we use English.
- Respondent W5: The entrants in P1 right away speak English because of their good nursery education background. Most learners also use English as medium of communication.

Policy guidelines provide for the teaching of MT as a subject in urban schools. However, no guidelines are given on how to select which language should be taught as a subject in any particular urban school. Teachers’ responses also indicated a misinterpretation of the policy (cf. Johnson, 2009 for interpretation of language policy). For instance, Respondent U2 states that the Ministry of Education and Sports guidelines do not allow MT teaching in urban schools, yet the policy documents clearly state that urban schools should teach a dominant area language as a subject throughout the primary school years (Government of Uganda,

⁷² Recall that these are the examinations sat by all learners (in both rural and urban government and private schools) at the end of primary school in Uganda.

1992; Kateeba, 2009; Ministry of Education and Sports, 2004). Respondent W4 claims that urban schools are too multilingual and that selecting a dominant local language is difficult. Note (i) that, given the data presented in Chapter 5, this view is unfounded, and (ii) that Benson (2005) and Lucas and Katz (1994) are of the opinion that MT education is possible even in complex multilingual environments. Benson (2005:9) contends that:

[w]hile rural areas are often homogenous with only one L1 to allow bilingual programmes, urban/suburban areas require creative classroom organisation. It should not be assumed that urban areas are so diverse as to render mother tongue programmes unmanageable; for example, many African cities have remarkably homogenous neighbourhoods with their own schools.

(Benson, 2005:9).

Benson's observation is true for most urban areas in Uganda. There are urban centres in the country which are largely monolingual, and there are specific areas which are known to have a concentration of particular language groups and therefore have a majority language (Ndoleriire, 2004). In such a case, a dominant language should be identifiable going by the language-in-education policy.

In addition, Respondent W5 stated that urban schools did not teach through MT because the learners they received in P1 already speak English, having learnt it in pre-primary, and that most of the learners in this respondent's school used English in their communication to each other. As had been stated in section 3.2 and will be discussed again in section 8.3, pre-primary education in Uganda has emerged as one of the factors negatively influencing the implementation of MT teaching. The current language-in-education policy is silent about pre-primary schooling; as such, learners at this level of education are taught in English. This teacher was of the opinion that, by the time children leave pre-primary, they are already fluent in English to the extent that they can learn through it (see section 8.3).

Stroud (2001:341) has argued that "educational 'discourse' and classroom practices transform differences in power and status between (speakers of) metropolitan and national languages into differences in number of hours of each language is taught per week". In this case, teachers maintain that English and/or other curriculum areas taught in English are more important than MTs, and therefore the time allocated to the teaching of MTs is reduced. It is possible that teachers assume that after a switch to English as a LoLT is made, MT as a subject is no longer necessary.

To conclude this section, the lack of examinations for MT as a subject is a strong demotivating factor for teaching MT as a subject and using MT as a LoLT in rural schools. Even when timetables in government schools clearly allocate particular hours for MT teaching, it is not uncommon for teachers to convert such a lesson into another learning area (see, e.g., IT2.BP5.8 & IT1.AP4.122). However, rural private schools appear to teach MT as a subject not because of examinations but because they do not want to look as if they are completely opposed to the language policy. Teaching MT as a subject in private schools is limited to the classes that should have MT as a LoLT, i.e., P1 to P3. In short, the planned teaching of MT as a subject to facilitate transfer to English after the first three years of primary school appears to be failing due to the early introduction of English and the unbalanced attention given to MT and English teaching.

In conclusion, rural P4 and P5 teachers were asked their views on the following statement: “For learners to be fully bilingual, they do not need to have their mother tongue/local language as a subject throughout their primary school”. Of all teachers who responded, 85.7% (6/7) stated that learners need their MT throughout their primary schooling if they are to develop as bilinguals. Only one teacher, from RakaiRP-C, disagreed with this statement. However, as discussed above, teachers’ and schools’ practices did not reflect this opinion.

6.2.3 Learners’ participation in mother tongue lessons

Classroom observations revealed that when MT was taught as a subject, learners participated eagerly (see, for example, Extract 22). Chimbutane (2011:77) observes that “the nature of interaction between teachers and pupils and among pupils themselves is one of the barometers that can be used to gauge the quality of the teaching and learning environment in a classroom”. As the extracts below demonstrate, the interaction between the teacher and learners is lively when the teacher uses MT. However, learners are not given opportunities to interact among themselves. I will also show later that teachers do not tolerate learners who talked in class unless they are granted permission to do so.

Extract 22 was taken from a P2 class in a private school (RakaiRP-D). This extract features a female teacher who also taught Mathematics in this class.⁷³ The teacher was discussing Luganda words with long vowels.

Extract 22: *Exuberant learner participation in MT lessons*

- ₁T: **Mumpeeyo ebigambo ebiwangaala. Ekigambo ekiwangaala. Olwawo n'owangaalawo ng'oyogera. Kitegeeza awo waliwo ennyukuta empeerezi mmeka? Give me some words with long vowels. Words with long vowels. Words with sounds with which you take a longer time pronouncing. That means at that point there are how many vowels?**
- ₂LS: **Bbiri. Two**
- ₃T: **Mukwano gwange KATENDE. My friend KATENDE.**
- ₄ KATENDE: **Omukeeka. Mat.**
- ₅T: **Very good. Weebale nnyo. Omukeeka. Omuki^...? Very good. Thank you very much. 'omukeeka'. What^...?**
- ₆LS: **Omukeeka. Mat**
- ₇T: **Wa ewawangaala? Where is the long vowel?**
- ₈LS: **'Kee.'**

OT1.DP2.25-27

In this extract, in turn 4, a learner gave a correct answer, *omukeeka* “mat”. When the teacher asked learners to identify the syllable with a long vowel in this word, *omukeeka* (in turn 7), they responded correctly, though in chorus (turn 8). In the rest of the lesson, not represented here, three learners then each identified a further word, and the teacher mentioned another two. These five words were also discussed with the class by the teacher, and the learners enthusiastically answered questions in unison. These and similar observations suggest that learners do not have many difficulties in learning MT as a subject. The teachers also did not report any challenges on the part of learners (when teaching and learning MT). Rather, the challenges involved in MT as a subject lessons had to do with materials and teachers’ competence in teaching MT, as elaborated on below.

As regards materials, both teachers and learners lacked materials for teaching and learning MT. During one classroom observation session in RakaiRP-C (see Extract 23), a P3 teacher told learners that if they had a book called ‘*Kisumuluzo*’, he would show them what he was

⁷³ It is the practice of many schools (both government and private) to have female teachers occupy lower classes like P1 and P2. However, one exception was observed: there was one male teacher in a P1 class in RakaiRP-C.

explaining in this Luganda lesson (see turn 1). Turn 3 indicates that he believed that learners refused to buy this book.

Extract 23: *Scarcity of materials impedes MT learning*

- ₁T:** Tusobola okuba n'ekigambo, 'mpya'. 'Mpya', uhm? 'Mpya', ky'ova olaba singa obadde olina Kisumuluzo yo, obadde ojja kubikkula we nandikugambye okubikkula, osangemu ebigambo bino nga weebiri bino. Enkuba ekya amangu si mbi. Olulimi ndwogera. Enkwenge, enswiriri. Ebigambo ebyo mubiwulira?
(...). We can have a word "mpya". "Mpya", yes? This is why if you had Kisumuluzo you would open to where I would direct you and then you would find these words there: "Enkuba ekya amangu si mbi"; "Olulimi ndwogera"; "enkwenge"; "enswiriri". Have you listened to those words?
- ₂LS:** Yee.
Yes.
- ₃T:** Mu kisumuluzo wo Kisumuluzo yakulema okugula.
You failed to buy Kisumuluzo.

OT1.CP3.73-74

A P2 MT teacher in RakaiRP-C said that challenges in teaching MT as a subject exist because teachers do not have reference materials (see Extract 24). Although this teacher stated that their only challenge is a lack of reference materials (and that they improvise), in section 7.2 I show that the greatest challenge appears to be teacher training/preparation for MT teaching.

Extract 24: *Scarcity of materials impedes MT teaching*

- ₁T:** (...) Empandiika? Era yo etulemeredde kuba singa tuba tulinawo obutabo n'oyongera n'osoma, naye kati era naffe mu kunyigiriza kwaffe oba ng'era omusomesa bw'otoyinja kulemererwa olina okukola ki?
(...) Writing? It is the one thing that is causing failure because if we have some books from which one can read; but in our creativity or just as a teacher we cannot fail to improvise. You have to do what?
- ₂MS:** Okuyiiyayiiya.
To be creative.
- ₃T:** Okuyiiya.
To be creative.

IT1.CP2.32

While there are some challenges related to teaching and learning materials for the subject of Luganda (MT), classroom observations indicate that learners participated well during MT lessons, better than during other subjects (cf. Chimbutane, 2009, 2011). In addition, learners gave more original answers during Luganda lessons. This means that if MT is taught well to the extent that learners can read, write, listen to, and comprehend their MT, these skills could be transferred to English, as evidence elsewhere has revealed. In addition, learning would make more meaning to learners (cf. Cincotta-Segi, 2013).

Although learners participate more in MT lessons than in others, teachers still dominate the lessons, perhaps because of a lack of training in learner-centred approaches. The guidelines of the thematic curriculum require teachers to use learner-centred approaches but, because of teachers' training background (cf. Spillane et al., 2002; Wang, 2008), they dominate the lessons (see section 7.3 for teaching strategies employed by teachers). Teachers also do not create many opportunities for learners to practise reading in Luganda lessons. Reading as a unit of language learning is more visible in English lessons (though also poorly handled) than in MT lessons. For the rural schools studied here, it appears that the teaching of English is over-emphasised at the expense of MT. If this is indeed the case, transfer from MT to English would be limited, as MT skills appear not to be developed in learners, which also means that learners struggle to learn English independently without well-built scaffolding from their MT.

6.3.3 Teachers' competence and challenges in mother tongue teaching

Despite the fact that learners participate enthusiastically in the MT lessons, it was observed that teachers experience challenges when handling MT as a subject. For instance, the content of MT that some teachers shared with learners appeared to be too advanced for the learners' ages. An example of this is in Extract 25 below, where a P3 teacher in RakaiRP-C used phonological terminology (such as "semi-vowel" and "nasal").

Extract 25: *Learners exposed to high order concepts in a MT lesson*

- ¹T: Ennyingo ez'ennyukuta ennya. Ennyingo ey'ennyukuta ennya tugambye tuzifuna nga tugasse ensirifu bbiri oba eza nnabansasaana, eeh? N'ogattako nnamapawengwa oba 'y' oba 'w' n'ossaako empeerezi. Djambye ennyingo ey'ennukuta ennya, luli twalaba ennyingo ey'ennyukuta ennya nga kuliko akatwe kano bwe kati, n'ozzaako 'a' oba 'u'. Naye kati tulaba ennyingo ez'ennyukuta ennya nga tugasse ensirifu bbiri. Ensirifu, ensirifu bbiri. Twaziraba ennyukuta ezigumira. Luli twalaba ennyukuta ezigumira, ezigumira mu walifu, z'osobola okuwandiika nga ziri bbiri. Tuwandiika ensirifu bbiri, ne tugattako nnampawengwa, nnampawengwa tusooka na ki, tusooka na 'y'. 'm' nnyukuta ki eyo? Eeh? 'M' egwa ewa? Wanika mukono, saagala kuvuuvuumira eyo mu kaama? Ani amanyi 'm' w'egwa?
Syllables with four letters. We get four-letter syllables after combining two consonants. Yes? Then you add a semivowel 'y' or 'w' plus a vowel. I have said, a syllable with four letters, the other day we saw a four-letter syllable with this sign here followed by 'a' or 'u'. But now we are looking at four-letter syllables with two consonants. Two consonants. We looked at the long sounds. The other day we looked at long sounds in the Luganda alphabet, those which you can write double. We write two syllables plus semivowels beginning with 'y'. 'M' which letter is that? Yes? Where does 'm' fall? Rise up your hand. I do not want you to keep murmuring. Who knows the category it falls under?
- ²L1: Nsirifu.
Consonant.

- 3T:** ‘M’ nsirifu. Esobola okuba nga nsirifu naye eyina ekiti ekirala ky’egwamu kye nakubuulira.
Yes it can be a consonant but it has another category it falls under which I already told you about.
- 4L2:** Nnakinnyindwa.
Nasal.
- 5T:** Yes, ‘m’ nnakinnyindwa. ‘m’ nakugamba nnakinnyindwa, ate endala?
Yes I told you that ‘m’ is a nasal. Which are the others?
- 6L3:** ‘n’
- 7T:** Ate endala? Ne ‘ŋ’ nayo nnakinnyindwa. Nga kuliko akatwe kano, kano bwe kati kano. Kaba sikalina mpeerezi yaakwo. Okategedde?
Which are the others? Even ‘ŋ’ is a nasal. This has to have a curve here, a curve of this nature. It does not have a vowel. Is it clear to you?
- 8Ls:** Yee
Yes.

OT1.CP3.73

Consider also Extract 26 below, taken from the same lesson, as a case in point. The teacher in question joined this school on completion of senior four, i.e., after 11 years of school, with no formal training in teaching. His lack of training could be the reason why he could not determine whether the language content of his lesson was appropriate for his learners’ level. It appeared as if he presented to his learners his very latest school experiences, as the kind of Luganda grammar he taught the P3 learners is typical of what secondary school learners are exposed to in Uganda.

Extract 26: *Teacher using phonological jargon with young learners*

- T:** Kano, kino eno y’egenda okukyuka nnampawengwa ebadde ‘y’, kati efuuse, ‘w’. Tugenda kuwandiika ekigambo “nkwa”, “nkwa”. Tuddidde ensirifu, ‘n’, tugigasseeko, ‘k’, tugasseeko nnampawengwa, ‘w’, ne tufuna ekigambo, ekigambo, “nkwa”. Ekigambo kyaffe, “enkwa”. Ani amanyi enkwa? Mmwe abatagimanyi? Enkwa. Tugasse ensirifu, ‘m’, abamu omanyi mubuzabuzibwa mangu nnyo, ate tugambye, nnakinnyindwa, ate wano ate nsirifu, eky’okuba nga nnakinnyindwa tekigigaana kuba ng’ate nsirifu. Omanyi lwaki nsirifu? Abange, mumanyi lwaki ennyukuta zino zonna nsirifu, ng’oggyeeko zino? Ezo ennyukuta ezo oziraba ezo? Ettaanu oziraba ezo? [a, e, i, o, u]. ezisigadde zonna nki? Nsirifu, lwaki nsirifu? Eeh?
This is the one that is going to change; the semivowel which was ‘y’ has now become ‘w’. We are going to write the word “nkwa”. We have consonant ‘n’, we have combined it with ‘k’, added onto it semivowel ‘w’ and then we have a word, the word “nkwa”. Our word “nkwa” who knows how to read it? Who knows “enkwa” tick, is it you who do not know “enkwa”? We have combined the consonant “m”. Some of you are easily confused. We have talked of a nasal, but at the same time we are talking about a consonant; being a nasal does not stop it from being a consonant. Do you know why it is a consonant? Friends, do you know why these letters are consonants apart from these? Do you see those letters? The five letters? A, e, i, o, u. The rest are ^.... Consonants; why are they consonants? Yes?

OT1.CP3.74

Similarly, a P2 teacher from the same school (RakaiRP-C) used unconventional words while teaching Lugandan vowels (Extract 27). The teacher in question said during a debriefing

session that MT teaching was challenging to the teachers. The following is part of a lesson the teacher gave in P2.

Extract 27: *Teacher uses unconventional grammatical words in teaching MT*

- 1T: **Twagamba tulina ennyingo ezitufuga. Ennyingo[^]...**
We said that we have syllables that govern us. Syllables which[^]...
- 2Ls: **Ezitufuga.**
Govern us.
- 3T: **Kwe tuzimbira oluki?**
Syllables onto which we do what?
- 4L1: **Olukiiko.**
Meeting. [Incorrect answer – MES].
- 5T: **Kwe tuzimbira ki?**
Onto which we build what?
- 6L1: **Oluganda.**
- 7T: **Oluganda. Kwe tuzimbira ki?**
Oluganda, onto which we build[^]...
- 8Ls: **Oluganda.**
- 9T: **Kwe tuzimbira ki?**
Onto which we build what[^]...
- 10Ls: **Oluganda.**
- 11T: **Kwe tuzimbira ki?**
Onto which we do what[^]...
- 12Ls: **Oluganda.**
- 13T: **Ezo ani azimanyi?**
Who knows them?
- 14Ls: *Me teacher, me teacher, me teacher⁷⁴.*
- 15T: **NNAABASUMBA.**
- 16NNAABASUMBA: *'a'.*
- 17T: **Tulinayo ki?**
What do we have?
- 18Ls: *'a'*
- 19T: **Tulinayo 'a'.**
We have 'a.'

OT1.CP1.2

In turn 1, the teacher says that in Luganda, there are “syllables” that “govern us”. This is repeated in turns 2 through 12 in the form of a sentence completion task for learners. In turn 13, the teacher asks the learners whether there is anyone who knew what “syllables” are. A learner suggests ‘a’ and the teacher accepts this as a correct answer. It is only at this point that we come to see that the so-called syllables were vowels. The fact that learners are able to give a “correct” answer implies that they are aware that the teacher’s term “syllables” refers to vowels. The lesson continued (not represented here) with learners suggesting other vowels

⁷⁴ It is worth pointing out that since children in private schools were under instruction to speak English in and outside class, it came naturally to them, even in MT lessons, to do so. Whenever the teacher solicited answers, those who knew the answer shouted “Me teacher! Me teacher!” in asking their teacher to choose them. In contrast, government school learners only raised their hands, and the teacher would call out the name of the learner or point to the one who was chosen to give an answer.

which the teacher accepted as correct. After all the vowels had been given by the learners and were written on the blackboard by the teacher, she asked learners what they are called as a whole and they chorused *enjatuza/empeerezi* “vowels”. As the lesson progressed, the teacher also asked learners to give her *ennyingo ensirifu*, loosely translated as “a syllable consonant” (which is not a known term in Luganda), when she meant to ask for examples of Luganda syllables.

Given the use of terminology exemplified here, it is possible that learners would view Luganda (or any other MT) as a difficult subject as a result of having been introduced to difficult concepts prematurely and because of approaches that do not allow easy access to what is being taught. Heugh et al. (2007) reports that there is usually little quality control in private schools (e.g., RakaiRP-C and RakaiRP-D). This could be one of the reasons for the presence of many untrained teachers in rural private schools in this study.

Regarding teachers’ competency in teaching MT, I observed that teachers experience many challenges, particularly with Luganda orthography. (Teachers also stated during the interviews that Luganda orthography is a challenge to them.) The notes, exercises and examples teachers gave while teaching demonstrated that they do not have fully developed skills in this area, as many fail to follow the orthographical rules of Luganda. Classroom charts written in Luganda also contained errors. A detailed discussion of the challenges that teachers face in the teaching of and in MT is presented in Chapter 8.

In conclusion, as much as learners are observed to participate enthusiastically during MT lessons when compared with other lessons, the teaching of MT as a subject is a challenge. Teachers have limited skills, training, and experience in teaching MT as a subject (see section 7.2 for teacher training issues). A possible result of this could be that learners might grow to view MT as a difficult subject and develop a dislike for it because of being exposed to age-inappropriate content and idiosyncratic uses of terminology.

6.3.4 Teachers’ views on how to improve the teaching of MT in schools

The questionnaire asked teachers to indicate how the teaching of MTs in Ugandan schools could be improved. P1 to P3 teachers responded as follows:

- Respondent A1: I suggest the ministry of education to make it compulsory for the pupils to learn first the local language country-wide.
- Respondent A3: 1. Translate the curriculum from English to mother tongue.
2. Provide us with enough learning materials.
- Respondent A4: To provide us with enough teachers in each class
- Respondent B6: Posting teachers of the born area, i.e., teachers who can speak and write the MT.
- Respondent B7: Those teachers to be trained how to teach MT.
- Respondent D9: Provision of Luganda dictionary; examining Luganda at primary school level as a paper.
- Respondent C11: The school should organise workshops/seminars.

The teachers' suggestions covered a wide range of topics, some of them already referred to above, e.g., those relating to human resource management (see Respondent B6's suggestion). As discussed in section 2.5, when teacher posting is not well planned, MT teaching can be a challenge (Ball, 2011; Dutcher, 2004a; Nyaga & Anthonissen, 2012; Woldemariam, 2007). Teachers' responses indicate that they are aware of and keen to address the challenges of MT education in their schools.

6.4 Mother tongue as language of learning and teaching in schools

Recall that the language-in-education policy states that MT must be used as a LoLT in rural schools from P1 through P3 (see Chapter 3). Purposeful questions were asked to capture teachers' beliefs on and attitudes towards the matter of using MT as a LoLT. The respondents were also interviewed on how they felt about instructing learners through MT when they themselves were instructed through English at school.

The majority of respondents (10/13; 76.9%) indicated that their schools use MT as a LoLT from P1 through P3, as the policy requires. Two teachers indicated that MT as a LoLT is used from P1 to P4, whereas one teacher, from RakaiRP-D, stated that his/her school does not use MT as LoLT at all. What is surprising is that the two teachers who stated that MT was used in P1 to P4 in their schools were both from private schools, schools which generally held the view that they do not instruct through MT at all.

In this regard, Heugh et al. (2007:88) cautions that “[t]he issues around medium of instruction are extremely complex, and if one needs precise information, one has to make detailed and

painstaking enquiries to elicit responses to hypothetical questions at a deeper level”. Bearing this in mind, in the subsequent classroom observations and follow-up interviews I had with teachers, it became apparent that, although private school teachers stated that they do not use MT in their teaching activities, they actually employ it simultaneously with English. During the interviews, private school teachers attested that they employed MT in almost all classes to ensure clarity of what is taught and sometimes to check for comprehension. Details of how MT is employed in the teaching and learning process are given in Chapter 7.

Teachers held different views on using Luganda (MT) as a LoLT. A teacher from RakaiRG-A stated that learning through MT helped learners to easily access what is taught, possibly because she was taught in English at school and found it difficult. She also stated that because English is not the learners’ home language, using it as LoLT makes the teaching process a “great effort”. Contrary to this teacher’s line of thinking, a P5 teacher from RakaiRG-B stated that learners needed to learn through English because, at the end of the day, they are going to be examined in English and not in MT (see Extract 28).

Extract 28: *Teacher: Language of examination should determine LoLT*

T: **Nze ekintu ekyo engeri gye nkirabamu, kwe kugamba Oluzungu luno baba beetaagisa okusoma mu Luzungu, olw’ensonga enkulu nti ebibuuzo bye babuuzza babibuuzza mu Luzungu.**

From my point of view, for English, it is proper that they study through English because of one major reason: the exams they sit at the end of the day are in English.

IT2.BP5.7

In the northern comparative schools, teachers were asked to indicate whether their schools employed MT as a LoLT in P1 through P3. Three out of four answered affirmatively; the other respondent did not answer the question. Although no interviews and classroom observations took place in the case of these teachers, available evidence suggests that MT teaching is more successful in this region than elsewhere in the country. There are a number of reasons for this success. These are discussed below.

Firstly, the number of learners in the sampled government schools is far greater than the number in government schools in Rakai district (see section 5.2.1). This was confirmed by Craig Esbeck⁷⁵ (personal communication, 6 September 2012) who reported that the

⁷⁵ See footnote 28 for Esbeck’s credentials. The higher teacher-learner ratio in the government schools in this area could be because of the acceptance of MT education as a result of the many NGOs promoting MT education in this area, as discussed in Chapter 3.

government schools in which the Mango Tree's Northern Uganda Literacy Program operated have a teacher-student ratio of around 1:120. Secondly, as indicated in Chapter 3, the District Language Board for the Leblanq language is one of the few successful language boards in Uganda. In addition, the Literacy and Adult Basic Education MT project report by Heugh and Mulumba (2013) demonstrates that MT education in this area is generally successful. As such, districts in northern Uganda are receiving more attention in the area of MT education than any other area in Uganda (see section 3.3). These factors working together might have caused MT education to be viewed as acceptable by parents and teachers in this district. This acceptability and the district's MT campaign would result in not many parents enrolling their children in private schools, a common practice in Rakai district. Note that Esbeck reported that there are probably no private schools in the rural communities in which Mango Tree operated. Private schools are instead found in urban areas of these districts. This indicates that MT education is more acceptable in this region than elsewhere in the country, e.g., in Rakai district where there are private schools in rural communities competing with government schools in terms of LoLT.

I also sought to establish whether learners were allowed to interact freely in their MTs at school. All respondents who stated that children were not allowed to speak their MT or local languages in the school compound (4/13; 30.8%) were from private schools: three from RakaiRP-D and one from RakaiRP-C. There were however two teachers from RakaiRP-C who believed that learners were allowed to speak their MTs at school, a response which contradicted that of their colleagues. All teachers in government schools indicated that learners were allowed to speak their MTs in the school compound.

This data illustrates that government schools are consistent with the language-in-education policy as they teach in learners' MT from P1 to P3. Private schools in rural areas are inconsistent in their implementation of this policy: instead of using MT as a LoLT and teaching it and English as subjects in P1 to P3, they teach MT as a subject and use English as a LoLT. As explained in section 5.2.1.1, the main reason private schools offer for not using MT as LoLT is that their learner population is "too multilingual". But, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 7, teachers' practices in these schools contradict their beliefs, because whenever they want to check on learners' comprehension, give instructions, or

emphasise an explanation, they employ Luganda, a language they call their learners' MT. The same teachers claim that all learners understand this language well.

Teachers were also asked how many years of MT as LoLT learners should have before a switch to English as LoLT be made. Their responses are captured in Table 8.

Table 8: Rural teachers' preferences for the period of teaching MT before English-medium education

Question on questionnaire	Class taught by rural respondent	Number of responses				
		4 years	5 years	6 years	7 to 8 years	No answer
From the following options, how many years of mother tongue/local language teaching do you think learners should have before they can begin learning through English?	P1, P2, or P3 (n=13)	5	1	1	3	3
	P4 or P5 (n=8)	3	3	0	0	2

Of the P4 and P5 teachers, three of the eight (37.5%) believe that 4 years of MT as LoLT is enough before the switch is made to English as LoLT, while another three believe that 5 years is sufficient. (Two respondents did not answer this question.) Somewhat different responses were given by the rural P1 to P3 teachers: 38.5% (5/13) think that MT should be the LoLT for 4 years, one each thinks it should be for 5 and 6 years, and three think that 7 to 8 years are necessary. (Three respondents did not answer the question.) Six to eight years is the period often recommended in the literature as appropriate for bilingual development and complete transfer of skills from the L1 to the L2. This data means that teachers are generally unaware of the values embedded in using the MT as LoLT for a longer time, as recommended in the literature (Benson, 2008; Collier, 1987; Cummins, 1992, 2000a; Fafunwa et al., 1989; Ramirez, Yuen, Ramey, & Pasta, 1991; Thomas & Collier, 1997, 2002; Walter & Chuo, 2012). Note however that the teachers in the present study did mention longer periods than the head teachers in the Piper (2010) study conducted in/amongst primary school head teachers: "36.7% of them mentioned a grade lower than P4. Expressly, 18.4% said P1, 2% said P2, and 16.3% said P3 are appropriate grades to begin teaching in English" (Piper, 2010:36). Interestingly, teachers in the north and north western Uganda regions believe that children should learn through their MT beyond P4 and that MT should be taught as a subject up to P7 so that learners can further develop their MT skills (Heugh & Mulumba,

2013). Perhaps teachers are aware of this advantage of MT education because of the MT education success registered in this region.

In addition, urban school teachers in this study (working in schools where the LoLT is English from P1 onwards) were asked whether learners should learn in their MTs in their early years of school. The majority (11/14; 78.5%) either agreed or agreed strongly, while the remaining three respondents disagreed (with one of the three disagreeing strongly).

In summary, although teachers' views on the questionnaire indicate that they generally support MT as LoLT, follow-up interviews reveal that they do not approve of it. Many of the respondents feel that using English as a LoLT is more worthwhile to learners as their final exams at the end of primary school are written in English. As was the case for teaching MT as a subject, the main reason for lack of support for MT as LoLT appears to be the language of examinations at the end of primary school. The implication of these findings for the MT education programme in Uganda is that if the use of MT, both as a subject and LoLT, is to be enforced in schools, the language of examination and/or the examination of MTs will have to be reconsidered.

6.5 Teachers' opinions on the thematic curriculum

As discussed in Chapter 3, the NCDC (2011) and Kateeba (2009) note that the thematic curriculum is arranged in themes to avoid repetition, as was the case in the pre-2006 curriculum. Furthermore, the NCDC argues that themes are easier for learners to understand than the subjects that took place in the old curriculum, and that the thematic curriculum enables easy access to reading, writing, mathematics, and life skills (Kateeba, 2009). However, teachers' opinions about the thematic curriculum varied from positive to negative.

On the side of government schools, some teachers viewed this curriculum as repetitive, shallow, and incomprehensive whereas others thought that the repetitiveness of this curriculum made it easy for learners to follow what was taught. Teachers who believed that this curriculum is good argued during the interviews that it helped learners to access its content many times from different angles, something which fosters their understanding. Those who criticised the new curriculum consider it inferior to the curriculum taught in private schools (although the policy requires all schools to follow the new curriculum but

rural private schools shun it⁷⁶). Consider in this regard the opinion of a P3 teacher from RakaiRG-A presented in Extracts 29 and 30.

Extract 29: *Teacher's evaluation of the thematic curriculum*

- T: **Ogenda okulaba nga omwaka guggwaako ng'ogutuuse wakati, kati bino byonna ebirala, biki, polite language, biki byonna, nga tabimanyi, ate ng'omwaka ogujja bamuwa kitabo kirala. Kati kano kye kaliko, kye kaliko, [ageraageranya ebitabo ebikozesebwa mu masomero ag'obwannanyini – MES]. Ko kasala [agamba akatabo akakozesebwa mu masomero g'obwannanyini – MES], kye kamaze tekakiddamu, kagenda ne kagenda, ne kagenda, okutuuka wano ng'omwana amanyi different activities, biki biki, naye wali okusinga, mulimu although, mulimu using biki, shouldn't ebyo baabivaako. Ogenda okulaba nga bano bawa ...bawa bi-arrange, ebitali muli [mu kitabo kya thematic – MES]. Muno tosobola na kusangamu bi-arrange ate nga babibuuza. [Teacher laughs].**
By the time you realise that the year is ending, you will have just reached the half-way mark in the book and then the rest of the other material, say, polite language and the rest of that, the learner wouldn't know. And yet, the following year, they are supposed to be given another book. But what this book is about [referring to the book used in private schools – MES], it is well organised, what has been handled is not repeated, it goes on and on and on and by the time the learner gets to this point, they know different activities. But in the other [thematic curriculum – MES] book you find although using what and what, shouldn't, content which is no longer handled. But on comparing, you find that this [private school – MES] book gives tasks as arrange, which you cannot find in the other [thematic curriculum – MES] books. In this [thematic curriculum – MES] book, you cannot find tasks on arrange and yet they are examined. [Teacher laughs.]

OT5.AP3.56

This respondent argues that the thematic curriculum does not address certain crucial things, yet learners are still examined on the omitted material. A P3 teacher from RakaiRG-B also evaluated the thematic curriculum as being shallow, and explained that teachers are required to “expand” what they teach – a P3 respondent from RakaiRG-A stated the same – yet this practice of expanding is not without its problems (see Extract 30).

Extract 30: *Challenges of the thematic curriculum in government schools*

- ₁T: **Uhm, eyaffe nfunda. Kale mpozzi bakugamba nti weegaziyize, kati ggwe omanyi bw'osensera mu bugazi bwo.**
Yes, our curriculum is shallow. Well, they tell us to expand the content as we can, so it is up to you to know how far to go.
- ₂T: **Obuzibu bwe tulina, kati ba-inspector bano bwe baba ng'abazze, nkulaga ne bw'akebera mu bitabo by'abaana, nga mu bitabo mulimu ebintu bye wabasomesezza nga tebiri ku mulamwa, asobola n'okukugamba nti ate bino wabiggye wa?**
The challenge we have is, if the inspectors come around, they could check the learners' books and if they come across content which they cannot find in the curriculum, they ask where you got it from.
- ₃MS: **Eee?**
Sure?

⁷⁶ Also see Ssenkabirwa and Ahimbisibwe (2014) who report that urban schools disregarded the thematic curriculum with the argument that it can only be taught in rural areas. Recall too that many teachers equated the thematic curriculum with MT teaching.

- 4T: **Okiraba? Ayagala** evidence. Era inspector **bw'ajja, olina okubeera n'ebitabo by'abayizi, n'obeera ne scheme yo ne curriculum. Okiraba?**
Do you understand that? They want evidence. So if the inspector is to come, you should have learners' books, scheme of work and the curriculum. Do you understand that?
- 5MS: **Uhm.**
Yes.
- 6T: **Nga kino kiri related ku kino na kino, byonna byegoba.**
This has to be related to this and this to the other.
- 7MS: **Bw'akusanga ng'otaddemu ekirala guba musango?**
Do they blame you if they find you having added in something else?
- 8T: **Uhm, kati ate bw'ogamba nti ka nnyungemu wano nkozese ku katabo kano aka standard, olaba obudde, periods z'omu scheme bw'oba ng'oziridde? Kyokka jjukira nti ayagala time akusange nga timetable ky'egamba, ne wiiki ky'egamba nga bwe bagamba nti olina kubeera mu wiiki yakusatu olina kubeera ng'oli mu wiiki yakusatu.**
Yes, so if you think of adding in something else from the Standard Aid,⁷⁷ do you see how the periods will not be enough for you to complete the content you prepared in the scheme because you will have encroached onto them? Also remember that s/he wants to find you at a point when if the timetable says x, for instance, if it is week three, then in your teaching you have to be in the third week as well.

IT1.BP3.170-171

Teachers faced a dilemma: they did not know whether or not to continue making use of their creative ways to supplement the thematic curriculum. A P3 teacher from RakaiRG-A said that he consistently supplements the thematic curriculum content but in a manner that would not be detected by inspectors. Note also that respondents reported that the thematic curriculum materials are in English, yet rural teachers are required to teach in local languages. On the questionnaire, respondents expressed their inability to translate these materials into local languages and mentioned this as a reason why teaching in the MT is challenging. Consider the following selection of responses:

- Respondent A2:** (i) We find a difficult (sic.) of translating some words from English to MT.
 (ii) We find a difficult (sic.) in spelling some words.⁷⁸
 (iii) All curriculums were written in English yet we are to teach in MT.
- Respondent B7: I was not trained in writing. So I find a problem in writing local language.

⁷⁷ 'Standard Aid' is a textbook written by private individuals, those who set the examinations for this district. Private schools had access to these materials and taught from them. Because government school learners did not learn from these materials, they could not sit the same end-of-term exams, as these examinations were based on the materials used in private schools (see section 8.8 for further explanation in this regard). Note that at the end of primary school, both sets of learners sit the same national examinations, viz. the Primary Leaving Examinations.

⁷⁸ The NCDC suggests that wall charts be used in the teaching of English. In the government schools, I observed few wall charts, and only once during the period of classroom observation in these schools was a teacher seen making use of one (in a P2 class in RakaiRG-B). Most of the charts were hand-made and were in Luganda (so they could not be used in the teaching of English), some with orthographical errors. When I asked the teachers about these errors, they denied having made the charts, stating that the charts were made by student teachers who had been at these schools the previous year for their internship.

These responses demonstrate that teachers face the challenge of accessing the curriculum in local languages. Given the fact that not all teachers have the same translation skills (see Respondent A2 above), they are bound to render the materials in local languages with differing meanings, and this potentially culminates in teaching different subject matter to learners across the country.⁷⁹ When asked directly in the questionnaire what their opinion was on the thematic curriculum being taught in MT (i.e., not in English), the following responses were obtained from P1 to P3 teachers:

- Respondent A2: **Bagyongeremu bwongezi maanyi.**
Let them just put in more effort..
- Respondent A3: It helps learners to learn things faster because of the mother tongue.
- Respondent B5: It should be continued, it should also be examined in upper classes.
- Respondent B6: It brings confusion to the learners.
- Respondent B7: It should be taught in English as a medium of instruction.
- Respondent D9: (i) Pupils are not given a chance of integrating in their languages. (ii) Scarcity of jobs on the side of teachers.
- Respondent C12: The NCDC should provide schools with books (text books) in local languages relevant to the curriculum for each region.

These responses indicate that teachers hold different views on the teaching of the thematic curriculum in MT. Some think that the teaching of this curriculum should be continued and that MTs should be examined in upper classes, whereas others are of the opinion that the thematic curriculum should not be taught in MT because, amongst others, it confuses learners. Respondent B6, who referred to the “confusion”, stated in the follow-up interview that she felt “sad” about the thematic curriculum being taught in MT (IT1.BP1.5), and that the years of teaching the thematic curriculum in MT are “wasted time” (IT1.BP1.5).

Note that the respondents from the private schools (D9, C11 and C12) support the teaching of the thematic curriculum in MTs, which is an unexpected finding, given that their schools teach the pre-2006 curriculum to their learners and do so in English. Respondent D9 mentioned that learners are not given the chance to “integrate” in their MTs. The respondent might have meant “interact” instead of “integrate”; recall that private schools require their learners to speak only English in the school compound at all times.

⁷⁹ A review of the MT materials sent to schools revealed that these materials might have been hurriedly written and/or written by unqualified persons, as they contained a number of orthographical errors (see NCDC, 2006d). These mistakes added an additional burden to teachers who had little or no training in language teaching.

When P4 and P5 teachers were asked their opinions on the teaching of the thematic curriculum in MT specifically, they responded as follows:

- Respondent A1: It is very good because it helps the learner to know more from the known.
- Respondent B2: It is good but needs pro-long training of teachers before start.
- Respondent B3: It is good for children to learn things around them in their mother tongue.
- Respondent B4: The thematic curriculum being taught in mother tongue is good but there is still a need for training of teachers.
- Respondent C5: The thematic curriculum is good but it needs much more time so the time allocated for lessons should be widened.
- Respondent C6: I do not agree with teaching learners following thematic curriculum because it can disturb a child to write proper spellings in upper classes for example she or she can write **boyi** instead of **boy**.
- Respondent D7: (i) Thematic curriculum makes learners find a P4 and P5 class very difficult due to the fact that they lack some concepts as far as the English language is concerned.
(ii) Thematic curriculum should be taught in English in all schools in Uganda whether a government school or a private school.
- Respondent D8: It is less needed because it consumes a lot of time (time consuming).

These responses again communicate a range of teacher beliefs. Private and government school teachers hold very different views regarding the thematic curriculum. RakaiRG-A and RakaiRG-B school teachers (Respondents A1 and B3) think that teaching the thematic curriculum in MT was a good practice because it enables learners to move from the known to the unknown, and that it is good for the children to learn things around them in a familiar language. Respondent B2 suggests that, as much as the policy of teaching the thematic curriculum in MT is good, more time should have been spent on teacher training before the introduction of the new curriculum. Respondents from RakaiRP-C and RakaiRP-D (C5 and D8, respectively) argue that the practice of teaching the curriculum in MT is good but believe that it is not properly planned in terms of time. Most teachers pointed out in the interviews that the time allocated to lessons in the thematic curriculum is insufficient. Other teachers from the same schools (Respondents C6 and D7) are of the opinion that teaching the thematic curriculum in MT in the lower grades negatively affected learners' English proficiency in P4 and P5.

The NCDC (2011:3) reports that teachers' attitudes towards the thematic curriculum had improved due to continuous professional development, support supervision, and improved learners' performance. However, field experiences reported here reveal that there is limited supervision from the NCDC and/or the Ministry of Education and Sports, and that some

teachers are negative towards the thematic curriculum. This study's findings are however consistent with the NCDC's (2011:3) finding that "some private schools have been lax in implementing the thematic curriculum, as they equate the curriculum to local language". (cf. Acemah, March 2, 2014; Komakech, 2014; Ssenkabirwa & Ahimbisibwe, 2014 who report on "thematic curriculum" being used as a synonym for "MT education" in Ugandan local newspapers). All private schools visited for the purposes of this study equated local language (MT) teaching with the thematic curriculum. In fact, gaining access to private schools in order to conduct this study was challenging, because school directors claimed that they did not "teach thematic" and therefore I would not benefit from conducting classroom observations. RakaiRP-C and RakaiRP-D disregard this curriculum on account that it is shallow. These schools borrowed content from the thematic curriculum and incorporated it into the pre-2006 subject curriculum.

From the teachers' narratives, one can infer the following:

- (i) There are two curricula in Uganda running concurrently – one in government schools, namely the thematic curriculum (for P1 to P3), and another in private schools, namely a pre-2006 subject curriculum.
- (ii) During the time children learnt in their MT and through themes, they do not learn all that they are supposed to learn, and they do not learn what is expected of them. This is because the thematic curriculum is not comprehensive enough to cater for English language issues to which learners are supposed to be exposed at particular points in time and in particular classes. This means that, by the time they reach the transitional year, P4, there are a lot of aspects of the English language that they do not know, because they have not been exposed to them.
- (iii) Government school teachers did not know how they should supplement the thematic curriculum materials without getting into trouble with the Ministry of Education and Sports.
- (iv) The transition from MT to English by way of the thematic curriculum in Uganda was problematic.
- (v) It was also possible that the education system of Uganda produced two sets of learners, because what learners in private schools were exposed to was different from what those in government schools were exposed to.

When asked how Uganda's thematic curriculum can be improved, P1 to P3 teachers made the following suggestions:

- Respondent A1: 1. If possible to give more seminars of the thematic curriculum.
2. Applying refresher courses.
- Respondent A3: Provide us with enough teachers in classrooms.
- Respondent B6: I appeal to the Ministry to change the teaching of thematic curriculum to English instead of local language.
- Respondent D9: One local language should be selected and taught all over the country.
- Respondent D11: The government should encourage the use of the thematic curriculum and monitor the implementers.
- Respondent C12: Parents should provide learners with required materials like readers etc.

Similar to the suggestions for improving the language-in-education policy, respondents referred to a need for more human resources (Respondent A3), more training (Respondent A1), and some government intervention in controlling the implementation of the curriculum (Respondent D11). Other respondents, like B6, suggested that the LoLT for the thematic curriculum should be changed to English from MTs, whereas Respondent D8 proposed that one local language should be selected and used to instruct all learners country-wide. Respondent C12 gave a response not given by any other respondent, namely that parents should provide their children with learning materials. The teachers' suggestions indicate that they were aware of the challenges that the thematic curriculum posed.

6.6 Teachers' attitudes towards and perceptions of the teaching and learning of English

6.6.1 The teaching and learning of English in Ugandan classrooms

The teaching of English in both (rural) government and private schools has emerged as a pertinent issue in this study. Curriculum guidelines provide teachers with stipulations on how the teaching of English should proceed in facilitating literacy acquisition in this language (see Appendix L). Similarly, curriculum guidelines clearly state that, since English is the official language in Uganda, learners should be literate in it by the end of P3.

Prior to the reintroduction of MT education in 2006/2007, MT teaching in Uganda was haphazard. In the majority of schools, English was the LoLT from P1 onwards, characterised

by codeswitching, codemixing, and translation throughout the primary school years, particularly in rural schools. Studies conducted before 2006 indicate that learners' literacy skills were very poor, and this was attributed to the use of English as LoLT in the early years of children's learning (Kateeba, 2009; Read & Enyutu, 2004; Tembe & Norton, 2008) as well as to flaws in the curriculum (Read & Enyutu, 2004). One such flaw was the inadequate time allocated to literacy and numeracy in P1 to P3 (Read & Enyutu, 2004). This background should be borne in mind when looking at teachers' attitudes towards the learning and teaching of English, because the background teachers have may influence these attitudes.

The Ministry of Education and Sports and the NCDC hoped that, with the introduction of MT as LoLT and the teaching of English as a subject for the first three years, learners' competence in English would improve because, according to curriculum guidelines, the time allocated to teaching English was increased. Amidst these hopes, teachers also hold certain beliefs about the teaching and learning of English, some of which have been alluded to in the previous sections. In the following sections, I present findings that relate to teachers' attitudes towards, perceptions of, and practices in the teaching of English. When reading these findings, one should bear in mind that Ugandan society approves of children's high proficiency in English at an early age (cf. Stroud, 2002; Tollefson, 1991). There are however not many contexts in which English is used in public life in Uganda (cf. Rosendal, 2010). As mentioned earlier, this attitude is explainable by (i) the colonial legacy of viewing English as a tool for socio-economic advancement, and (ii) the government structures that call for proficiency in English in order to access public jobs (Tollefson, 1991; Stroud, 2001, 2002).

6.6.2 Teachers' perceptions of the teaching and learning of English

A number of questions in the questionnaire attempted to capture teachers' perceptions of the learning of English. Teachers were asked, amongst others, whether children should already know English by the time they come to school. Only two of the rural respondents agreed (one strongly), and six did not provide an answer to this question. The five respondents who disagreed that children should enter school proficient in English (four of these disagreeing strongly) were all teachers from RakaiRG-A, a government school. The following is a summary of rural P1 to P3 teachers' responses to the sources of English language input for

pre-P1 children (indicating where teachers think learners should acquire the English with which they enter school).

Table 9: Rural P1 to P3 teachers' responses to where children should be exposed to English prior to school entry

Statement on questionnaire	Number of responses (n=13)		
	Yes	No	No answer
79.1. Learners should be exposed to English learning from nursery school.	2	6	5
79.2. Learners should be exposed to English learning at home.	0	8	5
79.3. Learners should be exposed to English learning from TV and radio.	0	8	5
79.4. Learners should be exposed to English learning from other (please mention).	2	7	4

With regard to the urban teachers, 11 of the 14 respondents disagreed (one strongly), and three agreed with the statement that learners should enter school speaking English. When the statement was paraphrased as “Children should already know English by the time they come to school”, six respondents disagreed (two strongly) and seven agreed (two strongly), with one respondent not providing an answer.

Table 10 summarises the responses of the teachers in this study to the statement that the best way to learn English is to use it as LoLT from P1 onwards.

Table 10: Teachers opinion on whether using English as LoLT is the best way to learn English

Statement on questionnaire: The best way to learn English is to use it as a medium of instruction right from P1	No. of respondents agreeing		No. of respondents disagreeing	
		Of whom agree strongly		Of whom disagree strongly
Rural P1 to P3 teachers (n=13)	7	4	6	1
Rural P4 and P5 teachers (n=8)	5	1	3	1
Urban teachers (n=14)	9	3	5	2

On the whole, the majority of the teachers believed that the best way to learn English is to use it as a LoLT. Benson (2008) and Heugh (2011a) argue that this belief is one of the reasons why policy makers choose early-exit models rather than late-exit MT models, the latter being more beneficial to learners: sooner rather than later, learners begin to learn through English (cf. Stroud, 2002).

During interviews, RakaiRG-B teachers indicated that, in their opinion, children should be learning in English and not in the MT. These teachers were of the opinion that the first three years of using MT as a LoLT are “wasted years” (see IT1.BP1.5 and IT2.BP3.166) because children need more time than that currently afforded to learn English. Consider in this regard Extracts 31 and 32.

Extract 31: *Teacher’s opinion about using MT as LoLT (1)*

- ₁MS: How do you feel about the fact that the children you teach learn through MT but you were taught through English?
- ₂T: **Bambi nfuna okunyolwa...**
Oh no, I get so sad...
- ₃MS: **Mhm.**
Yes
- ₄T: **Nga ndaba nga nze ndaba eyamala essaawa ezisinga zonna nga ndi mu Luzungu, nga nange olumu luntawaanya, kyokka ate nga ye afuna eddakiika aga, asatu emyaka gye esatu egyo.**
Seeing that I spent more hours in [learning through – MES] English and yet I sometimes experience challenges with it, and yet this learner gets only thirty minutes [each day – MES] for those three years
- ₅MS: **Egisooka.**
The first years
- ₆T: **Kyokka nga bw’anaatuuka mu gwokuna ogw’okujoininga atandike okuba nga..., ahaa! Mu butuufu emyaka gye omusanvu giggwaako aba akyayagala ayongereyo emyaka emirala gye yasooka okwonoona wansi eno.**
And yet when s/he joins the fourth year where s/he starts..., haa! The truth is the seven years will go when this child will need more years, possibly the number of years that s/he wasted first.

IT1.BP1.5

Extract 32: *Teacher’s opinion about using MT as LoLT (2)*

- ₁MS: **Naye okiwulira otya okuba nti ggwe kati b’osomesa obasomeseza mu Luganda?**
But then how do you feel about you teaching your learners in Luganda?
- ₂T: **Nze nkiwulira si bulungi.**
I do not feel good about it.
- ₃MS: **Mhm.**
Yes.
- ₄T: **Nkiwulira bubi.**
I feel bad.
- ₅MS: **Lwaki?**
Why?
- ₆T: **Nze ku lwange njamba nti abayizi bano okuva wansi eno nga basoma Luganda lwokka, kijja kubatwalira obudde buwanvu, okusobola okuyita Oluzungu. Gino emyaka gino esatu egya wansi, giringa egibafudde. Ate nga n’okuva mu P4 era nakyo kintu kimpi, kiba tekibamala okusinziira ku nsoma yaabwe.**
I think that since these learners have started learning through Luganda, it will take them a long time to pass English. These three initial years are almost wasted; and yet from P4 [up to P7 – MES] is also a short time; it is not enough time for them judging from their way of learning.

IT1.BP3.166

Teachers do not think that increasing the number of years for instruction of learners in MT and teaching English as a subject would improve learners’ proficiency in English. This is contrary to international evidence provided by empirical studies – such as those by Collier (1987), Cummins (1992), Fafunwa et al. (1989), Ramirez et al. (1991), Thomas and Collier (2002), and Walter and Chuo (2012) – that it is the investment in L1 for an extended time of between 6 to 8 years that yields success in L2 learning. Evidence in the literature (Benson, 2008a; Dutcher, 1997) also demonstrates that it is not necessarily the case that learning in English (or any other L2) enhances its acquisition, contrary to what teachers in this study believe. Heugh et al. (2007) report that this is only possible in countries such as Canada and the USA where English is widely used in communities where minority children live. Since English is a foreign language to most learners in Uganda, it may be best to employ only proven ways of learning this language.

Relatedly, teachers indicated on the questionnaire that they did not think that three years of teaching English as a subject is sufficient for learners to master English to the extent that it can be used as LoLT in P4/5 and onwards (see Table 10). Respondents were also asked how many years of MT teaching they thought are most suitable before learners could shift to learning through English. The majority opted for three years, while very few opted for 5 years. These lengths fall short of the recommended period for using MT as LoLT before introducing learners to English as LoLT. This indicates that teachers are not aware of the theories concerning L2 learning.

Table 11: Rural teachers’ responses to the statement that three years of English as a subject suffices before English becomes the LoLT

Statement on questionnaire: Three years of teaching English as a subject is enough to help the learners to master English language so that it can be used in instruction in P4/5 and onwards	No. of respondents agreeing		No. of respondents disagreeing	
		Of whom agree strongly		Of whom disagree strongly
Rural P1 to P3 teachers (n=13)	6	0	5	2
Rural P4 and P5 teachers (n=8)	2	1	4	1

The majority of the respondents agreed with the statement on the questionnaire that English was given enough time on the school timetable (see Table 12). During follow-up interviews,

however, teachers stated that English language teaching required more time than that allocated (e.g., IT1.BP1.5).

Table 12: Rural teachers' responses to questions on time allocated to teaching English

Statement on questionnaire: English is given enough time on the school timetable	No. of respondents agreeing		No. of respondents disagreeing	
		Of whom agree strongly		Of whom disagree strongly
Rural P1 to P3 teachers (n=13)	8	2	1	2
Rural P4 and P5 teachers (n=8)	5	2	1	0

According to the guidelines of the thematic curriculum, English is allocated at least 30 minutes per day every school day in P1 to P3. Figure 3A is an example of a typical rural school's timetable (that of RakaiRG-A), followed by Figure 3B which is an English translation of this timetable.

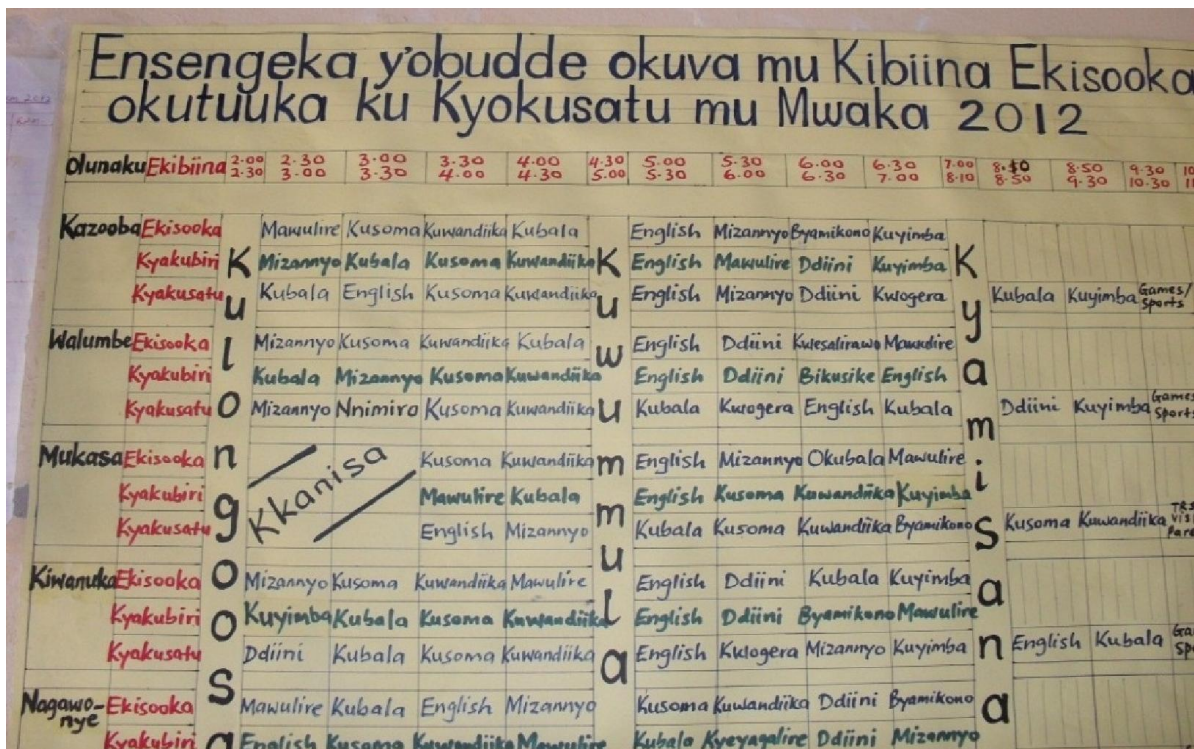


Figure 3A: Timetable for P1 to P3 classes in a rural school

Timetable for primary 1 to primary 3 in the year 2012																		
Day	Class	8:00 8:30	8:30 9:00	9:00 9:30	9:30 10:00	10:00 10:30	10:30 11:00	11:00 11:30	11:30 12:00	12:00 12:30	12:30 1:00	1:00 2:10	2:10 2:50	2:50 3:30	3:30 4:30			
Monday	P1	C L E A N I N G	News	Reading	Writing	Maths	B R E A K	English	Games	Art/Craft	Singing	L U N C H						
	P2		Games	Maths	Reading	Writing		English	News	RE ⁸⁰	Singing							
	P3		Maths	English	Reading	Writing		English	Games	RE	Speaking		Maths	Singing	Games/Sports			
Tuesday	P1		Games	Reading	Writing	Maths		English	RE	PIAS ⁸¹ CY	News							
	P2		Maths	Games	Reading	Writing		English	RE	Oral Lit	English							
	P3		Games	Garden	Reading	Writing		Maths	Speaking	English	Maths		RE	Singing	Games/Sports			
Wednesday	P1		C L E A N I N G	Church		Reading		Writing	B R E A K	English	Games		Maths	News	L U N C H			
	P2					News		Maths		English	Reading		Writing	Singing				
	P3					English		Games		Maths	Reading		Writing	Art/Craft		Reading	Writing	
Thursday	P1	Games		Reading	Writing	News	English	RE		Maths	Singing							
	P2	Singing		Maths	Reading	Writing	English	RE		Art/Craft	News							
	P3	RE		Maths	Reading	Writing	English	Speaking		Games	Singing	English	Maths	Games/Sports				
Friday	P1	News		Maths	English	Games	Reading	Writing		RE	Art/Craft							
	P2	English		Reading	Writing	News	Maths	Free activity		RE	Games	-	-					

Figure 3B: Timetable for P1 to P3 classes in a rural school (translation of Figure 3A)

⁸⁰ RE = Religious Education.

⁸¹ Presidential Initiative for AIDS Strategy for Communication to Youth.

Regarding the time allocated for the teaching and learning of English, classroom observations indicated that government school English lessons in P1 to P3 are scheduled to last for 30 minutes (see Figures 3A and 3B above; NCDC, 2006d, 2008) (for Rakai-RG-A) whereas those for private schools ranged from 40 minutes (for RakaiRP-C) to 1 hour (for RakaiRP-D). Despite the fact that government school timetables showed an adherence to NCDC curriculum guidelines, teachers felt that the time allocated to the teaching and learning of English was not enough for learners to cover what they were supposed to. Also recall that some teachers feel that the time learners spend in using MT as LoLT is time “wasted” (see Extracts 31 and 32). This means that, as much as these teachers work within the MT programme, they do not believe in or are not aware of a sound MT education which scaffolds English language learning.

Also, prior studies (Altinyelken, 2010; Kisebo, 2008) focusing on the challenges encountered in the implementation of the thematic curriculum have reported that there is too much content planned for the 30-minute lessons prescribed by the NCDC. If teachers cannot cover what the NCDC prescribes on a daily basis, by the time learners complete their first three years of learning English as a subject, there will be a lot of subject matter unattended to. This also adds to the list of explanations for learners’ inadequacy in language by the time they transition to English.⁸²

Related to the above, I sought in this study to understand teachers’ views on “myths” (Benson, 2008:2) surrounding L2 learning. Certain questions tapped into teachers’ insights on the role of MT in L2 learning. Rural P1 to P3 teachers were requested to indicate whether learners who learn in English throughout their primary education fare better than those who first learn in their MT before shifting to English. Teachers’ responses had a mean score of 3.64, a number that leans more towards 1 (strongly agreeing with the statement) rather than 10 (strongly disagreeing with the statement). These teachers were also asked whether MT learning facilitated the acquisition of English. The mean for the teachers’ responses was 3.80, a number that again is closer on the scale to 1 than 10. When asked whether MT negatively affects the acquisition of English, the mean response was 6.18. The teachers, however, rather strongly agreed with the statement that a learner who can read and write his/her MT well is likely to learn English fast and well; here, the teachers’ responses had an average of 2.18.

⁸² Time management of teachers and absenteeism of both teachers and learners from school are issues that appear to further reduce the time available for teaching and learning. Details of this are given in Chapters 7 and 8.

Other questions on the role of MT in L2 learning were posed to teachers. When teachers were asked which learner was better (one who was taught in the MT before being promoted to P4 or one who was taught in English before being promoted to P4), responses clearly indicated that a learner taught in MT was deemed better.

To conclude, interviews and discussions with teachers provide information to suggest that the transfer to English medium education is a great challenge. It was observed that some teachers are clearly not in support of having MTs as LoLT, i.e., that they preferred English as LoLT. The following extract serves as a summary of many of the views held by teachers: turn 1 suggests that the teaching and learning of English is not handled well in government schools in the first three years. Also, the time allocated to the teaching and learning of English was insufficient (turns 3 to 5). Learners in rural schools are not able to understand what is taught when only English is used (turn 13), whereas those in urban schools (and rural private schools, e.g., RakaiRP-C and RakaiRP-D in this study) enter P1 after two or three years of English-medium pre-primary schooling (turn 16), creating a sharp divide between rural and urban learners and between rural government and rural private school learners.

Extract 33: *Teachers' opinions about the teaching of English*

- 1T1:** Problem erimu kale endala kale... singa eno emphasis eya wansi eno baba bayizeemu mu budde bwabwe obw'Oluzungu reading ne bagyongerako nnyo ne baba nga bamanyiimanyiimu ku bintu ebimu, ate awo kiba kibanguyira.
The other problem is that if only at the lower level emphasis would be placed on reading in English lessons, so that learners learn some things, this would be easier for them.
- 2MS:** Kati olowooza nti obudde bwe babawa mu Luzungu eno mu myaka esatu egisooka nga tebumala bulungi?
Do you think that the time allocated to English in the first three years is not enough?
- 3T1:** Tebumala.
It is not enough.
- 4MS:** Uhm. Tebumala?
Yes. Is it not enough?
- 5T1:** Yee.
Yes.
- 6MS:** Uhm, bwetaaga kwongerako?
Does it need to be increased?
- 7T1:** Uhm.
Yes.
- 8MS:** Oba ate olaba otya bwe kiba nti emyaka gye bayigira mu Luganda gye gyongezeddwayo English as a subject n'eba ng'emala emyaka kati ka tugeze ena oba etaanu?
But then what is your view about adding more years to the teaching of Luganda such that English as a subject lasts for say four or five?
- 9T1:** Kati tolaba, kale thematic nga bw'ali, English as a subject yo balina gisomesa mu English.
Look, from the thematic curriculum guidelines, English as a subject is supposed to be taught through English.
- 10MS:** Kituufu.
That is true.

- 11T1: **Kati** problem era w'eggira wano, ewaffe.
Now the problem comes in here in our school.
- 12MS: **Uhm.**
Yes.
- 13T1: **Ne bwe baba bakuwaana batya nti osomesa Oluzungu** [laughs] **nga tozzeeko mu lulimi lwe n'omubuulira kino kye kino ne bw'oleeta ebyokulabirako bitya, ayinza obutaggyaamu.**
Even when you are praised as the best English teacher [laughs] *if you do not make use of the learners' language to tell them that this is this and this is that, however much you bring in examples, a learner may not pick up anything.*
- [Another teacher from P5 joins the conversation, listens and begins to contribute.]
- 14T2: **Kati ng'ekyo kiyinza okukola mu masomero ag'omu kibuga.**
That can only work in town/urban schools.
- 15MS: **Uhm.**
Alright.
- 16T1: **Kubanga bo batandika eno ne Nursery. Nursery egundi ezo emyaka esatu aba alina gundi gundi gy'atuuseeko, level kw'atuuseeko. Naye jjukira nti ono owa P1 gw'oleese wano ewaffe, talabangako ku kintu na kimu.**
Because for they start with nursery. By the end of the three years [in nursery – MES] *a child has a level at which they have gotten to which is different from the level that these learners* [government school learners – MES] *are at. But remember that the learner whom you have brought here to join P1 has never seen anything.*

IT1.AP5.116-118

From the foregoing, teachers generally believed that the best way to learn English is to use it as LoLT, the P4/5 teachers are concerned that reading is not properly handled in the lower classes, and the use of English as LoLT and the presence of pre-primary sections in private schools (also instructed in English) interferes with teachers' work in government schools.

There is evidence in the literature that teachers and/or policy makers often believe that the best way to learn English is to use it as LoLT, and that in order to learn English well, one has to start as early as possible (e.g., Benson, 2002, 2008; Dutcher, 1997; McLaughlin, 1992); the present study found the same. The teachers' views in Extracts 31 and 32 also concur with what Obanya (1999) reports, namely that there are beliefs that transition to an official language is difficult when one first learns in a MT. It could be such beliefs which cause private schools to instruct learners in English from pre-primary and that cause teachers to pay less attention to MT teaching in government schools.

6.7 Teachers' perceptions of transition and transfer from mother tongue to English

Objective (iii), which is assessing teachers' perceptions of what contributes to success or failure of the transition to English as LoLT, and the continuation of learners in the education system, pertains to teachers' perceptions of two issues: (i) what contributes to the success or failure of the transition from MT to English as a LoLT, and the accompanying transfer of skills from MT to English, and (ii) the continuation of learners in the education system.

From the international context, there is a wealth of studies which consistently suggests that children learn easier and faster in their MT, and that if they are taught and guided well, they can transfer the skills from their MTs to their L2s (see section 2.2.2). Piper (2010) observed that there are limited studies in the sub-Saharan context on the transfer of skills from the MT to the L2. According to Piper, his study and a sister study (the latter undertaken in Kenya) might be the first ones to rigorously investigate such transfer (Piper & Miksick, 2011). As for the present study, teachers' perceptions of transfer from MT to English were investigated, and which will be reported on in the following sections. As noted earlier, such perceptions are worth studying as teachers are at the centre of policy and programme implementation, and their beliefs, perceptions and practices can potentially affect programme success.

6.7.1 Rural teachers' perceptions on transition and transfer from mother tongue to English

In the questionnaire, rural P1 to P3 teachers were asked to give their opinions on the transfer of skills from MT to English. One statement given in the questionnaire, with which the respondents were asked to rate their (dis)agreement on a scale and then justify their judgement, was that the knowledge acquired in MT facilitates the reading and writing of English. The majority of respondents (12/13; 92.3%) agreed with this statement (four of them strongly), while only one respondent disagreed. What follows are some of their explanations:

Respondent A1: Because MT opens all the other languages.

Respondent A2: **Buli kintu aba amaze okukyetegereza.**
The learner has already studied everything.

Respondent D1: We learn from simple to complex.

Respondent D10: Yes because learners start with simple to complex.

Respondent C11: Because the child transfers the skills and knowledge acquired in MT to English.

Respondent C12: It is because we/pupils learn from known to unknown.

These responses indicate that teachers are aware of the value of MT education, especially that MT skills can transfer to learning (in) English. A related question asked informants whether children who begin learning in their MT are more likely to do well than those who begin learning in English or another unfamiliar language. Answers to this question were divided, which was unexpected given that the respondents were generally of the opinion that the knowledge acquired in the MT facilitates the reading and writing of English: a narrow majority of respondents (53.8% vs. 46.2%; 7/13) agreed that learners who start learning in their MT are more likely to do well than those who start their learning in an unfamiliar language. This response may suggest that teachers think that the MT facilitation of reading and writing of English is (to some extent, at least) different from beginning reading in a familiar vs. unfamiliar language.

Responses to a more generic question regarding whether learners are able to transfer skills and knowledge acquired in MT to English saw a shift in respondents' opinions. A great majority of respondents (92.3%; 12/13) agreed that transfer of knowledge and skills from MT to English is possible. However, not one of these strongly agreed. Finally, P1 to P3 respondents were asked whether MT improves learners' performance. Ten (77%) of the 13 respondents believe that it does, four strongly so. Three respondents (23.1%) believe that MTs do not improve learners' performance.

Turning now to the rural P4 and P5 teachers: Table 13 summarises the responses of these teachers to a number of statements of transfer. Each of the statements are then discussed below the table.

Table 13: P4 and P5 teachers' opinions on the transfer of knowledge and skills from MT to English (n=8)

Statements on questionnaire	No. of respondents agreeing		No. of respondents disagreeing	
		Of whom agree strongly		Of whom disagree strongly
When learners are taught in their mother tongue in P1 to P3, this later helps them in P4.	7	0	1	0
If a child learns to read and write in his/her mother tongue first, the knowledge acquired facilitates the reading and writing of English.	7	0	1	0
Learners can transfer the skills and knowledge acquired in the mother tongue/local language to English.	4	1	4	1
Mother tongue/local language teaching contributes to acquisition of literacy skills later in English in P4 and P5.	5	2	3	1
Children who begin learning in their mother tongue/local language are more likely to do well than children who begin learning in English/nonfamiliar language.	5	0	3	2

When asked whether MT taught in P1 to P3 later helped in P4, the majority of respondents (87.5%; 7/8) agreed that it did (but none strongly). Respondents were asked to provide reasons for their opinions, and six of the eight respondents provided the following:

- Respondent B3: They use the language skills attained in the previous classes to communicate.
- Respondent B4: Because a pupil can understand quickly so long as she/he knows the meaning of a certain statement in his/her local language.
- Respondent B5: It helps them because they can easily learn the second language since at this stage learners should have developed all the four language skills.
- Respondent B6: It will not help them because when they go to upper classes they can fail to read and write because exams are set in English.**
- Respondent B7: This is because English helps the learners to master a lot of new words (vocabulary) from different subjects.
- Respondent B8: It gives curiosity to learners when they are first introduced to English in upper classes than before.

Respondent B6, who argues that MT “will not help them because when they go to upper classes they can fail to read and write because exams are set in English” did not consider the process but rather focused on the educational result. In addition, this respondent believes that as long as the examinations at the end of primary school are in English, MT learning might

not be helpful. This opinion is held by a number of teachers, as explained earlier. Recall that this is also the justification given by teachers for not teaching MT, a subject that is supposed to be taught in upper primary classes as the language-in-education policy specifies.

Respondents were also asked about the facilitation of knowledge and skills acquired in MT to the reading and writing of English. The majority of respondents (87.5%; 7/8) agreed that children who first learn to read and write in their MT acquire knowledge that facilitates the reading and writing of English. The responses of the P4 and P5 teachers to this question were almost similar to those of the P1 to P3 teachers discussed above. The only difference is that the P1 to P3 disagreement was strong whereas the P4 and P5 disagreement was not.

The P4 and P5 teachers were also asked whether learners could transfer skills and knowledge acquired in MT to English. Unlike the P1 to P3 teachers, of whom 92.3% agreed that such transfer could take place, the teachers of P4 and P5 were almost equally split between those who agreed and those who disagreed. Five agreed that MT teaching later contributes to the literacy skills in English in P4 and P5 (two strongly) and three disagreed (again, one strongly so). When asked whether children who begin learning in their MT are more likely to fare better than children who begin learning in English, five again agreed (none strongly) and three disagreed (two strongly). The majority of the teachers however also agreed that the earlier children start learning English, the better they fare in it; see Table 14.

Table 14: Rural teachers' responses to whether learners who start learning English early speak English better

Statement on questionnaire: The earlier children begin to learn English, the better English they learn to speak	No. of respondents agreeing		No. of respondents disagreeing	
		Of whom agree strongly		Of whom disagree strongly
Rural P1 to P3 teachers (n=13)	5	3	4	0
Rural P4 and P5 teachers (n=8)	3	3	2	0

These results indicate that the teachers' opinions fluctuate somewhat: based on their answers to some of the questions, they agree that the MT facilitates the learning of English, but based on their answers to others, they disagree. This could be an indication that teachers were not

fully sure of the role that MT education plays in the learning of English and later using English as LoLT.

6.7.2 Urban teachers' perceptions on transition and transfer from mother tongue to English

The questionnaire for the urban teachers also asked respondents for their opinions on the transfer of skills and knowledge from MT to English. Table 15 summarises these responses.

Table 15: Urban teachers' responses to questions on the transition and transfer from MT to English

Statements on questionnaire	No. of respondents agreeing		No. of respondents disagreeing	
		Of whom agree strongly		Of whom disagree strongly
Learners can transfer the skills and knowledge acquired in mother tongue/local language to English.	12	2	2	2
Teaching in mother tongue/local language improves children's learning.	11	3	3	2
Children who begin their learning in their mother tongue/local language are more likely to do well than children who begin learning in English/nonfamiliar language.	8	4	6	3
If a child learns to read and write in his/her mother tongue first, the knowledge acquired facilitates the reading and writing of English.	12	5	2	1
The earlier children begin to learn English, the better English they learn to speak.	9	2	5	1
Learners who come to school when they have mastered their mother tongue/local language do better than those who haven't.	9	5	5	2
It is difficult to begin teaching learners straight away in English.	8	3	6	0
Children should do better if some subjects in this school were taught in mother tongue/local languages.	6	1	8	1

As can be seen from Table 15, the majority of the urban respondents agreed that learners can transfer skills and knowledge acquired in the MT to the learning of English; that MT improves children's learning; that children who begin their learning in their MT are more likely to fare better than those who begin learning in English; that skills first acquired in the MT are helpful in reading and writing of English; that learners who enter school with an already developed MT do better than those who do not, and that the earlier children began to learn English, the better they learnt to speak it. A small majority of the urban teachers believe that it is difficult to begin teaching learners straight away in English. A large majority was also of the opinion that if some subjects were taught in MT in their (urban) schools, learners would do better. As will be discussed in Chapter 8, these responses suggest that urban teachers might not be convinced of the values of MT education.

6.7.3 Teachers' opinions about the transition class

I start this section with an extract from an interview with three P4 and P5 teachers from RakaiRG-A:

Extract 34: *Transition class challenging for learners*

- ¹T1: **Nze ku lwange mu subjects mu butuufu, transition emenya.**
From my point of view, the truth of the matter is, the transition class is so difficult because of subjects.
- ²T2: **Transition class eyo emenyera ddala nnyo, nnyo, kuba buli kimu kiba kipya, wadde nga wano aba ajja akiyitaayitamu naye...**
The transition class is very very difficult, because everything is new even as the learner gets to this class having had bits and pieces of what is handled in this class but...
- ³T1: **Kuba wali akiyitamu, kuba singa bamanya nti tugenda okusoma ku ssomo ku science, ne bamusomesa nti nno science kye kino na kino na kino na kino. Naye bwe bakyogerako, bayinza okukyogerako nti science ly'ekkula lyaki na ki kati bw'amala tebaddamu nti nno step nti kusoma kati nga bwe tubadde ku njoka. Bayinza okubyogerako nti nno ebiwuka, ebikwata mu mbuto awo, biki ne baba nga sibakitutte nnyo nnyo ng'ekikulu ennyo.**
Because the learner comes to this class having bits and pieces, if they [teachers - MES] know that we are going to learn about science and then the learner is taught what science is; but when they talk about it, they may do so by simply saying that science is this and that and the other; on finishing that step, they don't go further to learn for instance as we have been looking at worms. They don't talk about it in detail, they simply say, parasites that can attack stomachs and so on, so learners do not take it seriously.
- ⁴MS: **Mhm. So kati bagenda okuba ng'abatereera nga bali mu P6?**
Yes, so should we then say that learners stabilise around about P6?
- ⁵T3: **Aha, eyo mu P6 eyo gye batandikira okutegeerategeeramu.**
Right, it is about P6 class that they start to kind of understand what is taught.
- ⁶T1: **Okutegeerategeeramu. Kati ng'ate oli owa private...**
Start to kind of understand. But then the other in a private school... [Conversation interrupted by a passer-by – MES]

IT1.AP4/5.120-121

According to teacher T1, the transition class is challenging and difficult because of subject content. Bear in mind that in P4 there is a twofold switch from MT as LoLT to English as LoLT (in rural schools), and from a theme-based to a subject-based curriculum. The respondent narrates (turn 2) that, even though a child had been learning for the previous three years, everything appears new to them in the transition class. The teachers believe that this is due to the manner in which learners are taught in P1 to P3: content is mentioned almost in passing, and learners think it is acceptable to treat content in this manner, until they reach P4 where subjects are introduced.

The classroom observations and interviews revealed that the teachers find the transition class very challenging. Learners' vocabulary in English is still very limited which complicates transfer of skills from MT to English. Furthermore, teachers recount that they almost have to teach everything anew in P4; according to a P4 teacher in RakaiRG-A, the learning in P1 to P3 is not "serious" because all content is "seen as news".

6.8 The role of the language-in-education policy in the non-retention of learners

Literature suggests that when the MT is not taught for the recommended period, learners might drop out of school before even completing the primary school cycle due to the use of an unfamiliar language (Barron, 2012; Henrik-Magga et al., 2008; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2011). With this in mind, teachers were asked to judge statements relating to the influence of LoLT on school dropout rates. Their responses are captured in Table 16.

Table 16: Teachers' opinions on LoLT influencing school dropout rates

Statement on questionnaire	No. of respondents agreeing		No. of respondents disagreeing	
		Of whom agreed strongly		Of whom disagreed strongly
Learners are more likely to drop out of school after P3 when the language of learning and teaching is changed from mother tongue/local language to English (Rural P1-P3 teachers)	1	0	12	1
Children are more likely to drop out of school because of using an unfamiliar language in the teaching and learning process (Urban teachers)	4	0	10	1
Teaching in mother tongue/local language does not help children to remain in school (Rural P1-P3 teachers)	5	1	8	1

The majority of teachers in both rural and urban schools hold the view that a switch of LoLT from MT to English after P3 does not cause learners to drop out of school. Teachers' beliefs were however contrary to what the literature (e.g., Mango Tree Laŋo Literacy Project, 2010; NCDC, 2011) reports in Uganda's case.

6.9 Challenges faced by learners in learning English, literacy acquisition and transition and transfer to English

In this section, I report on the challenges that have been identified in transitioning learners from MT to English as LoLT and in the acquisition of literacy skills. These challenges were identified during the classroom observations that I conducted. In the next chapter, it will be shown that some teacher behaviours and teaching practices also pose a challenge to successful transition.

6.9.1 Possession of learning materials

A number of learners in government schools do not have basic materials such as notebooks and writing instruments.⁸³ For instance, in the classroom observations conducted, when the time came for writing, learners who did not have a pencil or pen waited for their classmates to finish writing so that they could borrow from them. Teachers said that learners had learnt “to share” their materials in class (OT1.BP2.117). Such sharing reduces the time learners have to practise writing, with some learners unable to attempt class exercises at all. Also, those who do have the necessary materials are interrupted, and some write hurriedly in anticipation of lending a pen or pencil to their classmates.

Such shortage of basic learning material has obvious pedagogical implications: when learners do not have such materials, they cannot complete writing tasks within the allocated time. Learning to write requires practice, and writing is a skill that enhances others like reading and comprehension. The lack of time to practise and acquire writing skills could affect the language and literacy acquisition of these learners, regardless of the LoLT or of which languages are offered as subjects. In the case of Uganda, it could also negatively affect the transfer of skills to English.

6.9.2 Absenteeism

Absenteeism has also emerged as a challenge to MT education and the resultant transition to English. Absenteeism is more of a challenge in government schools than in private schools. The photograph in Figure 4 below acts as a representative indication of absenteeism. It was taken at a morning assembly, held at 8:00 a.m., at RakaiRG-A. It shows the number of learners that were at school that morning in the entire school, P1 to P7, which has a learner corpus of approximately 100 (from P1 to P5, the total number was 71). In front of them is a teacher, the only one who had arrived at school by 8:00 am that day.

⁸³ Because the Universal Primary Education programme eliminated school fees, some parents are under the impression that learning materials are provided free of charge by the government, whereas it is still the responsibility of parents to source and pay for these materials. Some parents, however, do not have the means to purchase these learning materials. Also see Heugh and Mulumba (2013) for the situation in the northern and north western regions of Uganda as regards learners possessing a pencil and paper.



Figure 4: A morning school assembly at RakaiRG-A

Learners' irregular school attendance⁸⁴ was reported by teachers but was also observed in classrooms. For example, as teachers and/or class monitors handed out learners' books for them to do an exercise, many learners' names were called out and their fellow learners reported them as absent.

Frequent absenteeism can cause learners not to achieve what they are supposed to in a given period of time. Learners' levels of literacy can remain low simply because they are away at the time of teaching. In addition, if successful transfer to English requires learners to have attended classes for a certain number of hours (some of which they have now missed because they were absent), transfer for these learners is likely to be piecemeal. For this reason, absenteeism directly affects MT education and the subsequent transition and transfer of skills to English.

⁸⁴ This section focuses on learner absenteeism. Note, however, that teacher absenteeism and other discipline-related staff issues could also be impacting negatively on the implementation of the language-in-education policy. Although it was not planned that school head teachers would be interviewed, I had an opportunity to speak to the head teacher of RakaiRG-B. She stated that the Ministry of Education and Sports had limited the managerial powers of head teachers. Before the introduction of the Universal Primary Education programme, head teachers took almost full responsibility for the teachers under them. All teachers in government schools were now paid by a centralised office of the Ministry of Education and Sports, which meant that, unlike before, teachers received their salaries in their bank accounts without consultation with head teachers. Previously, parents paid school fees, and finances were managed by the head teacher who had direct control over teacher salaries and was responsible for disciplining teachers who demonstrated poor work ethics (e.g., absenteeism and non-preparation). Now, such discipline does not take place. In a recent news article reporting on teacher absenteeism (Ariba, May 1, 2013), a strong statement was made: "Jokes have been made about how common teachers are in the bank than they are at school (sic)", referring to more teachers being in the bank to collect their salaries than in the classroom to teach (Ariba, May 1, 2013). From this article, it appears that the centralisation of power might have led to some teachers acting in a less responsible manner, because they can no longer be disciplined by their head teachers.

6.9.3 Limited opportunities to practise English

As far as learners' proficiency in English is concerned, this study's findings indicate that the disparity in English proficiency that occurs between private and government school learners might be explained by the fact that learners in rural schools have limited opportunities to practise speaking English. In government schools, apart from the English lessons in P1 to P3 which also contain a certain amount of codeswitching and translation into Luganda, all other communication at school is conducted in Luganda: learner-to-teacher talk and learner-to-learner talk are consistently conducted in MT both in and outside class. In addition, all the communication amongst teachers in the staff room and outside on the school compound is in MT. However, in private schools, learners are not allowed to speak their MTs within class and on the school compound. Learner-to-learner and learner-to-teacher communication is, theoretically, conducted in English, but teachers use MT (Luganda) in the staff room.

In the classroom lessons, classroom talk is dominated by the teachers, so there are few opportunities for these learners to practise speaking English. This could be the reason for learners appearing to have far better developed receptive skills than expressive skills; they have had minimal opportunities to engage in conversations (cf. Manyak, 2008; Miller & Pennycuff, 2008; Peck, 1989; Swain, 1993). Teachers also spend much time training learners to write, even before learners have developed oral skills in English (recall, however, that the NCDC (2007b) encourages teachers to first develop learners' oral language before they can learn to write in the same language). Thus learners are required to express themselves in writing in a particular language before they "have the words" to do so (cf. Swain, 1993). When the time for writing comes, having not developed their oral competence in a language, learners experience "writer's block" (Miller & Pennycuff, 2008:40) because they look for the words to write but cannot find them. Phillips (1999:paragraphs 4 & 5) notes that oral language differs from written language and states that children should first learn to speak a language before they can write it (cf. also Swain, 1993). Phillips' argument is consistent with those of other scholars, like Craig, Hull, Haggart, and Crowder (2001), Miller and Pennycuff (2008), and Peck (1989). These authors argue for the use of storytelling as a resource for the promotion of reading and writing in the early years of learning. In the P1 to P3 classes in government schools (those who follow the thematic curriculum), provision is made for

storytelling on the weekly timetable. However, this storytelling does not entail that learners themselves tell stories in English but that stories are told to them, mostly in MT.

It was also observed that outside of the school, learners in government schools do not have opportunities to hear or speak English. There are no newspapers for them to read and no television to watch, and the radio stations they listen to broadcast in local languages only. By contrast, private schools have boarding sections; some learners stay at school during the school term, i.e., for a period of about three to four months at a time, during which time they speak and are addressed in English only. This gives these learners an advantage when it comes to opportunities to practise English which the government school learners do not have.

6.9.4 Challenges related to literacy development

In Chapter 2, I discussed challenges around the development of literacy the world over. Ball (2011:61) defines literacy as the “ability to read, write, calculate and otherwise use a language to do whatever is needed in life”. In this study, very few instances were observed of attempts intended to develop these skills. Reading goes hand in hand with comprehension, of which this latter skill was also not given much attention, as discussed earlier. Classroom observations reveal that teachers make an effort to develop learners’ writing skills, but mostly in P1 and P2 during language lessons (in both Luganda and English). In the government schools (RakaiRG-A and RakaiRG-B), the teachers seem not to care much about good handwriting practices (such as pencil grip or arm position) but focused instead on how letters are formed. In the private schools (RakaiRP-C and RakaiRP-D), the reverse was the case. As explained earlier, this difference between schools could be because of the difference in their learners’ backgrounds: learners in private schools have had two or three years in pre-primary, during which time the P1 curriculum is followed, so by the time they begin P1, they already know how to shape letters and write some words, whereas P1 learners in government schools are just starting the task of recognising letters/sounds and their shapes.⁸⁵ The teachers in government schools would therefore not speak about good handwriting practices but were interested in seeing children learn how to form the letters. To illustrate this difference, I present Extract 34 from a private school (in which the teacher directed learners on how to position their arms on their desks if they were to write properly in their books) and Extract 35

⁸⁵ Recall that one of the reasons for the disregard of the thematic curriculum by private schools was that what government school learners learn in P1 has already been covered by private school learners in pre-school.

from a government school (in which the teacher was struggling to guide learners on how to form letters).

Extract 35: *Teacher emphasises good handwriting in private schools*

- T: You write the date, the name of your school, the class, **aah. Wandika bulungi nnyo nnyo. Nagamba omukono oguwandiika olina kugwesigamya omulala ne guguwanirira. Ggwe teweebaka mu kitabo. Desk zammwe mwazarranginze na bubu. Ggwe biwandiike nga bw'owulira nti oyagala, ojja kulaba.** Where did you put it? **Uhm?** Where did you put it? Class monitors **ebitabo ebifisse biriwa? Tewafisse na kimu? iii, ggwe SHANITA kiba kyaleze wa? Baliwa abatafunye bitabo byabwe?** Where did you put it? Where did you put it?
- You write the date, the name of your school, the class, aah. Write very very well. I said you let the writing hand be supported by the other hand. You, do not sleep in the book. You even did not arrange your desks well. You just write as you want and then you will see. Where did you put it? Uhm? Where did you put it? Class monitors, where are the books that remained? Is there no book remaining? Iii, you SHANITA, where could your book be? Who has not got their books? Where did you put it? Where did you put it?*

OT4.DP2.120

Extract 36: *Teacher emphasises letter shapes in government schools*

- ₁T: **Kati buli omu ampandiikire 't' awo ku table. Giwandiike n'engalo ne bw'otateekako kkalaamu. Wandika ndabe. Ggwe wandika nze engalo bw'eba etambula mba ngiraba. Wandika n'engalo yo nga tolina kkalaamu. Ggwe yanguya. Toggyaayo kkalaamu, wandika buwandiisi bw'oti, ndabe nga ye 't' yennyini. Naawe eno nga bw'owandiika mwenna mbalaba lumu. Naawe SHANITA wandika. Yanguya eyiyo. Ate ggwe? Wandika eri. Kati wandika 'e'.**
- Every one write for me 't' on your table. Write it with your finger; you may not use a pencil. Write it so that I see it. You just write, when the finger is moving I can see it. Write with your finger without a pencil. Please hurry up, do not take out your pencil. Just write like this, so that I can see the real 't'. Can you also write? I can see you all at ago. SHANITA, you may also write. Hurry up. What about you? Write the other side. Now write "e".*
- ₂L: "e"
- ₃T: **Eeh. Wandika n'engalo nze nja kuba ndaba nga ntambula. Yanguya. SEMPLIJA wandika ennyukuta..... Ziri wali ku lubaawo. Yanguya.**
- Yes. Write with your fingers. I will see you as I move around. Be quick. SEMPLIJA, write the letters... they are there on the blackboard. Be quick.*
- ₄L: [Learners are talking].
- ₅T: **Toyogera.** [The teacher moves around class].
- Don't talk.*
- ₆T: **Wandika eyiyo ndabe. Kwata bw'oti. 'k' bw'oti bw'ogiwandiika bulijjo? Si ye eyo gidemu ndabe. Waggulu gy'onyoola, n'owetamu bw'oti. Yanguya. Tunula ggwe eno olabe bwe tuwandiika. Sirika!**
- Write yours so that I see it. Hold like this. Is this the way you have been writing "k"? It is not the one. Rewrite it so that I see it. It is the upper side that you curve then you turn like this. Be quick. Look here so that you can see how we write. Keep quiet!* [Teacher sternly orders learners to keep quiet.]
- ₇T: **Tunula wa?**
- Where should you look?*
- ₈LS: **Ku lubaawo.**
- At the blackboard.*
- ₉T: **Tunulayo. Ogenda kulaba bwe mpandiika. Tugenda kusooka na ki? Mbabuuzizza, tugenda kusooka na ki?**

- Look there. You will see how I write. What are we going to start with? I have asked what are we are going to start with.*
- 10LS: “p”
- 11T: **Tusooka na ka ki?**
What are we going to start with?
- 12LS: **Akati.** [Very few learners answer.]
The stick.
- 13T: **Akati. N’oteekako akati akalala nga kaki? Katonotono. Osooka n’akati nga ki?**
The stick. Then you write another stick which is what? Smaller than the other. You begin with a stick which is what?
- 14LS: **Nga katono.**
Small.
- 15T: **Nga kawanvu. Ojja kukawandiika kave ku line yo waggulu katuuke ku yo wansi. Oteekeko akaki? Akoobukiika nga katonotono. Otegedde?**
When it is long. You will write it starting from the upper line up to the lower line. What do you put on it? A small horizontal one. Have you understood?
- 16LS: **Yee**
Yes.
- 17T: **Kale kati tugenze ku eno. Buli omu alabayo?**
Okay, now we have gone to another letter. Does everybody see?
- 18LS: **Yee.**
Yes.
- 19T: **Ojja kusooka owandiike bulungi eno ‘c’. Ogirabye?**
You will first write this letter “c”. Did you see it?
- 20LS: **Yee**
Yes.
- 21T: **Bw’omala olyoke owete bulungi bw’oti.**
When you finish that, then you curve like this.
- 22LS: **Yee.**
Yes.
- 23T: **Ogirabye?**
Have you seen it?
- 24LS: **Yee.**
Yes.
- 25T: **Osooka ki?**
What do you begin with?
- 26LS: “c”
- 27T: **“c”. N’ova eno waggulu nga bw’oweta bw’oti. Ogirabye?**
“c”. You start from the upper side as you curve like this.
- 28LS: **Yee.**
Yes.
- 29T: **Ani ayogera?**
Who is talking?
- 30LS: **Martin**
- 32T: **Ogirabye?**
Did you see it?
- 33LS: **Yee.**
Yes.
- 34T: **Buli omu ategedde bw’anaagiwandiika?**
Has everybody understood how they will write it?
- 35LS: **Yee.**
Yes.
- 36T: **KATONGOLE otegedde?**
KATONGOLE, have you understood?
- 37KATONGOLE: **Yee.**
Yes.
- 38T: **Eeh?**
Yes?
- 39KATONGOLE: **Yee.**

- 40T: *Yes.*
Otegedde?
Have you understood?
- 41KATONGOLE: *Yee.*
Yes.
- 42T: **Ggwe woza nti “yee”. Kati era weetegereze wano nga mpandiika. Ani ayogera? Bw’otyo bw’ogenda okuwandiika.**
Do not just say “yes”. Continue to observe as I write here. Who is talking? That is how you are going to write.
- 43LS: *Yee.*
Yes.
- 44T: **Otegedde?**
Have you understood?
- 45LS: *Yee.*
Yes.

OT2.AP1.30-32

Based on the classroom observations in this study, teachers emphasised good handwriting techniques or letter formation while paying less attention to areas like speaking (oral language), reading, comprehension, listening, etc. which, if all developed together, make a person literate in a language. (Compare the case of Māori children in Hill & May, 2011, where children are taught how to read first before they received instruction on writing. We notice that teachers in the present study handled reading and writing simultaneously, and this might impact negatively on the process of literacy development.) It is also important to point out that most of what children wrote was given to them by their teachers; they merely copied from the blackboard. Little opportunity was given in P1 to P3 for independent writing, which raises the question as to whether the learners were indeed learning to write comprehensibly and spell correctly in their MT and in English. It was also noted that learners were not given opportunities to talk unless it was the teacher who asked them to (and then the talking took the form of only answering the teacher’s question). For instance, in the extract above, in turns 6 and 29, the teacher does not want any learners speaking in her class. The teacher did all the talking and learners were to speak when told to do so. This might potentially affect the development of literacy in a language.

6.10 Chapter conclusion

In concluding this chapter, it is noted that teachers’ attitudes towards the language-in-education policy are generally negative. It also emerged that private schools chose to instruct in English and not to use MT as LoLT. They also prefer a subject-based curriculum over the thematic one. Furthermore, many teachers characterised the thematic curriculum as

incomprehensive, shallow, narrow and repetitive. Teachers generally evaluated learners as inadequate in English both before and after transitioning to English as LoLT; it appears that the expectation set by the Ministry of Education and Sports and the NCDC for learners in the first three years of their primary school education was unattainable. For this reason, teachers reported that the transitional class is very difficult for them. This can be attributed to:

- (i) Inadequate time allowed for transition. Three years of teaching English as a subject is not sufficient for the learners to acquire the required vocabulary for the language to be used as LoLT. This observation confirms earlier scholars' arguments (Ball, 2011; Benson, 2008; Cummins, 1992, 1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c; Cummins & Genzuk, 1991; Heugh, 2011a; Ouane & Glanz, 2010; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2011; Walter & Chuo, 2012).
- (ii) Poor teaching of reading in the first three years (P1 to P3).
- (iii) Limited opportunities for the learners to practise oral and written language.
- (iv) Limited learning materials.
- (v) Poor preparation of teachers to simultaneously handle MT as a LoLT and English as a subject.

It also appears that the thematic curriculum is not well organised. If this curriculum is poorly structured, its teaching is also likely to be disorganised. As a result, teachers in P4 onwards face the challenge of "re-organising" the learning process after P3. The evidence presented here suggests that the NCDC's predictions of learners' achievement in English after P3 are far from reality given (i) the circumstances under which teachers operate, and (ii) that the available evidence in the literature does not support such well-developed English skills as attainable within three years of MT teaching. In the next chapter, I present data on the practices that teachers employ in order to teach English and MT, and to prepare children for the change of LoLT that occurs in P4.

Chapter 7

TEACHERS' CLASSROOM PRACTICES AND LANGUAGE-RELATED STRATEGIES TO FACILITATE TRANSITION AND TRANSFER TO ENGLISH

7.1 Introduction

According to Bloch (2000:11), “the way teachers understand the process of becoming literate has consequences for what they understand to be appropriate teaching strategies in the classroom”. One of the objectives of this study (objective (iv)) was to describe the classroom practices and educational strategies used by P4 and P5 teachers to facilitate the transfer to English. The practices reported here were distilled from the recorded classroom observations. In addition, I took notes when conducting these observations which helped me in understanding and interpreting the recorded classroom interactions. The teachers' classroom language and educational strategies reported here will be compared with those discussed in Chapter 2. However, in order for us to have a clear understanding of why teachers use particular language and educational strategies in their teaching practices, it is appropriate to begin with an overview of the teachers' qualifications and their experiences in teaching.

7.2 Teacher training

The purpose of this section is to highlight three issues: (i) the nature of teacher training in Uganda before teachers engage in active teaching; (ii) the training, preparation, and orientation that teachers received before the implementation in 2006/2007 of the 1992 language-in-education policy, and (iii) the educational implications of teacher training on the implementation of MT teaching and the thematic curriculum. These three issues will help us to understand why teachers use particular language and educational strategies in attempting to support learners to transition to English as a LoLT, and as such the discussion in this section forms the background against which the rest of the chapter needs to be interpreted.

7.2.1 Teachers' levels of education

Literature on MT education suggests that for MT teaching to be successful, teachers should be prepared, trained and oriented in language teaching techniques. In addition, they should be convinced of the benefits and the wisdom of MT teaching (Benson, 2008b; Dutcher, 2003; Fafunwa et al., 1989; Heugh et al., 2007; Obanya, 1999). Table 17 indicates the training that the respondents in this study received (as indicated by the respondents on the questionnaire).

Table 17: Level of education of rural and urban teachers

Teachers	Highest qualification obtained			
	Senior VI*	Grade III Teachers' Certificate	Teachers' Diploma	University degree
Rural P1 to P3 (n = 13)	2	11	0	0
Rural P4 and P5 (n = 8)	1	7	0	0
Urban P1 and P4 (n = 14)	0	5	3	6

*Note that Senior VI is equivalent to Grade 12 in South Africa.

As can be observed from the table above, the majority of teachers in rural schools have a Grade III Teachers' Certificate as their highest qualification. This qualification is attained after two years of college training in a Primary Teacher College. Candidates for this qualification are Ordinary level school-leavers who have completed seven years of primary school and four years of high school. There are, however, teachers who do not have this qualification in rural schools. Some have Higher School Certificate (Senior six, SVI), obtained after completing six grades in high school; others have Ordinary level certificates (obtained after 4 years in high school), and still others (namely some of those who did not participate in the study) did not complete their secondary education. This information was obtained from informal conversations with staff members at the participating schools who did not participate in the study.

It is important to point out that teachers have little educational experience and knowledge of MT prior to entering teaching practice. Teachers do not have formal training to enable them to teach most Ugandan local languages. At secondary school, very few Ugandan local languages are taught and examined at Ordinary level. According to the UNEB's (2013) examination timetable, there are eight Ugandan local languages that are examined at

Ordinary level (also called the Uganda Certificate of Education level). These are Acoli, Ateso, Dhopadhola, Lango, Luganda, Lugbarati, Lusoga, and Runyankore/Rukiga (Ugandan National Examination Board, 2013).⁸⁶

Furthermore, in Primary Teacher Colleges, no local languages are taught to prepare teachers for subsequent teaching of local languages in schools. See Extract 37 from a follow-up interview with a P1 teacher in RakaiRG-B, in which she states that there was no training related to MT teaching in her Primary Teacher College.

Extract 37: *Teachers receive no MT training in Primary Teacher Colleges*

- T: **Mu college? Mu college, subject nnya zokka ze bahandlinga era ze basuubira, science, kubala, cultural kale mwe muli RE kati n’Oluzungu. Kati eno eby’okudda mu local language tekiriyo. Kati bye batutrainigamu by’ebyo kati eno tujja tumusanga nti tulina kusomesa ate mu local language.**
In the college? In the college, they only handle four subjects which they expect [to be taught in primary schools – MES]: science, mathematics, cultural studies. In cultural studies we also find RE [Religious Education] and English. Local language is not taught there. It is in these areas that we received training but on coming out we are told that we have to teach through local language.

IT1.BP1.2

Teachers who have not had the chance to opt for a local language as a subject at secondary school level would therefore find teaching a local language or using it as a LoLT challenging, because they would have had no training on the local language since primary school. Heugh et al. (2007:6-7) have observed that “[t]he MOI [medium of instruction – MES] for teacher training should match the MOI teachers will be using because teachers themselves need to develop their mother tongue skills, as well as the technical and pedagogical vocabulary and language structures needed to convey concepts in their subject areas”. Teacher preparation and training in Uganda falls short of the two criteria that these authors set: The majority of Ugandan teachers do not have formal training in their MTs and do not possess “the technical and pedagogical vocabulary and languages structures” needed to teach the curriculum content and the MTs themselves. It is not surprising that many teachers in this study reported that the greatest challenge they faced in MT education was writing, as reported in section 8.4.

Hardman, Abd-Kadir, and Smith (2008) found that teachers who have no background in MT training believe that teaching in MT is not possible, while those who have had training in MT

⁸⁶ Recall that by 2009, there were 35 MTs approved by the NCDC as LoLTs.

believed otherwise. In the current study, none of the teachers received formal training in their colleges to teach and/or use MT as LoLT. In the context of what Hardman et al. (2008) state, this might be the reason why teachers believed that teaching learners in MT would delay and/or complicate the acquisition of English (see section 6.3). Such beliefs may stem from teachers' own lack of knowledge regarding L2 learning and of the role of the MT in this process.

Turning to urban schools: all teachers in urban schools had formal training ranging from certificate to degree levels. There are various possible explanations for this disparity in the qualification levels of rural and urban teachers. Firstly, urban school teachers have more (and more favourable) opportunities to upgrade their qualifications than rural teachers do because, amongst other reasons, urban teachers are usually located in closer proximity to training institutions and can therefore more easily attend evening classes. Secondly, there is strong competition for teaching jobs in urban schools, which leads to these schools attracting applicants with high qualifications.

As far as teacher training needs are concerned, there is a gap between teacher training and language policy and/or curriculum implementation in Ugandan primary schools. Also, the available teachers are not sufficient in number, training, or English language proficiency to facilitate the implementation of the language-in-education policy in primary schools. In this regard, Kirkpatrick (2013:14) recently observed that there are “not enough sufficiently proficient English language teachers for primary schools to be able to teach English from the early years of primary school”. Similarly, given the background of the teachers' training presented above, while there are insufficient English language teachers, there may also be very few qualified language teachers for MTs in Ugandan primary schools. In the next section, I present findings related to teacher preparation, orientation, and training prior to the formalisation of the language-in-education policy and the thematic curriculum.

7.2.2 Training of teachers prior to introducing MT education

The preparation teachers receive before introducing any educational programme should convince them of the programme's importance and value so that the teachers can be in a position to defend the programme and also persuade the parents and community at large to accept it (Benson, 2004). As teachers may be implementing a programme that has different

demands from the educational programme that the teachers themselves followed when they were at school, they may need to adjust their attitudes, beliefs, and practices during training on how to implement the new programme. Here, I present findings on the training that the teachers received prior to and after the introduction of MT education, as reported during follow-up interviews with the participating teachers.

From the interviews, it transpired that

- (i) the NCDC provided pre-implementation training, which lasted a week, to one or two teachers per school who were then required to train the other teachers at their school⁸⁷ (IT1.AP4.126-127) (cf. Altinyelken, 2010);
- (ii) the trained teachers who had to train their colleagues did not feel confident enough to do so (IT1.AP4.126-127);
- (iii) teachers had a need for continuous training in the form of refresher courses (IT1.AP4.126-127);
- (iv) the challenges that teachers encountered with MT education and the thematic curriculum would lead them to suggest informative and helpful changes in the programme, but no such opportunity was made available by the NCDC (IT1.AP4.126-127);
- (v) 2010 was the year of the first transition class but by then teachers had not received training on how to handle this transition (IT1.AP4.133), and curriculum material was only made available in the following year (IT1.AP4.133);
- (vi) no other forms of training apart from the one-week session presented to selected teachers had since been offered by the Ministry of Education and Sports (IT1.BP1.4);
- (vii) teachers felt inadequately prepared for the task of implementing the language-in-education policy (IT1.BP1.1), and
- (viii) there was no formal platform for teachers to learn from one another and share their experiences in MT teaching (IT1.BP1.4). When asked who they consulted when they experienced challenges in implementing the language-in-education policy, teachers said that they sometimes consulted with the head teacher or deputy head

⁸⁷ The kind of teacher training adopted by the NCDC is also reported by Logijin (2009:156) with regard to the teaching of Kadzandusun in Malaysia, where selected teachers are trained and then required to train their colleagues. In Malaysia's case, trained teachers become "master trainers" who are sent to district level to train other teachers. For this to be successful, the master trainers ought to undergo intensive training.

teacher (RakaiRG-B; IT1.AP1.143) or the so-called Centre Coordinating Tutor (CCT) whose office is 15km from RakaiRG-A (IT1.AP1.143).

7.2.3 Implications of teachers' training for mother tongue education and transition to English

Teacher training and preparation greatly impacts on programme implementation, as Spillane, Reiser, and Reimer (2002), Tse et al. (2001), and Wang (2008) have reported. From the above, it appears that teachers have had minimal training and preparation for MT teaching since MT teaching and the thematic curriculum were rolled out in Uganda. This could mean that the procedures and mechanisms put in place for teachers to help learners transition from MT to English as LoLT are not easily interpretable for many teachers, given that these curriculum demands and stipulations are different from the experiences teachers themselves had when they were at school.

The classroom observations I undertook in various schools indicated that teachers were in dire need of training and preparation for MT teaching. The curriculum guidelines stipulate that teaching should change from a teacher-centred to a learner-centred approach. The reasoning is that learners should be able to direct the lesson while teachers draw from the learners' experiences (NCDC, 2006a, 2006d). From several classroom observations, it appeared that teachers who had no formal teacher training had difficulty in monitoring the difficulty level of the language they used when talking to their learners.⁸⁸ As such, they employed complex sentences, words which learners would find difficult to process or pronounce, and/or figurative language that was inappropriate for the learners' general level of development. One case in point is a P1 teacher in RakaiRP-C (Extracts 38 and 39) who addressed his learners as follows (where one could argue that the reference to cutting heads in two is inappropriate when addressing P1 learners):

⁸⁸ There were also incidents of threatening language used by teachers (such as *"I am teaching and you are playing but I am going to beat you thoroughly"*), a lack of verbal encouragement of learners on the part of teachers, and even rude language used by teachers during lessons (such as *"I do not want to see you becoming stupid again"*, *"the stupidity you have is that of your grandfather"*, or using the prefix *ki-* (cl7), which has an augmentative and derogatory connotation instead, of the neutral word *"ani"* (a-, 1st SG; -ni, "who"). For ethical reasons, and because such phenomena are not at the core of what is investigated in this study, transcripts of these incidents are not made available in the dissertation.

Extract 38: *Use of inappropriate language*

- T: By the way you have to master these words. **Mulina okubimasteringa, mulina okubikwata mu mutwe. Ggwe olowooza ηenda kubaasaamu emitwe mbibateekemu, mbibasonsekemu? Eeh?** [He laughs at them]. You have to master them.
By the way you have to master these words. You have to master these words, you have to cram them in your heads. Do you think I am going to cut your heads into two so that I put these things in your heads? Yes? [He laughs at learners]. *You have to master them.*

OT2.CP1.24

Consider also, in Extract 39, the inappropriately high difficulty level of the vocabulary (the Luganda equivalents of *surprising*, *interchange*, *according*, and *place value* and the English word *master*) used by the teacher while teaching Mathematics in P1 in RakaiRP-C.

Extract 39: *Use of language with a high level of difficulty*

- T: **Ekyewuunyisa, omuntu bw'oyinza okuddira eno ate n'ogiteeka eno. Ani yakugamba obikyuse? Eyakugamba obikyuse ye ani? Olyoke oddire eno kubanga y'ennene..... nga bw'oziraba wano, eno ntono ku eno** according to their place value. This one is greater than the other according to their place va^...
What is surprising is how a person would get this and put it here. Who told you to interchange them? Who told you to interchange them? Getting this because it is bigger, just as you see them here, this one is smaller than this one according to their place value. This one is greater than the other according to their place va^...

OT3.CP1.60

The language used by this teacher (that serves as an example here but is representative of that of other teachers as well) is not necessarily conducive to learning, neither in English nor in the MT. In the next section, I discuss the language-related educational strategies used by P4 and P5 teachers to scaffold the transition from MT as LoLT to English as LoLT.

7.3 Educational strategies used by P4 and P5 teachers to facilitate the transition to English

In light of the knowledge and evidence that exists about early-exit transitional models (discussed in section 2.2.2), the L2 proficiency of learners in this study has been observed to be below that expected to allow use of the L2 as the LoLT. At the outset of this study, I hypothesised that, since Ugandan learners would not be sufficiently proficient in English at the time of transition and after, teachers would employ language and educational strategies to facilitate transition and transfer to English and to scaffold accessibility of the curriculum

content in English. The succeeding sections elaborate the language-related strategies that teachers used to scaffold transition and transfer to English.

7.3.1 Codeswitching and codemixing

Ugandan teachers are supposed to operate within the confines of the language-in-education policy in the classrooms. In some situations (in P1 to P3 and in MT-as-a-subject classes), they are required to use only the MT, while in other situations (from P5 onwards and in English-as-a-subject classes), English only is used, and in yet other situations (in P4), a combination of two languages (i.e., codeswitching) is employed in one and the same lesson. In section 2.6.3, I discussed the forms of codeswitching that various authors cite as often occurring in the classroom context. Recall that such codeswitching is employed for a variety of reasons, for instance in giving instructions, making jokes in class, checking learners' comprehension, disciplining learners, and giving explanations (see, e.g., Atkinson, 1987; Bunyi, 2001; Chimbanga & Mokgwathi, 2012; Cincotta-Segi, 2013; Cook, 2001; Hornberger & Chick, 2001; Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; Jegede, 2011; Ncoko, Osman, & Cockcroft, 2000; Nyaga & Anthonissen, 2012; Pan, 2010; Probyn, 2009; Turnbull & Arnet, 2002). Chimbanga and Mokgwathi (2012:30) state that "as long as learners and teachers live in a community which is bi- or multilingual, there will always be a need to use alternative language codes which can best express their ideas". Cook (2001:404), by contrast, states that codeswitching also occurs frequently whenever a bi- or multilingual teacher or learner is inadequate in the LoLT. The reasons why codeswitching was employed by the participating teachers will be discussed in the subsequent subsections. Note that there are two issues related to codeswitching in this study that emerged as different from earlier studies.

Firstly, unlike other scholars, for example Arthur (1996), who document that teachers are hesitant to admit to their codeswitching practices because of fear of being exposed as acting against policy stipulations, the teachers in the current study have unreservedly admitted to codeswitching. They insist that if they do not codeswitch, their learners may not understand what goes on in class (see section 7.4). The majority of teachers in this study admitted to their codeswitching practices, both on the questionnaire and in the follow-up interviews, and codeswitching behaviour was also observed during classroom observations: 62.5% (5/8) of rural P4 and P5 teachers agreed (12.5% strongly so) that teaching P4/5 classes was easy because they could switch between English and the local language while teaching; 37.5%

(3/8) disagreed with this statement. Of the rural P1 to P3 teachers, 69.2% (9/13) indicated that they sometimes switched from English to the MT or vice versa when teaching; the other 30.8% strongly disagreed that they did so. All respondents who disagreed were from RakaiRG-A and RakaiRG-B, whereas all private school teachers (RakaiRP-C and RakaiRP-D) agreed that they codeswitched while teaching learners in P1 to P3. The classroom observations confirmed that government school teachers in P1 to P3 codeswitched from MT to English either minimally or not at all, whereas there was frequent codeswitching between Luganda and English in P1 to P3 classes in private schools. When asked to explain why they switched while teaching, the rural P1 to P3 teachers responded as follows:

- Respondent A1: To make pupils understand better.
- Respondent D8: For easy understanding of learners.
- Respondent C12: To enable learners understand better.
- Respondent B7: To make the point clear.
- Respondent B6: To avoid confusion.
- Respondent D9: To cater for individual difference.
- Respondent B11: To let the learners enjoy the lesson.
- Respondent B5: I switch to MT due to the ability of learners.
- Respondent A2: While teaching English we do not translate in MT, we create situations to make learners understand.

Some teachers admitted that they did codeswitch to facilitate learning, whereas others (see Respondent A2) denied doing so. This respondent stated that when teaching English codeswitching was not employed but that teachers rather “created situations” to help learners understand without having to codeswitch. The examples in the next sections will demonstrate, however, that teachers codeswitched not only in non-language subjects but also in English-as-a-subject lessons.

The second issue related to codeswitching in this study that emerged as different from earlier studies is that, in this study, teachers not only freely used Luganda after transition to English as LoLT (in P5) but also encouraged learners to use it in giving answers in class. A study performed by Arthur (1996) in Standard 4 (equivalent to P4 in the current study) classrooms in Botswana indicated that after the change from Setswana as LoLT (used in Standards 1 to 3) to English as LoLT (used from Standard 4 onwards), learners were not allowed to use Setswana in class and yet teachers were at liberty to do so (cf. Nyaga, 2013 for the Kenyan

situation). Although one such incident was observed in this study (see Extract 40 in which the teacher used *for example* (turns 3 and 11) while teaching in Luganda but reprimanded learners for using *no* (turns 4-7)), teachers who codeswitched generally allowed their learners to use the local language even after P3.

Extract 40: *Learners not allowed to use English in an MT lesson but teacher does*

- 1T: **Ahaa, ebirina ennyukuta ebbiri ezeefanagana. Si nsirifu si mpeerezi, zonna? Lutaaya.**
Yes, those with two similar letters. Are they consonants, vowels or all? Lutaaya.
- 2 Lutaaya: **Nga zirina, nga ziri bbiri.**
They have to be two.
- 3T: **For example, zino?**
For example, these?
- 4LS: **No.**
- 5T: **Eeh?**
Yes?
- 6LS: **No.**
- 7T: **Tuli mu Luganda, tonjamba 'no' nze sigimanyi. Eeh?**
We are in Luganda, do not speak to me with a no, I do not know it.
- 8LS: **Nedda.**
No.
- 9T: **Ahaa, ekigambo ekiggumira ky'ekyo ekigambo ekirina ennyukuta ebbiri ensirifu nga zifaanagana nga ziri wamu. Nga ziri waki?**
Yes, a word with a geminate is that with two similar letters written together. They should be what?
- 10LS: **Wamu.**
Together.
- 11T: **For example. Singa olaba zino n'eno, twalaba bulungi nnyo nti bwe tuba tuwandiika ekigambo, bwe tuba tuwandiika ennyukuta ensirifu, ennyukuta empeerezi y'ewa ennyukuta eyo bw'egenda okwatuka. Si ky'ekyo?**
For example, if you look at this and that, we saw that when we are writing a word it is the vowel that determines the sound of the consonant letter. Not so?

OT1.DP2.29

In the next sections, I discuss instances in which teachers used codeswitching in classroom interactions. These are organised according to the functions that the various switches performed.

7.3.1.1 Codeswitching to facilitate learners' understanding

Although the majority of teachers observed in this study codeswitched, some could sustain a lesson with very minimal codeswitching. The following extract from a P5 Science lesson in RakaiRG-B is illustrative of this. In the part of the lesson conducted before this extract, the teacher had spoken in English only. He then asked learners to explain a key term, *spraying*, that he had used, and he noticed that the learners could not do so. He then switched to

Luganda, translating the term (turn 3) and checking that the learners had understood his explanation of what needed to be sprayed (see turns 5 and 9).

Extract 41: *Codeswitching to facilitate understanding*

- ₁T: Okay. Now these are the parasites which we have been talking about. When those parasites attack the animals; you spray, to kill what? To kill what?
- ₂LS: [No answer]
- ₃T: To kill the parasites. Okay, now let me get somebody to tell us the meaning of that word spraying. You can use Luganda. Spraying, spraying, who can tell us the meaning of that word? Spraying. Okay, spraying **tugambye**, spraying **kuba okufuuyira. Okukola ki?**
To kill the parasites. Okay, now let me get somebody to tell us the meaning of that word spraying. You can use Luganda. Spraying, spraying, who can tell us the meaning of that word? Spraying. Okay, spraying means "okufuuyira"[Luganda word for spraying – MES].
What does it mean?
- ₄LS: **Okufuuyira.**
Spraying.
- ₅T: **Okufuuyira ki?**
Spraying what?
- ₆LS: [Inaudible].
- ₇T: **Uhm?**
Yes?
- ₈LS: [Inaudible].
- ₉T: **Nga bibadde ki?**
Spray for what reasons?
- ₁₀LS: **Ebiwuka.**
Parasites.

OT3.BP5.36

This teacher encouraged learners to use Luganda if they knew the answer in this language; in this way, the teacher codeswitched to facilitate the learners' understanding and learning. Note, however, that learner participation in this lesson was almost absent or was limited to one-word responses, often merely repeating that which the teacher had spoken about earlier in the lesson. In the debriefing session with this teacher, he said that he did not codeswitch in his lessons except when he noticed that the learners did not know the English words that he was using. However, as discussed in section 5.3.3, the learners in this class could not speak back to this teacher in English during a lesson conducted in English; compared to the learners in other teachers' classes (for example the P5 lesson in RakaiRG-A referred to in OT8.AP5.100), their participation was greatly limited. This could be due to the teacher's classroom management or the use of almost only English during lessons.

In Extract 42, a P2 teacher in RakaiRP-D, re-explained content in Luganda during a Mathematics lesson that was supposed to be taught only in English in accordance with private school practices; however, she explicitly stated to the learners that she was doing so so that

everyone in class would understand (turn 1). This is another example of codeswitching in order to help learners access lesson content. Later in the same lesson, the teacher expressed her disappointment at the fact that the learners were not grasping what she was teaching them (namely, how to tell the time) even after codeswitching (Extract 43).

Extract 42: *Codeswitching to facilitate understanding*

- ₁T: **Dŋambye, ka nziremu mu Luganda buli omuntu ategeere. Dŋambye nti bwe tuba, kano akalimi akawanvu akali ku side z'eno, kayinza okusonga mu seven, eight, ten, eleven. Eeh?**
I have said, let me repeat in Luganda for everybody to understand. I have said that if the long hand is this side, it might point into seven, eight, ten, eleven. Yes?
- ₂LS: Yes.

OT3.DP2.109

Extract 43: *Teacher despondent at learners' failure to understand despite her use of codeswitching*

- T: **Kati** where have you got that one, past? **Eeh? Eeh? Omuntu n'osomesa mu Luzungu oli n'atalutegeera, n'omulala n'omukyusiza n'odda ne mu Luganda lwe tusomesa era oli n'akulaga nti tategedde. Kati ggwe oba olitegeera ddi? Nkugambye nti singa kano kabeera kampointinze wano, wano mu ten. You leave this one, eno togibala kubala kuba already kali awo, kamaze okutambulawo. Kitegeeza zino ze zibulayo, gatta zino oba abamu okugatta kwe kubalema. MUGANGA five plus five, what do we get?**
Now where have you got that one, past? Eeh? Eeh? You teach someone in English and they fail to understand and then you translate into Luganda, a language we teach and again one shows that they have not understood. Now, when will you ever understand? I have told you that if this hand is pointing here, here in ten. You leave this one; you do not count this one because already it is there, it has already moved that distance. It means these are the remaining minutes. Add these. I wonder whether for some of you, it is the addition that fails you. MUGANGA, five plus five, what do we get?

OT3.DP2.115

Another instance where codeswitching was observed as a facilitative strategy was in RakaiRG-B in an P4 English lesson as illustrated in the Extract 44 below.

Extract 44: *Codeswitching to MT to explain concepts in an English lesson*

- ₁T: But when you are talking about Owen the pronoun to use is 'he' but Owen is a boy. Eeh? Have you got that one?
- ₂LS: Yes.
- ₃T: Now when we use pronouns when ourselves are not inclusive; **singa oba oyogera ku bantu nga ggwe toliiko; eeh?** There we use the word will. **Naye ggwe bw'obeerako tukozesa, shall.** Now another sentence? This time I want **NAKYEJWE** Josephine to read for me the sentence on the blackboard.
Now when we use pronouns when ourselves are not inclusive, if you are talking about people excluding yourself, yes? In that case we use the word 'will'. But if you are included, we use 'shall'. Now another sentence? This time I want NAKYEJWE Josephine to read for me the sentence on the blackboard.

OT2.BP4.277

In this extract, the teacher was illustrating instances of using *will* and *shall*. In making an effort to see that the learners understand what was taught, the teacher codeswitched in turn 3 by exemplifying pronouns in Luganda and relating them to English in terms of how they are used with the auxiliaries *will* and *shall*. This data confirms Cook's (2001) report that some teachers do not feel comfortable explaining grammatical issues in English. Similar classroom interactions were observed in both government and private schools.

7.3.1.2 Codeswitching to get learners' attention

One of the instances of codeswitching identified in this study was that of attracting learners' attention during the lesson (cf. Atkinson, 1987; Cook, 2001; Pan, 2010; Probyn, 2009; Turnbull & Arnet, 2002). Arthur (1996) observed that codeswitching is used when teachers want to get learners' attention, for instance, when moving on with the lesson or when getting back to what has been said. Extract 45, from a P4 Mathematics lesson in RakaiRP-C, illustrates this. Here, the teacher, who hails from the northern part of Uganda and thus did not have Luganda as a MT and had also not learnt to speak it fluently as a L2, employed a Luganda word that he did know (*ggwe* "you") to get the attention of a learner who appeared to be inattentive during the lesson.

Extract 45: Codeswitching to attract learner's attention (1)

- T: **Ggwe**, you are checking your bag, what is there? Have I told you to check?
You, you are checking your bag, what is there? Have I told you to check?

OT1.DP4.89

In Extract 46 below, taken from a RakaiRP-C P5 English lesson, the teacher was explaining the use of *will* and *shall* to the learners. As he wanted them to pay careful attention to what he was about to say next, he switched to Luganda to say "*I want you to get me very clearly*", and then immediately switched back to English to continue his explanation. This practice (using a single word, phrase, or sentence in Luganda to get the attention of the learners before switching back to English) was frequently observed in the classrooms.

Extract 46: Codeswitching to attract learner's attention (2)

- T: Yes, yes, that time is very short when you say will and shall; **njagala munkwate bulungi**. Okay? Going to, it must be short what ...?
Yes, yes, that time is very short when you say 'will' and 'shall'; I want you to get me very clearly. Okay? Going to, it must be short what ...?

OT1.CP5.106

7.3.1.3 Codeswitching to encourage learner participation

Arthur (1996:22) states that a switch to the MT is sometimes used by teachers not as a mechanism for checking understanding but as a “ritualistic pseudochecking with the concomitant convention that the only possible response is affirmative”. This means that a teacher can resort to uttering a phrase or word in the MT which is intended to elicit learners’ participation. In this study, this form of codeswitching was observed mostly in private schools where instruction was claimed to be in English only. Where this form of codeswitching was observed in government schools, it occurred in English-as-a-subject lessons. The examples cited in the extracts below were all taken from private school classrooms.

Extract 47: Codeswitching for pseudochecking (1)

- ₁T: Drums. Are we together?
₂LS: Yes.
₃T: I told you long ago **bwe twafunanga ababbi ku kyalo, eeh?**
I told you long ago when we got thieves in the village, yes?
₄LS: Yes.

OT1.DP3.135

In the above extract, a P3 teacher in RakaiRP-D was teaching Social Studies and sharing with the learners the traditional and modern means of communication. In turn 3, the teacher switched to Luganda for no other reason than to elicit an affirmative answer from the learners, given in turn 4. In the same way and in the same lesson, the teacher used Luganda to accomplish a similar goal, as can be seen in Extract 48 below. At the end of the Luganda utterance, the teacher asked a question that required an affirmative answer from the learners. The learners gave this answer in turn 2.

Extract 48: Codeswitching for pseudochecking (2)

- ₁T: There is even what we are calling, but now **haa**, your regime now, **omulembe gwammwe kati tegulabye nnaku. Ffe edda twerimiranga bulungibwansi nga bakuba saagalaagalamidde, buli omu bakukubira akasagazi, eeh?**
There is even what we are calling, but now haa, your regime now, your regime has not suffered. Long ago we used to dig, they could sound the drum “saagalaagalamidde”, and everyone would take on their part to dig, yes?
₂LS: Yes.

OT1.DP3.136

Apart from using MT in English lessons for pseudochecking, teachers also used MT to encourage participation. In Extract 49, the teacher switched between Luganda and English in

an attempt to encourage learner participation. As the lesson progressed, the teacher recognised that only two learners were giving answers. In order to encourage other learners to participate, he switched to Luganda to let the class know that the two participating learners were “(over)taking them” (see turn 6). When the teacher mentioned this, learners began to make contributions, as seen in turn 7 where Martin, who had been inactive up until the point at which the teacher switched to Luganda, gave an answer. Note that the teacher used a term of endearment, *wamma*, to encourage Martin to participate (see turn 6). Used in this context, it denotes that if the rest of the learners do not want to participate, let Martin do so.

Extract 49: *Codeswitching to encourage learner participation (1)*

- ₁LWANGA: Through telegram.
₂T: Through tele^...
₃Ls: Telegrams.
₄T: **Eeh.** Through telegrams are we together? **SSEKALEGGA** you can also try?
₅SSEKALEGGA: Radios.
₆T: Through radios, **haa**. Thank you **SSEKALEGGA**. **Iii, eee, eeeh**, you people, **mmwe bano abaana bagenda kubasinga, LWANGA SUNDAY ne SSEKALEGGA. Baatabuse. Hee**, they are taking you. **WASSWA DEO weerwaneko** they are taking you. **Ahaa. Wamma Martin, ahaa.**
Through radios, haaa. Thank you SSEKALEGGA. Iii, eee, eeeh, you people, these children are going to overtake you; LWANGA SUNDAY and SSEKALEGGA. They are incredible. Hee, they are taking you. WASSWA DEO wake up they are taking you. Ahaa. Yes my dear Martin, yes.
₇Martin: Through newspapers.

OT1.DP3.139

In Extract 50 below, taken from a RakaiRP-C P3 English lesson on pronouns, the teacher noted that learners were not suggesting answers to the questions that he had posed (turn 4). In turn 5, he switched to Luganda and asked them whether they had not heard what had been read, and then immediately paraphrased the question in English. After the switch to Luganda, learners started to respond, as can be seen in turns 6, 8, 10, and 12.

Extract 50: *Codeswitching to encourage learner participation (2)*

- ₁Ls: No.
₂T: No, we don't.
₃Ls: Yes.
₄T: Who says that we have? Put up your hands. If you say that we have, put up your hand. If we don't have put up your hand. Then the rest, where do you fall. You cannot see. You have not even heard; you have not even heard what we have studied. Have you heard what your friends have read?
Ls: Silence
₅T: Who says that we have? Put up your hands. If you say that we have, put up your hand. If we don't have put up your hand. Then the rest, where do you fall. You cannot see. **N'okuwulira temuwlira, temuwlidde era kye tusomye?** Have you heard what your friends have read?

*Who says that we have? Put up your hands. If you say that we have, put up your hand. If we don't have, put up your hand. Then the rest, where do you fall. You cannot see. **You cannot even hear, you have not heard what we read?** Have you heard what your friends have read?*

- 6Ls: Yes.
 7T: Then of what you have heard, is there any noun?
 8Ls: Yes.
 9T: Who can tell us the noun in this sentence? Have we agreed that there is a noun?
 10Ls: Yes.
 11T: But some have not agreed. **Kizza**, “Mary”, is “Mary” a noun?
 12Ls: Yes/No/yes teacher. [Three different responses given by learners – MES].

OT1.CP4.87

From the evidence presented, it is clear that when teachers switched from English to Luganda, they were asking learner participation, which then actually transpired.

7.3.1.4 Codeswitching to explain and to facilitate comprehension

In the interview I had with a P5 teacher in RakaiRG-A, he explained that codeswitching was inevitable if the teacher’s aim in the lesson was to have the content properly accessed by the learners. The teacher said that when they “codeswitch a little”, learners are able to go on “picking up” what was shared in class (see Extract 51 below).

Extract 51: *Why teachers codeswitch in class*

- T: **Naye bw’oteekamu kali mpola mpola bagenda basika. Problem erimu kale endala kale... singa eno emphasis eya wansi eno baba bayizeemu mu budde bwabwe obw’Oluzungu reading ne bagyongerako nnyo ne baba nga bamanyiimanyiimu ku bintu ebimu, ate awo kiba kibanguyira.**
But if you codeswitch a little, they go on picking something slowly slowly. The other problem is that if only at the lower level emphasis would be placed on reading in English lessons, so that learners learn some things. This would be easier for them.

IT1.AP4.116

In the following extract (52), I demonstrate how teachers used codeswitching to explain and facilitate learner comprehension. In this P5 Mathematics lesson in a private school (RakaiRP-D), the teacher codeswitched between English and Luganda while teaching about profit and losses. Note that the learners responded to the teacher in the language in which he spoke to them (see turns 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10), and that the teacher also codemixed (turn 7). Brock-Utne (2004b) states that codemixing (as seen in the extract below) is viewed more negatively than codeswitching, because codemixing is seen as indicative of language incompetence. However, such incompetence does not seem to be present here.

Extract 52: *Codeswitching to facilitate learner comprehension*

- 1T: So we are going to look for cost price when loss is given. Are we together?
 2Ls: Yes.
 3T: **Tugenda kunoonya ssente ezaakola ki?**
We are going to look for money which did what?
 4Ls: **Ezaagula.**
Which was used to buy.
 5T: **Ezaagula nga ssente ze twafiirwa bazitukoze ki?**
Money which bought something when loss is done what?
 6Ls: **Bazituwadde.**
Is given.
 7T: Mind you **nti profit gaba maki?**
Mind you that "profit" means what?
 8Ls: **Magoba.**
Profit.
 9T: What about loss?
 10Ls: **Kufiirwa.**
Loss.
 11T: **Eeh, si kufiirwa muntu.** Are we together?
Yes, it is not losing a person. Are we together?

OT1.DP5.65

Extract 53 below illustrates that although teachers codeswitched to give explanations, some of them used Luganda excessively, to the extent that the lesson content appeared to be stated in one language and then translated into the other. Here, a P5 teacher in RakaiRG-A who was teaching about colonial administration systems used English and Luganda (codemixing) to say that the British introduced two systems of administration in colonial Uganda (see turns 1 and 3). This is then repeated in Luganda (turn 7). That *"the most common form of administration was the indirect rule"* is stated in English (in turn 5) and in Luganda (in turn 9). Note that the only form of learner participation in this lesson was that of completing the teacher's sentences (see turns 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 13). This classroom interaction is similar to that reported by Chimbutane (2011) and Hornberger and Chick (2001) where learners' responses were limited to filling in a word or two or to a yes/no answer to a question.

Extract 53: *Excessive use of MT in English-only lesson*

- 1T: In that **baaletawo** two systems of admistra^....
In that they brought in two systems of administr^...
 2Ls: Administration.
 3T: Administration **okuzeeyambisa** to administer Uga^....
Administration to use them to administer Uga^...
 4Ls: Uganda.
 5T: Uganda. One, among those administration was the indirect ..., indirect rule. Indirect^...
 6Ls: Rule.
 7T: **Mbagambye**, system **zaali bbiri ze baali beeyambisa mu ngeri gye baali bagenda okukuleberamu Uga^....**

- I have told you there were two systems which they were going to employ in administering Uga...*
- ⁸LS: Uganda.
- ⁹T: Uganda. Naye nga eyasingira ddala okukyaka yali ya indirect^....
Uganda. But the most common form was that of indirect^...
- ¹⁰LS: Indirect rule.
- ¹¹T: Indirect rule. **Nga kitera kuba bwe kiti, nnina kye nkwagalamu.** Are we together? **Naye nnyinza okuba nga ndi mukambwe nnyo nnyo eri ggwe nga ne bwe nnaakikugamba era tojja kukikola ki?**
Indirect rule. It used to be done in this manner. I have something I want from you. Are we together? But I could be too cruel to you to the extent that even when I ask you to do what I want, you will not do what^?
- ¹³LS: **Kukikola**
Do it.

OT7.AP5.84

Although codeswitching has been shown to aid learners' understanding, especially when the LoLT is foreign to both the learners and the teacher, some teachers in this study overused codeswitching. This was mostly observed with government school teachers. Atkinson (1987) warned that when codeswitching is overused, it can distort the acquisition of the L2, especially when learners think that they cannot understand lesson content until it is translated into their MT.

7.3.1.5 Codeswitching to give instructions

Codeswitching has been reported to be useful in giving instructions to learners when the LoLT is not their MT (Atkinson, 1987; Cook, 2001; Pan, 2010; Probyn, 2009; Turnbull & Arnet, 2002). One question on the questionnaire asked the rural P1 to P3 teachers and P4 and P5 teachers whether MT was the best language in which to communicate with learners if they were to understand the instructions given to them. The majority of the respondents (8/12, 66.7% for P1 to P3; and 6/8, 75% for P4 and P5) agreed that MT is the language that best conveys meaningful instructions to learners. Accordingly, there were instances in the classrooms where teachers were observed giving instructions to the learners in Luganda. In other cases, teachers would first give an instruction in English and then immediately render it in Luganda – perhaps convinced that the learners would understand the instructions better when they are given in a language they understand best (cf. Okonkwo, 1983).

In Extract 54 below, taken from a P1 English lesson in RakaiRG-B, the teacher asked the learners in English to get out of their desks. Upon noticing that the response was not forthcoming as fast as she wanted it to, the teacher switched to Luganda. The Luganda

instruction was a translation of what she had already said in English. The learners quickly responded to the teachers request, i.e., moved out of their desks.

Extract 54: *Teacher repeats instruction given in English in mother tongue*

T: Get out of the desk. **Muve mu ntebe mudde mu bbanga. Njagala tukyakalemu.**
Get out of the desk. Get out of the desk and get free space. I want us to dance a little.

OT2.BT1.56

In the next extract (55), P2 learners in RakaiRG-D were reading a story in English with their teacher. The story was written on the blackboard. The teacher then switched to Luganda to instruct the learners on how to properly read aloud (see turn 2).

Extract 55: *Teacher instructs learners in Luganda how to read aloud in English*

₁Ls: Read this story. Yesterday a thief came to our school. He wanted to steal the school radio. He entered the head teacher's office. The prefects saw the thief. They reported to the matron. The matron shouted. She called the guard. The guard arrested the thief. He took him to the police station. The policemen wanted to punish the thief. They wanted to take him to prison. The thief cried. He said. I am sorry, please forgive me. I will not steal again. The policemen said. We don't like thieves.

₂T: **Aaa, bw'olaba** full stop **w'eri ng'osibamukko katono. Okitegedde?**
Okay, when you find a full stop, you pause a little. Have you understood?

OT2.DP2.47

In the extract below (56), the teacher gave instructions in Luganda. This was a Mathematics lesson in RakaiRP-D, P2 which was supposed to be taught in English in accordance with private school practices. However, in turns 2, 12, 14, and 16, the teacher used Luganda to give instructions to the learners.

Extract 56: *Teacher gives instructions in Luganda*

₁Ls: Five minutes to seven.

₂T: **Ffenna ffenna.**
All of us.

₃Ls: Five minutes to seven.

₄T: Yes. Five minutes to...?

₅Ls: Seven.

₆T: Now it is there. **Ahaa**, the short one is there. **Ahaa**, let us count the minutes. **Ffenna.**
Now it is there. Yes, the short one is there. Yes, let us count the minutes. All of us.

₇Ls: Five, ten, fifteen, twenty.

₈T: Now, who can tell me the time? **Ambuulira ayanguye. Ddakiika ziri mmeka ezibulayo okuwera essaawa ezo? Ahaa**, Denis. Denis, you **MAWEJJE.**
Now, who can tell me the time? He who is to tell me hurry up. How many minutes to that hour? Ahaa, Denis. Denis, you MAWEJJE.

₉MAWEJJE: Twenty minutes to eight.

₁₀T: **Uhm**, repeat.

- Yes, repeat.
- 11 MAWEJJE: Twenty minutes to eight.
 12 T: **Weetegereze.**
Look clearly.
- 13 MAWEJJE: Twenty minutes to four.
 14 T: Very good. **Ffenna**
Very good. All of us.
- 15 LS: Twenty minutes to four.
 16 T: **Ffenna.**
All of us.
- 17 LS: Twenty minutes to four.
 18 T: **Uhm, buli muntu nk wagala ng'ompadde answer. Jjukira nagambye nti wano we kapointinze tobalaawo. Ech? Zino ze zibulayo kuba kano kamaze okugguka wa? Kano kamaze okugguka wano five w'ekola ki?**
Yes, I want everyone to give me an answer. Remember I said that it is pointing here, do not count that point. Yes? These are the remaining minutes because this has already reached where? This has already reached here, where five is what?

OT3.DP2.111-112

In all instances observed in which teachers gave instructions in Luganda, the learners responded quickly and positively. This could indicate that learners understand instructions better when they are communicated to in their MT, which could be the reason why teachers employ such switching to Luganda when giving instructions.

7.3.1.6 Codeswitching to compensate for a lack of English proficiency

Codeswitching has been reported to be used by teachers who wish to compensate for their lack of proficiency in the LoLT (Heugh, 2011a, 2011b; Nyaga, 2013). In this study, one case of switching from English to MT in an English lesson exemplified a teacher's inadequacy in English. As much as one can argue that this teacher used MT to give explanations, a critical view of this classroom observation demonstrates that this teacher's competence in English was inadequate. The following extract was taken from a P3 English lesson in RakaiRP-C. The teacher was teaching about the grammatical use of *some* and *any*. A short discussion follows the extract.

Extract 57: *Teacher codeswitches to MT to compensate for his inadequate English*

- 1 T: **Ate ne tusanga "any" kitegeeza omutali kantu na ka ki...**
And then we find 'any' which means where there is nothing and completely what...
- 2 LS: **N'akamu.**
Nothing.
- 3 T: **Nga** for example, **tugenda kulabayo** example **endala. Ahaa**, here there are two sentences: there isn't dash letter from him; is there dash flower in the garden?

- For example, we are going to see another example. Yes, here there are two sentences: there is dash letter from him; is there dash flower in the garden?*
- 4L1: There isn't any letter from him.
- 5T: Clap for her.
- 6Ls: [Clapping]
- 7T: There isn't any letter from what, from him. **Tugambye kitegeeza nti teyafunayo wadde bbaluwa ne ki? N'emu.** Is there dash flower in the garden?
There isn't any letter from what, from him. We have said that it means that he did not get any letter. Is there dash flower in the garden?
- 8L2: Is there some flower in the garden?
- 9T: **Uhm**, another one?
Yes, another one?
- 10L3: Is there any flower in the garden?
- 11L4: Is there any flower in the garden?
- 12T: **Mmwe ab'omu nsonda muli ku ki? NATTEERO.**
Those seated in the corner, what are you after? NATTEERO.
- 13NATTEERO: Is there any flower in the garden?
- 14T: **Ggwe.**
You.
- 15L5: Is there any flower in the garden?
- 16T: So **tulabye ebigambo bino** "some" **w'ekola ki? W'ekozesebwa** and then "any", **w'ekola ki? W'ekozesebwa.** **Wano tugambye** when there is little. Here **tulabye nti ekozesebwa awali ebintu ebitono omulimu, eno n'ekozesebwa ebintu ebitakola ki? Ebitaliimu wadde n'akaki?**
So, we have seen these words, where 'some' is^... is used and then where 'any' is used. Here we have used when there is little. Here we have seen that it is used with few things and then this one is used where we have nothing at all.
- 17Ls: **N'akamu.**
At all.
- 18T: **Kati singa olupapula luno ndubikka bwe nti ne nkubuuza nti luwandiikiddwamu nga tolabamu kantu n'akamu kitegeeza tekuli kantu n'akaki n'akamu.** Naye bwe kubaako ebitonotono oba mpandiiseeko line **bbiri, kitegeeza lukola ki, lulinako ye** "some"; "any" is nothing. Have you understood?
For example if I turn over this paper and then I ask you whether the paper is written on but when you could not see anything, it means there is nothing. But if there are a few writings, say two lines, it means it has something, that is 'some'; 'any' is nothing. Have you understood?
- 19Ls: Yes.

OT2.CP3.125-126

In the above classroom interaction, the teacher could not sustain an explanation in English (see turns 3, 7, 16, and 18). For example, in turn 16, the teacher gave explanations by asking questions which he answered himself. This appeared to be a mannerism, but it rendered the explanations somewhat unclear. In turn 18, the teacher tried to explain the difference between *some* and *any*, incorrectly stating that *any* means "nothing". Even though I agree with scholars such as Heugh (2011a) and Nyaga (2013) that codeswitching can help compensate for the language inadequacy of teachers, the teacher's use of MT here did not appear to be a method of helping the learners to access what he was teaching. Note also that in turn 8, a learner gives an incorrect answer (considering the context), but the teacher does not indicate whether the answer is correct or not. The teacher says *uhm* ("yes") and then invites another

contribution without attempting to tell the the learners which of those two responses is correct. This could be an indication that the teacher does not know that one answer is correct but the other one not.

7.3.1.7 Codeswitching to show disdain

During classroom observations, teachers also used codeswitching when they wanted to indicate that they were not impressed by the learners' answers or behaviour. This switching was also from English to Luganda, so that the rebuke, insult, or otherwise negative comment was delivered in the MT. The following extracts are cases in point. In the first (Extract 58), the teacher rebukes a learner who had changed seats, presumably to sit with a friend. The word *ttumbaavu* that the teacher used is a strong and highly offensive word, meaning "utter stupidity". In Extract 59, the same teacher rebukes a learner for laughing in class, saying that he will hammer the perpetrator and knock out his/her teeth.

Extract 58: *Teacher uses a switch to MT to indicate disdain (1)*

T: **NAKYEJWE, ttumbaavu, ani yakutuuzizzaayo eyo? Nja kukunkona omutwe ogwo. Jangu vvaayo, [teacher jeers], nziremu mbasange nga mutudde mwembi. Awo. Tukomewo.** They keep us safe from wild animals.
NAKYEJWE, you utterly stupid person, who told you to sit there? I will knock your head in. Come here [teacher jeers at her]. I should not see you again sitting together. Sit there. Let us come back now. They keep us safe from wild animals.

OT2.CP1.19

Extract 59: *Teacher uses MT to indicate disdain (2)*

T: Uhm, sentence three. They protect us, **ani asese? Nja kukukonkona ebinyo mbiggyemu!** They protect us from thieves.
Uhm, sentence three. They protect us. Who laughed? I will hammer you and take out all your poor teeth! They protect us from thieves.

OT2.CP1.25

Gardner (2012:252) contends that teachers who handle younger learners should

be able to manage classroom activities, to provide good models of English for input, to adjust their level of language to the children's and to be able to encourage, reassure, engage and motivate the children through tasks with appropriate content.

Whereas many teachers were observed to encourage, reassure, engage and motivate their learners verbally, some instances of inappropriate language use by teachers did occur, and these were accompanied by a codeswitch from English to MT.

7.3.1.8. The simultaneous use of mother tongue and English in government and private schools

Before concluding the discussion of codeswitching as a language-related strategy used by teachers to prepare learners for the change in LoLT, and to assist them during the transition from MT as LoLT to English as LoLT, I will provide information on the use of codeswitching as observed in P5 classes, i.e., after the transition to English as LoLT.

Classroom observations revealed that in RakaiRP-C and RakaiRP-D, for which the language-in-education policy prescribes the use of only MT as LoLT but which claim to use English only as LoLT, there is in fact much use of MT and English (simultaneously) in P1 to P3. In RakaiRG-A and RakaiRG-B, this practice is common after transition to English (since government schools use MT as LoLT in P1 to P3), although the language-in-education policy prescribes the sole use of English as LoLT as from P5. It thus appears as though both types of schools (government and private) fail to implement the language-in-education policy, but different teachers do so for different reasons. As stated above, some teachers were observed to possess poor English communicative skills; as such, they could not sustain a lesson in English. Other teachers believed that without use of both MT and English, learners would not follow with ease that which is being taught.

Below, I present two representative extracts, one from a P5 class in RakaiRG-A, in which only English should have been used according to the language-in-education policy, and another from a P2 class in RakaiRP-D, in which only the MT should have been used according to the language-in-education policy and English only according to the manner in which the school markets itself to parents. These extracts indicate that neither type of school follows the language-in-education policy, and that private schools, contrary to what they claim to be the case, do not offer English-only education in the lower grades. Both of these extracts are necessarily long; they are provided here to show the simultaneous use of MT and English over a representative part of the lesson, and as such I chose to provide large portions of the transcripts of these two classroom observations.

The first extract (Extract 60) was taken from RakaiRG-A in a P5 Social Studies lesson on colonial administration in Uganda. In this class, the teacher spoke more Luganda than English; all explanations were given in Luganda. The only responses from learners were cued

responses, as in turns 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 20, 24, 26, and 28. Apart from English-as-a-subject lessons, instruction in rural schools can be likened to the models which Akinnaso (1993) and Wolff (2002) describe in which instruction is given simultaneously in both L1s and L2s throughout the years of primary education. However, I should add that more MT is used in government schools than in private schools.

Extract 60: *Simultaneous use of MT and English in a (purportedly English-only) P5 class*

- 1T: It was the Labony rebellion. And in Bunyoro there was another rebellion, which was that one? What was that rebellion in Bunyoro? Yes, **NAKAWOOYA**? The Nyangire rebellion. So rebellion **ezo zaabeerawo. Bwe zaabeerawo, Babritish baagamba tetwagala ate tuddemu tufune abantu abookusimbira ekkuuli enfuga yaffe. Ne bagamba nti tugenda kukola tutya, nti kati ka tukozese** indirect rule. This indirect rule would reduce rebellion...
- It was the Labony rebellion. And in Bunyoro there was another rebellion, which was that one? What was the rebellion in Bunyoro? Yes, NAKAWOOYA? The Nyangire rebellion. So those rebellions occurred. When they occurred, the British said that they wouldn't want to see any more persons resisting against their form of administration. So they asked themselves what they would do; so they agreed to use indirect rule. This indirect rule would reduce rebellions.*
- 2LS: Rebellions.
- 3T: Rebellions. Are we together? So they used indirect rule in order, it reduced, it redu^...
- 4LS: Reduced.
- 5T: It reduced a number of rebe^...
- 6LS: Rebellions.
- 7T: Rebellions. Rebellions. So those are some of the advantages or those are some of the two reasons why the British used indirect ru^...
- 8LS: Rule.
- 9T: Indirect rule. **Tugambye nti baasalawo bakozese enfuga bbiri. Tulabyeko** (a) indirect rule^.... Indirect rule.
Indirect rule. We have said that they decided to use two forms of administration. We have seen a) indirect ru^...
- 10LS: Indirect rule.
- 11T: Indirect rule. So let us see b) another system called b). What is the opposite of the word indirect? What is the opposite of the word indirect? Dire^...
- 12LS: Direct.
- 13T: Direct. So another system used by the British to administer colonial rule was direct^....
- 14LS: Direct rule.
- 15T: Direct rule. Direct^...
- 16LS: Rule.
- 17T: Rule. **Waliwo lwe kyasukkirira ng'abantu tebakyawuliriria mu bakulembeze baffe. Are we together? Mu kiseera ekyo baali balina empisa embi. Nga sikyabaagalira ddala, nga tulwanira bwetwaze bwaffe ate bo baagala kusigaza bwetwaze. Mu kusooka twali tulina obwetwaze, bwe bajja ne batuggyako obwetwaze. Kale nno naffe twakirabanga edda wadde abakulembeze ab'ensikirano tubakkiririzaamu naye kati ekiseera kiweddeko tetukyabakkiririzaamu nga bye bateesa tetukyakola ki tetukyabikkiriza. Babritish ne bagamba nti kati bafuuse bakiwagi. Babritish ne bagamba nti now let us carry out direct rule ffe ffennyini Babritish tuveeyo n'omukono ogwa ki?**
Rule. Time came when people were no longer loyal to our leaders. Are we together? At that time they were undisciplined. We no longer wanted them, we were fighting for our independence and yet they wanted to retain it. At first we had our independence; when they came, we lost it to them. We knew of this fact even when we were so loyal to our leaders but when that time had come, we lost the loyalty we had towards them. We could no longer listen to what they could tell us. So the British realised that people had become rebellious.

- So the British said, "Now let us carry out direct rule". Let us come out with what kind of hand...*
- 18LS: **Ogw'ekyuma.**
An iron hand.
- 19T: **Ogw'ekyuma.** Nga bo bennyini nnyini be bajja okutukulembera. Kino ng'ekyo kye tukola, kino nga bo bennyini be boogera. Ku luno abakulembeze, traditional leaders baabaleka ebbali. Are we together? So in that the British directly, dire...
An iron hand. It were they themselves coming to rule us. Do this, so we did, do this; so they themselves told us directly. At this time, they left the traditional leaders aside. Are we together? So in that the British directly, dire...
- 20LS: Directly.
- 21T: Directly rule passed the administration to the local people...
- 22LS: People.
- 23T: To the local people. So we shall say this is a type of rule whereby the British directly administered Uga...
- 24LS: Uganda.
- 25T: Uganda. Directly **bo bennyini nnyini nga balina okubagamba nti tugende tulime enguudo nga balina okubeerawo... eyo enkola yali mbi nnyo. Tugambye mu** indirect there was a number of rebellions **ate waliwo obwegugungo bwagenda mu maaso na kuvaayo.** Are we together? Men were killed, **bangi battibwa ate abalala ne bawona. Wadde nga battibwa, ate ekyo kyatutuusa ku** our indepe...
Uganda. They could tell the people directly, for instance, to go and clear the roads. At the time of doing this, they were there in person; this form of administration was so bad. We have said that in indirect rule there was a number of rebellions and many strikes and conflicts happened. Are we together? Men were killed, many were killed and others survived. Although they were killed, this helped us to attain our indepe...
- 26LS: Independence.
- 27T: Independence. So those are the only two systems of administration used by the Bri...
- 28LS: British.
- 29T: By the British to administer Uganda. Indirect and direct rule. Any questions? Any questions? Any? Any questions? So you can do this exercise if there are no any questions. Write very quickly, we are winding up with that. **Twagala tumalirize colonial rule nayo, tugikole ki? Tugiveeko.**
By the British to administer Uganda. Indirect and direct rule. Any questions? Any questions? Any? Any questions? So you can do this exercise if there are no any questions. Write very quickly, we are winding up with that. We want to finish up with colonial rule so that we do what? We put it aside.

OT7.AP5.87-89

In the next extract (61), I demonstrate a case of classroom interactions in RakaiRP-D. This case is presented here to illustrate what occurs in private schools' lower classes in comparison to the above case taken from a government school class (P5) after transition. Recall that private schools market themselves as instructing only in English, but this classroom vignette provides the actual interactions between the teacher and learners which involved the use of MT (Luganda) and English. In this extract, I demonstrate a representative case of classroom interactions in a P2 Mathematics lesson. As can be seen, the use of MT in this "English-instructed" lesson is not only a matter of conveying content and supporting understanding but also a means of building social relationships in class (see also the multilingual classroom interactions discussed in Shoba & Chimbutane's, 2013 volume).

Extract 61: *Simultaneous use of MT and English in a (purportedly English-only) P2 class*

- 1T: How many minutes are in an hour? How many minutes are in an hour? **Laba nno bano!**
How many minutes make an hour? Yes.
How many minutes are in an hour? How many minutes are in an hour? Look at these ones! How many minutes make an hour? Yes.
- 2L1: Sixty minutes.
- 3T: Yes we saw that there are sixty minutes in an^...
- 4Ls: Hour.
- 5T: We saw that from here up to here there are five...? Also here?
- 6Ls: Five.
- 7T: **Tebaasomye.**
They are not around.
- 8Ls: Five.
- 9T: **Ahaa?**
Yes?
- 10Ls: Five.
- 11T: Here?
- 12Ls: Five.
- 13T: **Uhm.**
Yes.
- 14Ls: Five.
- 15T: **Uhm.**
Yes.
- 16Ls: Five.
- 17T: **Ahaa?**
Yes?
- 18Ls: Five.
- 19T: **Uhm.**
Yes.
- 20Ls: Five.
- 21T: **Uhm.**
Yes.
- 22Ls: Five.
- 23T: And?
- 24Ls: Five.
- 25T: Five. So let us count these minutes and see the minutes which make an^...
- 26Ls: Hour.
- 27T: **Gatta.**
Add.
- 28Ls: Five.
- 29T: Plus five?
- 30Ls: Ten.
- 31T: Plus five?
- 32Ls: Fifteen.
- 33T: Plus five?
- 34Ls: Twenty.
- 35T: Plus five?
- 35Ls: Twenty five.
- 36T: Plus five?
- 37Ls: Thirty.
- 38T: Here there are thirty^...
- 39Ls: Minutes.
- 40T: Then thirty plus five?
- 41Ls: Thirty five.
- 42T: **Tebaasomye.**
They are not around.
- 43Ls: Thirty five.

- 44T: Plus five?
 45Ls: Forty.
 46T: Plus five?
 47Ls: Forty five.
 48T: Plus five?
 49Ls: Fifty.
 50T: Plus five?
 51Ls: Fifty five.
 52T: **Wangi.**
Yes.
 53Ls: Fifty five.
 54T: Plus five?
 55Ls: Sixty.
 56T: Sixty. We saw that this clock face has two hands. It has the minute hand and hour^...
 57Ls: Hand.
 58T: And hour hand. **Ne tulaba nti** this one moves slowly. **Ko kagenda mpola mpola nnyo kano ate kakola ki?**
And hour hand. We saw that this one moves slowly. It moves so slowly and yet this one does what?
 59Ls: **Kanguwa.**
It is fast.
 60T: **Kanguwa. Twalaba lwaki kanguwa. Si kyo?**
It is fast. Did we say the reason as to why it is fast? Not so?
 61Ls: Yes.
 62T: **Katono ate kano ka ki?**
It is small and yet the other one is what?
 63Ls: **Kanene.**
It is big.
 64T: **Kanene.** So this one moves, moves?
It is big. So this one moves, moves?
 65Ls: Slowly.
 66T: **Olimbira ddala.** Get me my clock face from there. Then we also saw that if this is our clock face, if we separate it into two, **twalaba nga wano wabeerawo** twelve. This one, here is?
That is a lie. Get me my clock face from there. Then we also saw that if this is our clock face, if we separate it into two, we saw that here is twelve. This one, here is?
 67Ls: Six.
 68T: Here is?
 69Ls: Six.
 70T: **Ne tugamba** from here up to here there are; how many minutes are there?
And we said from here up to here there are; how many minutes are there?
 71Ls: Thirty minutes.
 72T: Thirty. From here up to here there are thirty...?
 74Ls: Minutes.
 75T: We also saw that if the minute hand points this side, **uhm? Ne tulaba nti singa kaba katunudde** side **eno** we use pa^...
We also saw that if the minute hand points this side, yes? We also saw that if it is facing this side, we use pa^...
 76Ls: Past.
 77T: We use pa^...
 78Ls: Past.
 79T: We use pa^...
 80Ls: Past.
 81T: Past. Now who can tell me the time? **Uhm**, who can tell me the time? Who can tell me the time? **Kati mmwe abasigadde temwabaddewo? NANNYONGA. NANNYONGA**, what is the time?
Past. Now who can tell me the time? Yes, who can tell me the time? Who can tell me the time? Were the rest of you not around? NANNYONGA. NANNYONGA, what is the time?

- 82 **NANNYONGA:** Fifteen minutes past....
 83 **T:** Is she correct?
 84 **LS:** No.
 85 **T:** Another one. **MUGERA.**
 86 **MUGERA:** A half past three.
 87 **T:** Yes, we can say that a half past three or...? Yes.
 88 **L1:** Thirty minutes past three.
 89 **T:** Past three. Thank you. **Ahaa**, another one. Who can tell me the time? Uh, Esther.
 90 **Esther:** Thirty minutes past one.
 91 **T:** Very good. Thirty minutes past...?
 92 **LS:** One.
 93 **T:** Another answer. Yes.
 94 **L2:** A half past one.
 95 **T:** Yes. Thank you. We can also say that a half past...?
 96 **LS:** One.
 97 **T:** **Ne tulaba eggulo... Ne tunnyonnyolamu ne tulaba nti, nti tulinamu a half ne tulaba nga yavudde awo.** Then we continue to separate this one into four. **Ne tulaba a quarter we weerera. Ne tulaba a qua^...**
Yesterday we saw... we explained that we have a half and that is how we got it. Then we continue to separate this one into four. Then we saw the point at which we have a quarter. And then we saw a qua^...
 98 **LS:** A quarter.
 99 **T:** How many minutes make a quarter? How many minutes are in a quarter?
PONTINANTA, speak louder?
 100 **PONTINANTA:** Fifteen minutes.
 101 **T:** Fifteen mi^...
 102 **LS:** Minutes.
 103 **T:** **Ne tubala bulungi nnyo, ne tubal nti five....**
We clearly saw, we saw that five...
 104 **LS:** Ten, fifteen.
 105 **T:** **Ne tulaba nti fifteen zaaweredde wa?**
At which point do we have fifteen?
 106 **LS:** **Awo.**
There.
 107 **T:** **Awo. Jjukira nti minute hand ekyali ku side y'eyo.** So we have to use pa^...
There. Remember that the minute hand is still on that side. So we have to use pa^...
 108 **LS:** Past.
 109 **T:** Past. Now, who can tell me the time? Who can tell me the time? **Kati ku luno ngenenda kwagala atamanyi y'aba awanika. NABACHWA, tell me.**
Past. Now, who can tell me the time? Who can tell me the time? This time, I want those who don't know to raise up their hand. NABACHWA, tell me.
 110 **NABACHWA:** A half past eight.
 111 **T:** **Eeh?**
Yes?
 112 **NABACHWA:** A half past eight.
 113 **T:** **Wangi?**
Yes?
 114 **NABACHWA:** A half past eight.
 115 **T:** **Iii, is she correct?**
 116 **LS:** No.
 117 **T:** How many minutes are in a half? **NABACHWA, I am asking you. How many?**
 118 **NABACHWA:** Fifteen minutes.
 119 **T:** Fifteen? **Kirabika teyabaddewo. Wamma, NVANNUNGI tell us.**
Fifteen? It seems she was not around. My friend NVANNUNGI, tell us.
 120 **NVANNUNGI:** A quarter past eight.
 121 **T:** It is a quarter past...?
 122 **LS:** Eight.
 123 **T:** A quarter past...?
 124 **LS:** Eight.

- 125T: **NABACHWA twagamba nti** thirty minutes **ze zibeera mu** a ha[^]...
NABACHWA, we said that it is thirty minutes that make up a ha[^]...
- 126LS: A half.
- 127T: **Mu** a ha[^]...
In a ha[^]...
- 127LS: A half.
- 128T: **Kyokka ne tulaba nti** fifteen **zo ze zikola** what? A qua[^]...
But we also so that fifteen minutes make what? A qua[^]...
- 129LS: A quarter.
- 130T: A quarter pa...?
- 131LS: Past.
- 132T: A quarter past. You can use fifteen minutes or a quarter pa[^]....
- 133LS: Past.
- 134T: A quarter past. Now another one. **Asembayo. Ani atubuulira buno obudde?** What is the time? **NABIDDO. NABIDDO. NABIDDO. Uhm**, Innocent.
A quarter past. Now another one. The last one. Who can tell us the time? What is the time? NABIDDO. NABIDDO. NABIDDO. Yes, Innocent.
- 135Innocent: A quarter past twelve.
- 136T: Thank you. Who can give us another answer? You. **Ahaa**, this one. **MAWANDA**.
- 137MAWANDA: Fifteen minutes past twelve.
- 138T: Fifteen minutes past[^]...
- 139LS: Twelve.
- 140T: Fifteen minutes past twelve. **Kati eno side tugimaze. Ggwe atategedde ataagitegedde simanyi. Kati tugenda kutunula side ya wa?**
Fifteen minutes past twelve. We have finished this side. He who has not understood I don't know. We are now going to look at which side?
- 141LS: **Ey'eri.**
The other.

OT3.DP2.101-106

As Creese and Blackledge (2010) mention, both Luganda and English are needed for teachers to convey their messages and for the learners to access what teachers pass on to them. Wolff (2002:136) observes that it is common to find teachers reverting to MT (from English) whenever learners are asked a question which they cannot answer or understand in English; he infers that, in practice, teaching turns out to be “dual medium [...] all over Anglophone Africa. They are consisted of English plus one or more of the African languages, knowledge of which is shared by the teacher and his or her students”. Wolff’s remarks are consistent with those of other scholars who have studied classroom interactions in the global South (e.g., Bunyi, 2001; Chimbutane, 2011; Cincotta-Segi, 2013; Groff, 2013; Hornberger & Chick, 2001; Jean-Pierre, 2013; Lin, 2013; Ncoko et al., 2000; Nyaga & Anthonissen, 2012), and the classroom observations reported here are very similar to those of earlier scholars. This evidence thus suggests that beneficial language-in-education policies should be arrived at through classroom ethnographic studies such as the one reported here.

7.3.1.9 Educational implications of the use of codeswitching

From the foregoing discussion, the question arises as to whether the observed codeswitching occurs due to limited English proficiency or due to teachers making use of learners' linguistic resources (cf. Chimbanga & Mokgwathi, 2012). Almost all teachers in all four schools studied used some form of codeswitching. In the case of some teachers, it was to compensate for their and their learners' weaknesses in English, whereas, in the case of others, it was to facilitate accessibility of content which was delivered in English. However, some codeswitching teachers prohibited learners to do the same.

Atkinson (1987) and Pan (2010) warn that when codeswitching is used in such a way that learners wait for lesson content to be translated for them before they start processing what they have heard, it negatively affects their learning of content as well as their language learning. Traces of this behaviour were observed in the study, especially in the government schools.

Whereas not all codeswitching is a manifestation of teachers' inadequacy, mastery of English was lacking in the cases of some of the teachers who participated in this study. Teachers in this study not only failed to comply with the Ugandan language-in-education policy (in the sense that they continued to use MT after the transition class), but (i) their linguistic abilities in English did not always allow them to sustain a lesson in English, and (ii) learners, particularly those in government schools, were not yet sufficiently proficient in English to access content through it.

7.3.2 Translation

The second language-related strategy observed in this study that teachers use to facilitate transfer and transition to English is that of translation. Generally speaking, teachers employ this strategy by asking learners to translate what is being taught in class in order to be sure that they follow or understand what they are learning. Atkinson (1987) and Manyak (2004, 2006, 2008) have reported that translation is a good educational strategy to learn a L2 if properly applied. In this study, this strategy was used not only in English language lessons but also in non-language subjects. In the next section, I discuss the instances of translation observed in the classrooms in this study.

7.3.2.1 Instances of using translation

In RakaiRP-D, a P2 teacher employed translation to check the learners' comprehension of what was being taught in an English lesson (a part of which appeared in Extract 55 above). After reading a story together off the blackboard, the teacher tasked learners with translating every sentence in the story into Luganda, as illustrated in Extract 62.

Extract 62: *Teacher using translation by learners as a teaching and learning strategy (1)*

- 1T: **Ahaa**, who knows in Luganda that sentence? What is its meaning? PHINA.
 2PHINA: **Eggulo omubbi yazze ku ssomero.**
Yesterday a thief came to school.
 3T: **Ahaa, eggulo omubbi yazze wa?**
Yes, where did the thief come yesterday?
 4LS: **Ku ssomero lyaffe.**
At our school.
 5T: **Ahaa.** He wanted to steal the school radio. Yes? **Uhm?**
 6L1: Yes, **ng'ayagala kubba radio y'essomero.**
Yes, he came with an intention of stealing the school radio.
 7T: **Eeh?**
Yes?
 8L1: **Yazze ng'ayagala kubba radio y'essomero.**
He came with an intention of stealing the school radio.
 9T: **Abadde ng'ayagala kubba radio ya ki?**
He wanted to steal which radio?
 10LS: **Y'essomero.**
Of the school.
 11T: **Ahaa**, he entered the head teacher's office. **Uhm?** Who can tell me the meaning in Luganda?
 12L2: [Inaudible]
 13T: **Yakoze ki?**
What did he do?
 14L2: [Inaudible]
 15T: He entered the head teacher's office.
 16L2: **Yayingidde mu office y'omukulu w'essomero.**
He entered the head teacher's office.
 17T: **Eeh?**
Yes?
 18LS: **Yayingidde mu woofiisi y'omukulu w'essomero.**
He entered the head teacher's office.

OT2.DP2.47

In the next extract (63), a P5 teacher in RakaiRP-D also asked the learners to do a translation of a question they were about to work out in a Mathematics lesson. In addition, the teacher explained why he had called for the translation, namely so that everyone would know what the question was about (turn 1). In turn 2, a learner named Nnyanja translated the sentence and the teacher, in turn 3, asked the class whether Nnyanja's translation was correct. Learners in turn 4 chorally agreed that the translation was correct.

Extract 63: *Teacher using translation by learners as a teaching and learning strategy (2)*

- ₁T: Who can help us translate that sentence in our mother tongue? **Mu lulimi lwa bamaama baffe**. Who can help us and translate such a question in our mother tongue? **Ani ayinza okutuyambako n'atukyusiza ekibuuzo kyaffe ekyo mu Luganda?** Such that everybody gets to know the meaning of that question. **NNYANJA**.
Who can help us and translate that sentence in our mother tongue? In our mothers' language. Who can help us and translate such a question in our mother tongue? Who can help us to translate our question into Luganda? Such that everybody gets to know the meaning of that question. NNYANJA.
- ₂NNYANJA: **OKETCHO yatunda, yatunda embuzi ku mutwalo gumu mu enkumi ttaanu. N'afiirwako enkumi ssatu. Yali agiguze ssente mmeka? OKETCHO sold, sold a goat at fifteen thousand shillings. He made a loss of three thousand shillings. How much did he buy it?**
- ₃T: **Bitereevu? Is that right?**
- ₄Ls: Yes.
- ₅T: **Mumukubireko mu ngalo. Clap for him.**
- ₆Ls: [Learners applaud]
- ₇T: **OKETCHO** sold a goat at fifteen thousand shillings. He made a loss of three^...?
- ₈Ls: Shillings.
- ₉T: How much, **yatunda embuzi ku mutwalo gumu n'ekitundu, n'afiirwayo enkumi ssatu**. How much **yali yagigula ssente mmeka?** How much did he buy it? What is the formula for getting the cost price? What is the formula for getting cost price? The formula is within our question there. **EGWOU**.
How much, he sold a goat at fifteen thousand shillings and made a loss of three thousand shillings. How much did he buy it? How much did he buy it? What is the formula for getting the cost price? What is the formula for getting cost price? The formula is within our question there. EGWOU.
- ₁₀EGWOU: Selling price minus loss.
- ₁₁T: Selling price^...
- ₁₂Ls: Minus loss.

OT1.DP5.66

From these two classroom extracts above, one clearly sees that translation is used as a strategy to check whether learners clearly understand what they were being taught. In summary, the use of translation reported here is limited to checking learners' comprehension. Knapp (2013) states that translation helps in understanding what is taught and aids in in-depth processing and in content retention. However, Brock-Utne (2004b) warns that repeating and translating everything in learners' MT slows the lesson down and is equivalent to a speech being interpreted. Also, the danger with such a translated lesson is that the learners are not likely to pay attention to the first part (delivered in English) because they know it will be translated into their MT. It is also important to point out here that in the classroom spaces explored in this study, the translation technique was not used to help learners expand their vocabulary as has been the case elsewhere (see, e.g., Atkinson, 1987; Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Manyak, 2004, 2006, 2008).

7.3.2.2 Educational implications of the use of translation

As reported in section 2.6.2 and as exemplified above, translation plays a significant role in accessing content and in learning the L2. However, it is also observed that translation was not put to full use by teachers in this study, especially not in the English language lessons. Atkinson (1987) contends that the moment learners know how to say something in their MT, it is the teacher's role to help them learn how to express it in English. But this technique was not applied in any of the classroom observations conducted in this study. If teachers were to ask learners, "How do you say x in English?" (as Atkinson, 1987 recommends), they would be able to gauge the extent of the learners' English vocabulary and where this vocabulary needs to be expanded.

7.3.3 Sheltered instruction

Sheltered instruction is an approach to teaching language where content is simultaneously presented with language issues. The prime goal of this approach is to help learners to access the curriculum content easier (Echevarria et al., 2011; Hansen-Thomas, 2008; Short et al., 2012). In the Ugandan context, there is an unequal balance between the teaching of content and the teaching of language, because teachers are trained to handle these two issues separately (despite teachers being expected, as per the requirements of the thematic curriculum, to handle these issues in an intertwined manner). Consequently, there are no teachers in Uganda who are trained to use sheltered instruction as a strategy to assist learners in the transition from MT to English as LoLT. Sheltered instruction is thus a strategy which teachers could, in theory, use to facilitate the transfer from MT to English as LoLT, but which was not observed to be used in practice.

In explaining the need to train teachers in content-based instruction, Kong (2009) mentions that, as much as teachers may have the qualifications to teach a subject and the L2 (e.g., English), as is the case in Germany and Austria, they need to be trained in content-based instruction for them to be effective in guiding learners to learn both content and language at the same time. In Uganda's case, however, there is more emphasis placed on content delivery, and less attention is given to language (cf. Kyeyune, 2003).

Kong (2009), with reference to available literature on sheltered instruction, explains that evidence indicates that teaching content through the L2 is not enough to enable learners to understand this content. Kong adds that it is necessary to focus on language form as well. This calls for careful teacher training as well as careful lesson planning.

If teachers are not trained to handle content and language at the same time, lessons are bound to be mishandled. One clear instance of a teacher not managing to deliver content and at the same time expand vocabulary was observed in a P4 Social Studies class in RakaiRG-B (see Extract 64). Here, the teacher wanted to refer to conflicts, but told learners that he will rather use the word *wars*, because they would find *wars* easier than *conflicts*. Another option, one which the teacher did not go with, would have been to teach the learners the word *conflicts*, especially as *war* and *conflict* are synonymous in certain senses but not in others, so one may not necessarily be substituted for the other.

Extract 64: *Teacher missing an opportunity to expand learners' L2 vocabulary*

- ₁T: **Entalo. Ndowooza tuteekewo ekijja okubanguyira nandibawadde conflicts naye ka mbawe wars. What?^...**
 Wars. I think let us write that which will be easier for you; I would have given you conflicts but let me give you wars. What?^...
- ₂Ls: Wars.

OT1.BP4.251

Based on the findings of this study, one of which is that learners in rural areas have very limited exposure to English, it is prudent that the exposure to this language is strengthened at school. One way of doing this might be the use of sheltered instruction. However, for teachers to be able to employ this method, they need to be trained to do so.

In the next section, I discuss safetalk, a strategy frequently employed by teachers in this study. There is no evidence that teachers employ safetalk specifically to enhance the transition from MT to English as LoLT. However, this strategy is language-related, and it could affect learners' language development, hence it is discussed here.

7.4 Teachers' use of safetalk and repetition as participative strategies in teaching and learning

Safetalk, broadly speaking, refers to the nature of interaction between the teacher and learners where the use of language in the classroom is deceiving, i.e., where language is used in a manner that covers up teachers' and learners' inadequacies (Arthur, 1996). Arthur (1996), Hornberger and Chick (2001), and Pontefract and Hardman (2005) also describe safetalk as a ritualised participation in the classroom. Given the fact that learners in most African classrooms are not proficient in English, they resort to language use that is "safe" or which does not cause "loss of teachers' face" but which actually results in less concrete learning (Bunyi, 2001; Chimbutane, 2011; Cincotta-Segi, 2013; Hornberger & Chick, 2001) and sometimes in a lack of understanding.

This form of language use manifests itself in the form of questions requiring a yes/no answer or choral responses from learners (i.e., teachers speak to learners in a way that calls for a chorus answer) or incomplete teacher sentences requiring completion from learners (i.e., teachers leaving a gap for the learners to fill individually or in chorus with a sound, syllable, word, or short phrase) (Arthur, 1996, 2001; Brock-Utne, 2004; Chimbutane, 2009; Nomlomo, 2007; Pontefract & Hardman, 2005). Having learners repeat what the teacher has said is also a form of safetalk. Hornberger and Chick (2001:34) explain that such chorusing "serves a social rather than academic function" (cf. Cincotta-Segi, 2013). In other words, learner responses are for participatory purposes but do not contribute to learning. During safetalk, language is consciously or unconsciously used in a form that does not commit the teacher to elaborate on what learners say; rather, the teacher is using language in a manner that "plays it safe" in order to avoid embarrassment (cf. Chick, 1996).

Safetalk does not yield active learning (Ouane & Glanz, 2006). The intonation or tone of voice used by the teacher prompts learners to initiate their "chanting" (Chimbutane, 2009:171-172; Pontefract & Hardman, 2005; see also Ouane & Glanz, 2006:6), but learners can join the chanting chorus without understanding what they are answering (Chimbutane, 2009:56).

In many of the extracts from the classroom observations provided here, there were instances of teachers employing safetalk. Two forms of safetalk leading to ritualised learner

participation will be discussed here, namely cued elicitation (Pontefract & Hardman, 2005:90) and repetition. Each is illustrated by means of a representative extract in which such a strategy is clearly employed by the teacher.

7.4.1 *Cued elicitation*

This form of safetalk manifests itself in a particular use of intonation: the teacher raises his/her tone at the end of a word or sentence, and this serves as a prompt for the learners to complete the word or sentence (cf. Arthur, 1996; Hornberger & Chick, 2001). In this dissertation, the symbol [ˆ] is used to signify a rising tone. This symbol is followed by ellipsis (...) to indicate an oral gap that the learners have to fill. The following extract was taken from a RakaiRP-D P3 Social Studies lesson on traditional means of communication. The teacher involved learners in the lesson delivery by using prompts which required them to complete a word or sentence.

Extract 65: *Teacher cues learners' participation*

- ₁T: Is a radio a traditional means of communication class?
₂LS: No it is not.
₃T: **Eeh**, Brenda.
₄Brenda: Clapping.
₅T: Claˆ...
₆LS: Clapping.
₇T: Clapping. I can send my message to you and you receive it. Maybe you are moving and you are there I can't call you I don't want people to know, I just say "Claps". You have received my message. Looking at me means you have received my meˆ...
₈LS: Message.
₉T: My message. My clapping is sending meˆ...
₁₀LS: Message.
₁₁T: Lisa.
₁₂Lisa: Drumming.
₁₃T: Druˆ...
₁₄LS: Drumming.
₁₅T: Druˆ...
₁₆LS: Drumming.
₁₇T: **Eeh**, I told you, last time or long ago before these radios, before newspapers, before television laptops and whatever we had, we were using druˆ....
₁₈LS: Drumming.

OT1.DP3.136-137

As is evident in this extract, teachers make an effort to involve learners in learning through cued elicitation, however the participation on the learners' side is deceiving, because there is little contribution to learning from their side. Pontefract and Hardman (2005) observe that

such a practice is intended to establish shared attention in class. Arthur (1996) argues that the teachers' dominance of classroom talk may be explained by two issues: (i) the unbalanced level of competence in English between learners and teachers – as teachers are more proficient in English than their learners, they tend to dominate the talk, and (ii) drawing from Cleghorn et al. (1989), Arthur explains that this dominance might originate from the traditional obedience of authority.

7.4.2 *Repetition*

Repetition is another form of safetalk used by teachers, often to hide their and the learners' inadequacy in a language. Repetition often occurs when learning and teaching takes place in a language unfamiliar to both the teacher and the learners. Bunyi (2001) and Pontefract and Hardman (2005) report that the justification teachers give for using repetition is that they want what is taught to remain in the minds of learners. When it comes to English, an additional justification often given is that they want to enforce proper pronunciation.

The repetition observed in this study took various forms. On the one hand, teachers required learners to repeat letters, words or sentences and, on the other hand, learners were required to spell words chorally or individually. Choral spelling was sometimes done based on gender. These two forms of repetition are described below.

One of the forms of repetition observed in the government schools of this study was the repetition of letters and syllables. The following extract was taken from a P1 Luganda reading lesson in RakaiRG-A. This being a government school, the learners in this class were in their first year of schooling. (Recall that rural government schools do not have pre-school sections.)

Extract 66: *Repetition and choring in a reading lesson*

1T:	a	11T:	o
2LS:	a	12LS:	o
3T:	a	13T:	o
4LS:	a	14LS:	o
5T:	e	15T:	u
6LS:	e	16LS:	u
7T:	i	17T:	sa
8LS:	i	18LS:	sa
9T:	i	19T:	se
10LS:	i	20LS:	se

21T:	si	LS:	se
22LS:	si	52T:	ka
23T:	so	53LS:	ka
24LS:	so	54T:	seka
25T:	su		laugh
26LS:	su	55LS:	seka
27T:	sa		laugh
28LS:	sa	56T:	sa
29T:	la	57LS:	sa
30LS:	la	58T:	si
31T:	sala	59LS:	si
	cut	60T:	sasi
32LS:	sala		bullet
	cut	61LS:	sasi
33T:	su		bullet
34LS:	su	62T:	Kati mmwe mugenda
35T:	la		okunsomera [Teacher gives
36LS:	la		instructions]
37T:	sula		<i>It is now your turn to read for</i>
	spend the night		<i>me.</i> [Teacher begins to point at
38LS:	sula		sounds and syllables]
	spend the night	63LS:	a, a, a
39T:	So	64T:	Era
40LS:	So		Again.
41T:	na	65LS:	a
42LS:	na	66LS:	e, e
43T:	sona	67T:	Era.
	weave		Again.
44LS:	sona	68LS:	e, i, i
	weave	69T:	Era.
45T:	so		Again.
46LS:	so	70LS:	I, o, o
47T:	ma	71T:	Tugendere kumu
48LS:	ma		<i>Let us go together.</i>
49T:	soma		
	read		
50LS:	soma		
	read		
51T:	se		

OT2.AP1.14-16

In this class, the teacher did not introduce the lesson, but simply titled it on the blackboard as *Reading*. She then wrote letters, syllables, and words on the blackboard as excerpted above. After writing the letters, syllables, and two-syllable words shown in the extract, the learners repeated all that the teacher read out⁸⁹, without any instruction from their teacher to do so.

⁸⁹ Since repetition of sounds, syllables, words, and sentences was led by the teacher without making an effort to guide learners on how to read such words on their own, some learners engaged in such “reading” (which is actually mere repetition) without even looking at the blackboard on which the words to be read were written. There were many lessons in which learners behaved in this manner. Consider, for instance, the Extract B from a P1 Social Studies lesson in RakaiRP-C.

From turn 1 to 16, the teacher and learners repeated in turn the five Luganda vowels. The teacher followed this with syllables, as shown in turns 17 to 30. Starting in turn 31, the teacher began to form words out of syllables, e.g., *sala* (“cut”) (turn 31). For every word to be pronounced, each syllable was first pronounced independently, as in turns 39 to 44, 45 to 50, etc. In turn 62, the teacher asked the learners to take the lead in the reading as she had done in the previous turns. The learners started to pronounce the individual letters in chorus, repeating each letter at least twice as instructed by the teacher in turns 64, 67, and 69. When the teacher realised that not all of the learners were participating, she said, “*Tugendere wamu*” (“Let us all go together”) (see turn 71).

Even though there was a lot of repetition of sounds in this lesson, there was little evidence of learning taking place in this class, as will be explained below. Given the fact that this was a reading lesson, a critical skill⁹⁰ for learners to acquire in their early school years, one would have expected the learners to receive the opportunity to read instead of only repeating what the teacher had said.

Another form of repetition observed in the government schools in this study was the repetition of whole words. In the following extract (67), the same teacher as in Extract 66 is teaching reading in English in RakaiRG-A. As soon as she entered the class, she wrote six words on the blackboard. She called her lesson “*revision of vocabulary*”. After writing these words, she instructed the learners (in turn 1) to repeat after her as she read through the “*vocabulary*” (turns 2 to 11).

Extract B: *Learners “reading” from the blackboard without looking at the blackboard*

- T: **Ate ggwe, osoma totunuddeeyo? Lekera awo, lekera awo. Njagala osome ng’osoma bino ebiri ku lubaawo, wabula tosoma ng’otunudde bbali. Nze ontabula, kati ggwe oyinza otya okusoma ng’oli oti, they protect us.... olubaawo luli wano, ggwe ng’otunudde eri. They protect us, they protect us. Kati oba osoma ki? Eeh? Amaaso go galina kubeera wano. (...)**
What about you? How do you read without looking at the blackboard? Stop, stop. I want you to read what is on the blackboard but not reading while looking to the other side. You really amaze me! How can you read in such a manner, they protect us.... The blackboard is here but you read facing the other side. They protect us, they protect us. What can you claim to be reading in such a manner? Yes? Your eyes should be fixed here (...).

OT2.CP1.24

⁹⁰ Trudell et al. (2012:5) argued that “of all the core competencies recognised to contribute to lifelong learning and sustainable development, none is quite as central as the ability to read and write”. These authors state that teachers must be trained specifically to teach reading and writing along with other language skills, namely speaking and listening.

Extract 67: *Choral reading of vocabulary*

1T:	I'm going to read the vocabulary when you're repeating after me.	34T:	Millet.
2T:	Revision of vocabulary. Repeat. Revision.	35Ls:	Millet.
3Ls:	Revision.	36T:	Millet.
4T:	Revision of vocabulary.	37Ls:	Millet.
5Ls:	Revision of vocabulary.	38T:	Beans.
6T:	Revision.	39Ls:	Beans.
7L:	Revision.	40T:	Beans.
8T:	Of vocabulary.	41Ls:	Beans.
9Ls:	Of vocabulary.	42T:	Beans.
10T:	Revision of vocabulary.	43Ls:	Beans.
11Ls:	Revision of vocabulary.	44T:	Again.
12T:	Potatoes.	45Ls:	Beans.
13Ls:	Potatoes.	46T:	Groundnut.
14T:	Potatoes.	47Ls:	Groundnut.
15Ls:	Potatoes.	48T:	Groundnut.
16T:	Potatoes.	49Ls:	Groundnut.
17Ls:	Potatoes.	50T:	Groundnut.
18T:	Fish.	51Ls:	Groundnut.
19L:	Fish.	52T:	Beans.
20T:	Fish.	53Ls:	Beans.
21Ls:	Fish.	54T:	Beans.
22T:	Potatoes.	55Ls:	Beans.
23L:	Potatoes. [some learners are facing away from the blackboard]	56T:	Potatoes.
24T:	KAMIYATI. [Teacher catches the attention of an inattentive learner by calling out their name.] Fish.	57Ls:	Potatoes.
25Ls:	Fish.	58T:	Potatoes.
26T:	Bananas.	59Ls:	Potatoes.
27Ls:	Bananas.	60T:	Potatoes.
28T:	Bananas.	61Ls:	Potatoes.
29Ls:	Bananas.	62T:	Fish.
30T:	Bananas.	63Ls:	Fish.
31Ls:	Bananas.	64T:	Fish.
32T:	Millet.	65Ls:	Fish.
33L:	Millet.	66T:	Fish.
		67Ls:	Fish.
		68T:	Fish.
		69Ls:	Fish.
		70T:	Again.

OT1.P1.1-7

When the teacher asked the learners to read on their own (as shown in the extract above), they found it difficult to do so, because they had not understood how the teacher had sounded out the letters they saw on the blackboard to form the words which they had just been chanting. The learners' task in this class appeared to be only repeating what the teacher had said; the focus was not on getting learners to understand how to sound out the words. In Extract 68, in order to get the learners to read aloud the words that she pointed to on the blackboard, the same teacher asked "What is this?", and the learners were required to answer the question by uttering "It is (a) ..." and then filling in the appropriate word to form a

sentence. It is at this point that we notice the difficulty learners experienced in reading on their own (see Extract 68).

Extract 68: *Learners demonstrating difficulty in (choral) reading when no model is provided by the teacher*

- 1T: Look here. What is this?
 2Ls: [Learners are silent]
 3T: What is this?
 4Ls: It is a fish.
 5T: No, it is beans.
 6Ls: It is a bean.
 7T: Not “it is a bean”; it is beans.
 8Ls: It is beans.
 9T: It is beans.
 10Ls: It is beans.
 11T: It is beans.
 12Ls: It is beans.
 13T: What is this?
 14Ls: It is fish.
 15T: What is this?
 16Ls: It is fish.
 17T: It is a fish.
 18Ls: It is a fish.
 19T: What is this?
 20Ls: It is a banana.
 21T: It is bananas.
 22Ls: It is bananas.
 23T: It is bananas.
 24Ls: It is a banana.
 25T: It is bananas.
 26Ls: It is bananas / a banana. [Two different answers given here by different learners – MES]
 27T: What is this?
 28Ls: [Learners murmur, appearing not sure of what to say]
 29T: It is po^...
 30Ls: Potato.
 31T: It is potatoes.
 32Ls: It is potatoes.
 33T: It is potatoes.
 34Ls: It is potatoes.
 35T: What is this?

OT1.API.11

In this classroom interaction, turns 2 to 4 clearly show that the learners had not actually learned the words in question. For instance, the teacher pointed to the word *fish*, but the learners read it as “beans”. The learners also pronounced the word *bananas* correctly, but not *potatoes* (see turn 28).⁹¹ The teacher brought the lesson to a close by drawing pictures corresponding to each of the words they had covered. Since the period had already come to

⁹¹ The lack of active involvement in the reading process observed here brings to mind what Marrapodi (2013:13) has described in the study on the use of flashcards. The interaction routines captured here in the Extracts 68 and 69 are also very similar to those documented by Bunyi (2001) and Nyaga (2013) in rural primary schools in Kenya.

an end, she asked the learners to continue with the work after break time (as seen in the following extract). She switched to the children's MT for the first time during this lesson to give this instruction.

Extract 69: *Drawing activity following choral reading*

- T: **Tukomye awo. Tujja kumala kuva mu break mulyoke muwandiike. Olyoke onkubire bulungi ebifaananyi ebyo bulungi mu kitabo kyo.**
We will end here today. You will go for break first and when you return you will write. You will then draw for me those pictures very well in your books.

OT1.API.12

The NCDC (2007:31) points out that the second half of a P1 reading lesson should be dedicated to “pre-writing activities, drawing, labelling and developing handwriting”. Perhaps this teacher was trying to comply with the curriculum guidelines on “drawing” when, in the extract above, she asked the learners to draw the pictures in their books. Marrapodi (2013:8) states that there are five elements of reading, namely “phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency, with the vision of touching each area during reading lessons”. In the lessons extracted above, the teachers focused on letter awareness and vocabulary (using the sight-word approach). Curriculum guidelines stipulate that teachers should introduce at least five words each day. It appears that teachers are under pressure to follow what the curriculum guidelines require and many lack a clear sense of how to handle different elements of reading, not only in MT but also in English. Even if teachers use the sight-word or word-recognition methods, there is no clearly organised, prescribed lexicon from which to draw each day's vocabulary (cf. Marrapodi, 2013). In all writing activities, the learners only copied what the teacher had written on the blackboard. It is thus doubtful whether these learners understood what they had copied into their books, given that they could not read such material independently, as demonstrated in Extract 68 above.

There were also instances of repetition of whole sentences during the classroom observations for this study. In the observed instances, the teacher read sentences and the learners repeated after him/her. The following extract exemplifies this.

Extract 70: *Choral reading of sentences*

- ₁T: Now you repeat it again. Very well in English not in Luganda. Read it again.
₂Ls: Read this story. Yesterday a thief came to our school. He wanted to steal a school radio. He entered the head teachers' office. The prefects saw the thief. They called the matron. The matron shouted. She called the guard. The guard arrested the thief. He took him to the police station. The policemen wanted to punish the thief. They wanted to take him to prison.
₃T: They wanted to take him to prison.
₄Ls: They wanted to take him to prison. The thief cried. He said "I am sorry, please forgive me. I will not steal again". The policemen said "We don't like thieves".
₅T: Others, you are leaving others. Okay you start from here. **Uhm?**
Others, you are leaving others. Okay you start from here. Yes?
₆Ls: They wanted to take him to prison. The thief cried. He said "I am sorry. Please forgive me. I will not steal again".
₇T: Now, **ahaa**, they wanted to take him to prison.
Now, yes, they wanted to take him to prison.
₈Ls: They wanted to take him to prison.
₉T: The thief cried.
₁₀Ls: The thief cried.
₁₁T: The thief cried.
₁₂Ls: The thief cried.
₁₃T: He said.
₁₄Ls: He said.
₁₅T: I am sorry.
₁₆Ls: I am sorry.
₁₇T: Please forgive me.
₁₈Ls: Please forgive me.
₁₉T: I will not steal again.
₂₀Ls: I will not steal again.
₂₁T: The policemen said.
₂₂Ls: The policemen said.
₂₃T: We don't like thieves.
₂₄Ls: We don't like thieves.
₂₅T: It is bad to steal.
₂₆Ls: It is bad to steal.
₂₇T: You should work hard and get money.
₂₈Ls: You should work hard to get money.
₂₉T: **Uhm**, read it again.
Yes, read it again.

OT2.DP2.47

This extract was taken from a P2 English lesson in RakaiRP-D. In this lesson, the learners were required to read a story and later answer questions about it. At one point, they were required to read together as the teacher directed them in turn 1, and at another point the teacher read as the learners repeated after her. In turn 5, the teacher insisted that all the learners must read together in chorus. From line 7 to 27, the teacher read and the learners repeated after her. In turn 29, the learners were required to repeat the reading.

The following extract, from a P2 English reading lesson in RakaiRG-B, also clearly demonstrates the repetition of sentences. This teacher constructed the sentences and had the learners repeat them, although many of the learners had difficulty repeating them.

Extract 71: *Choral repetition of teacher-constructed sentences*

- 1T: I go to church on?
 2NAMUGGA: Sunday.
 3T: You say I go to church on Sunday.
 4NAMUGGA: I go to church on Sunday.
 5T: I go to church on Sunday.
 6NAMUGGA: I go to church on Sunday.
 7T: When do we go to church?
 8Ls: I go to church on Sunday.
 9T: When do you go to church?
 10Ls: I go to church on Sunday.
 11T: I go to church on Sunday.
 12Ls: I go to church on Sunday.
 13T: I go to church on Sunday.
 14Ls: I go to church on Sunday.
 15T: **SSENNABULYA**, when do you go to church? Stand up. I go to church on Sunday.
 16**SSENNABULYA**: I go to church on Sunday.
 17T: I go to church on Sunday.
 18**SSENNABULYA**: I go to church on Sunday.
 19T: **NAMUJU**, when do you go to church?
 20**NAMUJU**: I go...
 21T: Stand up. **Uhm**, when do you go to church?
Stand up. Yes, when do you go to church?
 22**NAMUJU**: I go...
 23T: I go to church on Sunday.
 24**NAMUJU**: I go to church on Sunday.
 25T: I go to church on Sunday.
 26Ls: I go to church on Sunday.
 27T: Ben, when do you go to church?
 28Ben: I go to church on Sunday.
 29T: Stand up, tell us. **Uhm?**
Stand up, tell us. Yes?
 30Ben: I go to church on Sunday.
 31T: **Ahaa**, when do you go to mosque? Mosque.
Yes, when do you go to mosque? Mosque.
 32Ls: Mosque.
 33T: **Ahaa, tugenda kulaba abasiraamu bagenda ddi ku mo^...?**
Yes we are going to see moslems, when do they go to the mo^...
 34Ls: **Ku mosque.**
To the mosque.
 35T: **Ahaa**, Aisha, when do you go to mosque? I go to mosque on? Friday. **Uhm?** I go to mosque on Friday.
Yes, Aisha, when do you go to mosque? I go to mosque on? Friday. Yes? I go to mosque on Friday.
 36Aisha: I go.
 37T: **Iii**, I go to mosque on Friday.
No, I go to mosque on Friday.
 38Aisha: I go mosque on Friday.
 39T: Who can say it well? **Ani ayinza okukyogera obulungi?** Who can say it well? I go to mosque on Friday.

- Who can say it well? Who can say it well? Who can say it well? I go to mosque on Friday.*
- 40Ls: I go to mosque on Friday.
 41T: I go to mosque on Friday.
 42Ls: I go to mosque on Friday.
 43T: Moslems go to mosque on Friday.
 44Ls: [Fail to repeat it.]
 45T: Moslems.
 46Ls: Moslems.
 47T: Go to mosque.
 48Ls: Go to mosque.
 49T: On Friday.
 50Ls: On Friday.
 51T: **Uhm**, you say, I go to mosque on Friday.
Yes, you say, I go to mosque on Friday.
- 52Ls: I go....
 53T: You listen, listen. I go to mosque on Friday. I go to mosque on Friday. **EDIRIISA**, I go to mosque on Friday.
 54**EDIRIISA**: I go to mosque on Friday.
 55T: I go to mosque on Friday.
 56**EDIRIISA**: I go to mosque on Friday.
 57T: **Ahaa**, go back, thank you. Now you are going to draw and name. You are going to draw and...?
Yes, go back, thank you. Now you are going to draw and name. You are going to draw and...?
- 58Ls: Name.

OT1.BP2.112-114

There were also instances in which learners were required to spell words individually or chorally (as opposed to reading them), as illustrated in the next extract.

Extract 72: *Individual and choral spelling of words*

- 1T: **Ahaa**, children can say the word basket.
Yes, children can say the word basket.
- 2Ls: B-a-s-k-e-t, the word is "basket".
 3T: Children can say the word "basket".
 4Ls: B-a-s-k-e-t, the word is basket.
 5T: **MUWONGE** can say the word "necklace".
 6 **MUWONGE**: n-e-c-k-l-a-c-e, the word is "necklace".
 7T: Marvin can say the word "ball".
 8Marvin: B-a-l-l, the word is "ball".
 9T: Mathew can say the word "rope".
 10Mathew: R-o-p-e, the word is "rope".
 11T: Children can say the word "handbag".
 12Ls: H-a-n-d-b-a-g, the word is "handbag".
 13T: Children can spell the word "handbag".
 14Ls: H-a-n-d-b-a-g, the word is "handbag".
 15T: Girls can spell the word "basket".
 16Ls: B-a-s-k-e-t, the word is "basket".
 17T: Children can spell the word "basket".
 18Ls: B-a-s-k-e-t, the word is "basket".
 19T: **ASIMWE** can spell the word "pot". **ASIMWE**, is he present? **ASIMWE** can spell the word "pot".
 20**ASIMWE**: P-o-t, the word is "pot".

OT1.DP1.5-6

Unlike in the other examples given above, this teacher tried to involve the learners as a whole class (turns 2, 4, 12, 14 and 18), as individuals (turns 6, 8, 10 and 20), and based on gender (e.g., girls in turn 15). This mechanism may help to involve all the learners in learning and also to check whether all the learners are actually following.

The prevalence of rote learning, ritualised expressions, and the dominance of teacher talk in classroom interactions found in the current study replicates that reported by Nyaga (2013) and Pontefract and Hardman (2005) in Kenyan primary schools, Chick and Hornberger (2001) and Bunyi (2001) in South African classrooms, Hardman et al. (2008) in Nigerian primary schools, Arthur (1996) in Botswana primary schools, and Chimbutane (2009) in Mozambique primary schools. Such practices have also been reported by Ouane and Glanz (2006), Heugh (2011) and Skutnabb-Kangas (2011). Ouane and Glanz (2010:28) observed that “most African teachers have not received training in language acquisition theory and practice”. This, coupled with a lack of mastery of the language of instruction, results in a serious teaching barrier. The above classroom vignettes are typical of what these two authors describe. It is debatable as to whether children are learning to read by simply repeating words in turns. Hardman et al. (2008) argue that, for teacher in-service training to be effective, teachers must be encouraged to reflect on their beliefs and practices in order to arrive at better alternatives. In this study, teachers were not requested to reflect on their teaching practices, such as repetition and cued elicitations that were illustrated here; however, such reflections could be investigated in future studies.

7.4.3 Nature of questions in a safetalk

As explained above, in a class in which safetalk is employed as a teaching strategy, the teacher does most of the talking and the learners' work is to repeat or complete what the teacher prompts them to. As could be seen from the extracts, the questions that the teacher asked learners required an answer that was limited to a word or two. In the classroom observations considered here, most questions asked by teachers were again yes/no questions (such as to repeat or complete what the teacher prompts them to). As could be seen from the extra chorus answers; there were no in-depth questions directed at the learners to assess their deeper level of understanding of what was being taught (such as questions requiring explanations or descriptions). In addition, perhaps because of a language barrier between the

teacher and the learners, there were no clarification questions from the learners to their teachers (cf. Walsh, 2011). Consider Extract 73 from an English-instructed P4 Mathematics lesson in RakaiRP-D. Here, we can clearly see that the learners' responses were limited to a single word (see turns 2, 4, 6, 8, 12, 14, 16 and 18) although the content of this lesson lent itself to greater learner involvement (for instance, to the teacher asking the learners to suggest the steps needed for doing the calculation).

Extract 73: *Lack of clarification questions asked by teacher*

- ₁T: We are going to multiply two hours twenty five minutes times what^...?
₂Ls: Three.
₃T: Now we are going to multiply. Now when you are multiplying hours and minutes. What are we going to do? We are going to multiply now, three times two. We are going to write here, we begin with that^...?
₄Ls: No.
₅T: What should we begin with? What should we begin with? **Ahaa**, yes girl? *What should we begin with? What should we begin with? Yes, yes girl?*
₆L1: Minutes.
₇T: We are beginning, we are going to multiply to begin with what^...?
₈Ls: Minutes.
₉T: Give that girl flowers.⁹²
₁₀Ls: Shhhhhhh.
₁₁T: Good. Now, **ahaa**, we are going to begin to multiply with what^...? *Good. Now, yes, we are going to begin to multiply with what^...?*
₁₂Ls: Minutes.
₁₃T: Now we have twenty five minutes, we are going to multiply times what^...?
₁₄Ls: Three.
₁₅T: So now we multiply twenty five times what^...?
₁₆Ls: Three.
₁₇T: Now I am going to give you in two ways. Not so?
₁₈Ls: Yes.

OT1.DP4.90

It can be argued that the reason why teachers maintained safetalk, and particularly the use of yes/no questions, was because of their and their learners' language inadequacies. As previously indicated, some teachers avoided giving explanations in English which could be why they avoided asking the learners explanatory questions, as the learners' answers might in turn necessitate more explanations from the teachers (cf. Brock-Utne, 2011). Therefore, in order for teachers to avoid "losing face" (see Hornberger & Chick, 2001; Bunyi, 2001; Chimbutane, 2011), they stick to questions that play it safe (and they employ safetalk). In this regard, Kyeyune (2003) observed that such classroom environments are the source of learners' inadequacy in English, because they are not exposed to tasks that require them to reason, give explanations, account for something, etc. Now consider Extract 74 from a P1

⁹² This is used as an alternative to "Applaud that girl". See also footnote 112 for "...give him soda".

lesson on diseases given in RakaiRG-B. Here, the teacher made minimal use of safetalk and asked wh-questions (“what” and “why”) to which the learners keenly and seemingly effortlessly responded with correct answers, possibly because on both counts the LoLT was also the MT of the teacher and the majority of the learners. Also note that the learners in this classroom share intimately about their lives (turns 7-13), something that would not be possible if the LoLT was unfamiliar to them.

Extract 74: *Teacher making minimal use of safetalk, asking open-ended questions*

- 3T: **Kale, muli balamu mwenna?**
Are you all alright?
- 4LS: **Yee.**
Yes.
- 5T: **Mwazze muli balamu mwenna olwaleero?**
Are all alright today?
- 6LS: **Yee.**
Yes.
- 7T: **Ani yeewuliramu obubi? Ani mulwadde? Ani yeewulira nga teyeewulira bulungi? Nze, nze ndi omu ku bateewulira bulungi. Era olwaleero singa tekibadde ki sandizze. Mpulira ndi mulwaddelwadde. Ani mulwaddelwadde omulala? Oli mulwaddelwadde naye nga toli mulwadde nnyo? Kiki ekikuluma? Omutwe gumulumirira ono. Uhm? NAKKAZI kiki ekikuluma?**
Who is not feeling well? Who is sick? Who is not feeling well? I am one of those who is not feeling well. I wouldn't even have come today. I feel sickly. Who else is sickly? You might not be feeling well but not so sick. What are you suffering from? This one has a headache. NAKKAZI, what are you suffering from?
- 8NAKKAZI: **Olubuto.**
Stomach-ache.
- 9T: **Olubuto lwabadde ki? Uhm, SSEKIMPI wamma ggwe ate kiki? Ssenyiga amuluma ono. Jane kiki ekikuluma? Eeh? Ani mulwadde omulala?**
What happened to the stomach? Yes, SSEKIMPI, what is wrong with you? SSEKIMPI has a cold, what about you Jane? Yes? Who else is sick?
- 10Teddy: **Musujja.**
Malaria.
- 11T: **Teddy omusujja gumuli bubi. Akasujja kaamukyalidde.**
Teddy has malaria. She caught malaria.
- 12LS: [Learners laugh]
- 13T: **Wamma NAKAZIBWE ggwe kiki?**
My friend NAKAZIBWE, what is the problem?
- 14NAKAZIBWE: **Lubuto.**
Stomach-ache.
- 15T: **Akabuto? Kaabadde ki naye olowooza? Walidde biki? Eeh? Oba yalidde biki?**
Stomach? What do you think happened to the stomach? What did you eat? Yes? I wonder what she ate!
- 16LS: **Emmere/ebyennyanja/ebinyeebwa.**
Food/fish/groundnuts.
- 17T: **Ebyennnyanja?**
Fish?
- 18LS: **Ebinyeebwa.**
Groundnuts.
- 19T: **Ebyennyanja ngyennyanjaa?**
Where did she get fish?
- 20LS: **Binyeebwa.**

- Groundnuts**
- 21T: Ebyennyanja birwaza olubuto?
Does fish cause stomachaches?
- 22LS: Yee.
Yes.
- 23T: Iiii!
Sure?
- 24T: Ate owish cause stomachaches?ppened to the stomach? What did yo
What about one with malaria?
- 25LS: Omusana.
Sunshine.
- 26T: Eee?
Yes?
- 27LS: Omusana.
Sunshine.
- 28T: Akasana?
Sunshine?
- 29LS: Yee.
Yes.
- 30T: Ke mutambulamu nga mujja ku ssomero?
That in which you walk under while coming to school?
- 31LS: Yee.
Yes.
- 32T: Kabalwaza?
Does it cause you to fall sick?
- 33LS: Yee.
Yes.
- 34T: Eeh? Kiki ekirala ekikulwaza ngile coming to scho
Yes? What else causes you to be sick apart from sunshine?
- 35LS: Enkuba.
Rain.
- 36T: Enkuba?
Rain?
- 37LS: Yee.
Yes.
- 38T: Mmwe muzannyiramu. Si bwe guli? Enkuba mmwe mukola ki?
It is you who play in it. Not so? It is you who do what?
- 39LS: Tugizannyiramu.
Play in the rain.
- 40T: Kiki ekirala ekitera okutulwaza abalwalalwala? Wamma Grace.
What else causes us sickness for those of you who fall sick regularly? My friend Grace?
- 41Grace: Ensiri.
Mosquitos.
- 42T: Iii, ensiri esobola okukuluma? Kiki ekitera okulwaza abalwala?
Can a mosquito bite you? What usually causes sickness for those who fall sick?
- 43L1: Ssennyiga.
Colds.
- 44T: Ssennyiga? Ate ye ava ku ki?
Colds? What causes colds?
- 45L2: Mu nfuufu.
Playing with dust.
- 46T: Lwaki muba mugizannyiramu? Mulwooza y'ejja awo n'ebeefuumulirako?
Eeh? Enfuufu eyo etulwaza ki?
Why would you play with it? Does it come by itself to you? Yes? What does that dust cause?
- 47LS: Ssennyiga.
Colds.

- 48T: Naye ng'olwooza enfuufu eyo nga tewali agitaddemu bulwade bulwaza ssennyiga esobola okukukwasa ssennyiga?
Do you think if that dust has not got into contact with a person who has a sickness can cause you a cold?
- 49LS: Yee.
Yes.
- 50T: Enfuufu bagiteekamu obulwadde oba tebagiteekamu?
Can dust be a disease carrier or not?
- 51LS: Bagiteekamu.
They put it (sickness) in.
- 52T: Ani abuteekamu?
From whom can dust get sickness?
- 53LS: Tewali.
No one.
- 54T: Tewali. Ebeera bubeezi awo n'eraba ng'egenda kulwaza ssennyiga? Eeh? NABABI, wamma ggwe ogamba otya? Baani abatera okulumwa embuto? Ate okubeera nga lukuluma, n'ogendako eyo emmanju eyo. Kiki ekiba kikuleetedde ekyo olowooza? Uhm?
No one. Does it just cause colds to anyone? Yes? NABABI, what do you have to say? Who usually has stomachaches? What about having a stomachache and you visit the toilet? What do you think brings about that? Yes?
- 55L1: Kulyaguzibwa.
Eat whatever we find.
- 56T: Kulyaguzibwa? Kituufu nnyo. Kukola ki?
Eating whatever we find? That is very true. Doing what?
- 57LS: Kulyaguzibwa.
Eating whatever we find.
- 58T: Kulyaguzibwa. Mulyaguzibwa ebintu ebiki?
Eating whatever you find. You eat many things which are...
- 59LS: Ebicaafu.
Dirty.
- 60T: Ebiki?
Things which are...
- 61LS: Ebicaafu.
Dirty.
- 62T: Ebicaafu. Naye ggwe wano olowooza nti ekicaafu ekyo okukiryaguzibwako, ojja kulonda wali omuyembe. Bw'oba onaalya omuyembe, n'ogulya nga tokoze ki?
Dirty. Many of you think you just pick a mango from anywhere and eat it. If you eat a mango without doing what...
- 63LS: Togwozezza.
Washing it.
- 64T: Nga togwozezza olina okulumwa ki?
If you do not wash it, you have to experience what?
- 65LS: Olubuto.
Stomachaches.
- 66T: Olubuto. Naye ggwe olowooza omuyembe ogwo ogwozaako otya?
Stomachaches. How do you think you should wash that mango?
- 67LS: Mazzi.
With water.
- 68T: Oba ogwozaako kiki?
What do you wash from that mango?
- 69LS: Bucaafu.
Dirt.
- 70T: Ekicaafu ekyo kiba kizze kitya ku muyembe waggulu?
Where does the dirt come to get to the mango yet it is up the mango tree?
- 71L1: [Inaudible]
- 72T: Gugwa wansi ne gukola ki? Gugwa wansi nga wano mu ttaka?
It falls down and does what? Does it fall down like here on the floor?
- 73LS: Yee.

- 74T: *Yes.*
Eeh?
Yes?
- 75Ls: *Yee.*
Yes.
- 76T: *Wamma guyinza okugwa awabi. Si buli ekigwa wansi nti buli we kigudde wabeera waki?*
Yes, it can fall in a dirty place. It is not the case that whatever falls on the ground will fall^...
- 77Ls: *Wayonjo.*
On a clean floor.
- 78T: *Kiyinza okugwa ewaki?*
It might fall in a dirty place.
- 79Ls: *Ewabi.*
Dirty place.
- 80T: *Kiyinza okugwa ewabi. Kaakati tulina endwadde ezo ze mulwala. Waliwo ebizikola ki? Ebizireeta. Sio muyembe ogwo gw'ogenda okuggya wansi ogulye gwe guleese obuki?*
It might fall in a dirty place. We have diseases which usually attack you. There are things that do what? That spread them. It is not the mango that we pick on the ground that has caused the^....
- 81Ls & T: *Obulwadde.*
The disease.
- 82T: *Gye mwenjeererayenjeerera eyo ne mulonda emicungwa wuuyo muli mu JAMBULA, bigudde wansi byagudde ne Kenny wali wa bayoononye. Eeh? Nga mulya buli. Olwaleero tugenda kulaba, ebiwuka ebisaasaanya endwa...?*
Where you go, from one place to another, picking oranges, JAMBULA, having fallen in such places where Kenny might have defecated. Yes? You just eat. You just eat. Today, we are going to look at vectors which spread dis^...
- 83Ls: *Endwadde.*
Diseases.

OT2.BP3.200-207

In conclusion, safetalk leads to limited learner participation and to learner participation that is not meaningful or conducive to learning taking place. The types of questions elicited during safetalk require a yes/no- or one- or two-word answer from the learner, often provided in a chorus. This is a language-related teaching practice commonly employed by the teachers who participated in this study.

7.4.4 Educational implications of safetalk and repetition

In discussing the implications of safetalk, I make reference to Piper's (2010:7) study. This author reports on Early Grade Reading Assessment involving letter naming fluency, letter-sound fluency, syllable reading fluency, phonological awareness, oral reading, familiar word fluency, connected text oral reading fluency, and reading comprehension in connected text. Piper reports that children in the central region (of Uganda) are quicker in identifying sounds in their MT than in English. When placed in the international context, the level of

performance of learners in Uganda is below regional (East Africa) and international levels (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2014). Comprehension levels for these children are reported to be close to zero in English. The findings in the current study indicate that the organisation of the classroom discourse in both private and government schools is mostly teacher-centred. In addition, the methods of teaching used by teachers are contradictory to the NCDC's proposed teaching methodology of learner-centred approaches (cf. Altinyelken, 2010). The NCDC suggests that the thematic curriculum is child-centred by nature and that it would be even more accessible to learners when presented in MTs. While learners have been reported here to be more participatory in MT-as-a-subject lessons and in lessons taught in MTs, the greatest part of the lessons was dominated by teachers, as exhibited by the discourse turns in the analysed classroom vignettes.

The challenge that lies ahead is for teachers to be retrained in child-centred approaches, and to limit use of the chalk-and-talk and rote-learning methods. There is a body of scholarship which argues that the move for classroom interaction should be towards a social-dialogic arrangement (Pontefract & Hardman, 2005). When the talking and learning is balanced between the teacher and the learners, the latter have more opportunities to participate, contribute to learning, and share their own experiences. By so doing, their linguistic abilities and cognitive skills grow.

However, as for the arrangement of teaching and learning exemplified here, very limited learning appeared to be taking place. It appeared that learners "read" and wrote without understanding what they were taught. Walsh (2011:37) has observed that question asking is "one of the most important strategies used in the classroom to elicit responses from learners. It is also, arguably, one of the most difficult skills to master, even for the most experienced teacher". Walsh (2011:44) furthermore states that "if learners are not engaged in the discourse of participating actively, they have little opportunity to try out (and later learn) new language, test their own hypothesis or develop strategies for dealing with unknown language".

7.5 The news period as an educational language learning opportunity: a neglected resource in Ugandan schools?

In the curriculum guidelines, the NCDC (2006b, 2008) discusses the news period as one of the activities and approaches to language and literacy development of learners.⁹³ The NCDC (2006b:11) suggests that this period should be the first period of each day “since it is designed to draw on children’s immediate out-of-school experiences”. Evidence provided by Manyak (2008), as described in section 2.6.2, indicates that the news period can not only be an exciting activity but also a method through which learners playfully develop two languages simultaneously (MT and English, in Uganda’s case). In this section, I consider the employment of the news period by participating teachers in order to establish whether one of their language-related strategies to facilitate transition from MT to English as LoLT includes optimal use of this NCDC-prescribed period. I consider first how consistent teachers’ practices are with the curriculum stipulations, and second the educational implications of the current use of the news period.

7.5.1 How consistent are teachers’ practices with curriculum stipulations?

Despite the fact that curriculum guidelines include that news as a learning method should be used daily by teachers, it was found in this study that teachers did not only neglect this resource, but also held different interpretations of it. In what follows, I report on interviews with teachers on the news period.

⁹³ The NCDC also suggests that teachers should use short dialogues so that learners can speak to one another in order to comprehend and contextualise what they have learnt during specifically the English periods. This strategy was not observed in any class, nor were other teaching methods and strategies, such as games, role-play, acting and speech exercises, teaching rhymes, listening to children reading, doing shared (or dialogical) reading observed. Storytelling was disregarded by teachers in specifically English literacy acquisition. Scholars like Heugh (2011b), Bloch (2000), Peck (1989), Craig, Hull, Haggart and Crowder (2001), Miller and Pennycuff (2008), and Phillips (1999) explore the invaluable contribution of storytelling in early literacy development. Bloch (2000:26) states that “there is recognition of the importance of stories, but little time for them in many early childhood classrooms”. Bloch (2000:28), in reference to Wells (1987), emphasises that “of all the activities which contribute towards becoming literate, hearing stories is the most crucial to later educational success”. Storytelling has also been shown to promote reading comprehension and writing (Craig et al., 2001; Miller and Pennycuff, 2008), and enhances expressive and receptive language development (Peck, 1989). Bloch (2000) explains that although teachers recognise that stories would help learners, they regard them as extra work because they are under pressure to keep up with the syllabus. Recall that the thematic curriculum has been evaluated by teachers as being overloaded. Teachers in government schools, especially those in the lower classes (P1 to P3), said that they did all they could to compensate for the time that their learners “lost” by not attending pre-school. Even though storytelling has been present in many African contexts, very few stories find their way into the teaching and learning environment in Uganda. (See, however, The African Storybook Project, a project introducing learners to reading and writing through storybooks: <http://www.africanstorybookproject.pwias.ubc.ca>).

The NCDC suggests that the news period should be allocated at least three slots on the school timetable throughout the week (see section 6.6.2 for a sample school timetable). This could be an indication that the news period is seen as distinct from other thematic areas. However, as will be shown in Extract 75, the teachers had different (and varied) views of what a news lesson should comprise of. Some teachers believed that the content to be learnt in a day should be given to the learners in the form of news, so that *news* does not mean “newsworthy event that occurred since we last met” but rather “a personalised discussion on a topic pertaining to the theme from the thematic curriculum currently being covered in lessons”. (An example of such news period is given in Extract 76, where the P1 teacher in RakaiRG-B first models the kind of news she is looking for before giving individual learners an opportunity to share their news in a similar fashion.) Other teachers in RakaiRG-A (see turns 17 and 19 in Extract 75) were not sure whether news should be limited to a topic pertaining to the theme of the day.

Extract 75: *Teachers’ opinions about “news” as a classroom period*

- 1T2:** Science n’ajja nga mawulire ne bamwogerako, Science n’ayita nga bamwogeddeko nga mawulire. Ne mu mawulire ng’agamba nti era bwe nabadde nzija olwaleero...
Science is looked at as news, the science lesson comes to the end when it is been looked at as news. Even in the news lesson they say, when I was coming here today...
- 2T1:** [Laughs.]
- 3MS:** **Iii, naye ate nze amawulire nga nkifuna bulala?! Nze mbadde ndowooza nti lesson, uhm, kati nga mmwe muno bwe mulina abayizi abadday ogenda kumbuuza...**
Incredible, I have a different picture of what the news lesson is! I thought that the news lesson, for instance due to the fact that you have day school learners you would ask me...
- 4T1:** **Biki ebyabadde eyo?**
What happened where you went?
- 5MS:** **Bye nalabye okuva wano eggulo bwe navudde ku ssomero ne nzirayo eka ne mu kujja kwange okutuuka ku ssomero nkutegeeze, essaawa ezo ze sibadde ku ssomero, biki bye ndabye. Kati ne tugenda nga tuyitamu ebyokuyiga; nze bwe mbadde ndowooza.**
What I saw when I left school yesterday including my way to school, so I would tell you; for the hours I was not in school, what did I really see. So we would draw lessons from my sharing; that is what I know about a news lesson.
- 6T3:** **Bwe kyali naye kati byakyuka. Amawulire gajjira era ku mulamwa.**
That is how it was but now things changed. News has to come in line with the theme.
- 7T1:** **Ku mulamwa bateekawo theme yaabwe nti kati mbeera ya budde.**
On the theme they bring up their topic, say weather conditions.
- 8MS:** **Eeh?**
Oh?
- 9T1:** **Kati ku mbeera y’obudde abaana ne balowooza biki. So singa bakireka ne bakireeta nga subject ne bagamba kati embeera y’obudde mu ssomo bwe liti...**
So on the theme learners begin to think of many things. But if such could be introduced as a subject for instance weather conditions in such a subject...
- 10MS:** **Eeh, ekyo nga kizibuzibu. Kaakati olwo ka ngeze nga bwe tubadde tuyiga leero ku njoka, ng’omubuuza akubuulire ky’amanyi ku njoka nga ge mawulire?**
Oh, that is difficult. Let me refer to today’s lesson about worms, would you then ask a learner to tell you what they know about worms – and that will be news?
- 11T1:** **Kati bali be balina obukugu engeri gye bakiggyayo.**

- 12T3: *It is those teachers that know how they bring it out.*
 Ffe? Kati nze nsooka okubawa ku mawulire ku kintu ekyo nga mmaze okubawa omulamwa ku kwe tugenda okuweera amawulire.
Do you mean us? It is me who has to start giving them news about a subject. I do this after giving them a theme onto which we are going to share news.
- 13MS: Kirabika amawulire sikitegeera.
It could be that I don't know what news is.
- 14T1: Kati ka tugeze, ggwe MS N tugenda kusoma ku njoka oba ku biwuka ebiyingira mu mibiri gyaffe. Kati gwe mulamwa. Eeh, anti tugenda kusoma ku biwuka ebiyingira mu mibiri gyaffe ne gubikosa, omuli ezo enjoka n'ebika byazo nga bwe bijja okuba. Kati kitegeeza ng'obagamba mumbuulireko ku...?
Let's give an example, MS N, we are going to learn about worms, or about parasites that attack our bodies. That is our theme. Yes, we are going to study about the parasites that attack and affect our bodies including worms and their types. Does that mean you ask them to tell you about...?
- 16T3: *Aha, era tubanga kumpi abasomera ddala.*
Yes, it appears as if we are engaged in actual learning.
- 17T2: Kati ekitegeeza mu mawulire go g'ogenda okuwa togenda wabweru wa njoka?
Does that mean in the news that you will share, you don't go outside worms?
- 18T3: Oyogera ku ebyo.
You only talk about that.
- 19T2: Oyogera ku ebyo?
You only talk about that?
- 20MS: Naye ago mawulire?
But is that news?
- 21T2 & T3: [Laugh]
- 22MS: Eeh, kwe kugamba amawulire, concept y'amawulire si y'eyo ffe eya bulijjo ntudde ku ttivi kulaba....
Eh, that means the concept of everyday news for instance sitting in front of a television and watch...
- 23T3: Eyaffe eyo ggwe oli ku nkadde.
The concept of news you have is an old one.

IT1.AP1.123-124

Extract 76: *A teacher modelling a news period*

- 1T: Mutuuleko wansi. Obudde bwakutuwa ku maki^...?
Sit down. This is the time to give us what^...
- 2LS: Ku mawulire.
News.
- 3T: Mmwe munnyimbide n'akayimba nti mugaggya eyo mu byalo byammwe, mugalina mangi nnyo. si bwe kiri?
It is you who sung a song that you get the news from your villages, you have too much of it, not so?
- 4LS: Yee.
Yes.
- 5T: Mangi nnyo ngalaba. Kaakati nange ngenda kusooka mbawe amawulire gange. Olwaleero tugenda kuwa amawulire agakwata ku mmere esinga okutuwoomera. Buli muntu emmere esiga okukola ki?
Yes you have a lot of it. So I am going to give you my news first. Today, we are going to give news about our best dishes. Everyone your best what^...
- 6LS: Okumuwoomera.
Our best dishes.
- 7T: Ate bw'omala okugituwa ng'otubuulira n'omugaso gw'emmere eyo ekuwoomera bw'etyo mu mubiri gwo. Mutegedde olwaleero amawulire ge tugenda okuwa?
After giving it to us you will also give us the value of that food in your body. Have you understood the kind of news we are going to share today?
- 8LS: Yee.

- 9T: **Yes.**
Emmere esinga okukola ki?
The that is what...
- 10LS: **Okutuwoomera.**
Our best food.
- 11T: **Bw'omala okutubuulira emmere eyo okuwoomera ng'otubuulira n'omugaso gw'emmere eriwa? Eyo. KATEREGGA, vvaayo eyo kale. (...) Amawulire amawulire.**
After telling us that food, then you tell us the value of which food? That food. KATEREGGA, get away from there. (...) (...) News, news.
- 12LS: **Munnaffe tubuulire amawulire.**
Our friend, give us the news.
- 13T: **Bannange, nze bwe mba nakyadde ewantu, oba nga ndi ewaka ewange, kati mmwe muli wammwe ewabeera maama n'ani?**
Friends, if I go visiting anywhere, or if I am at my own home, for your case you stay at home with your mother and...
- 14LS: **Ne taata.**
And father.
- 15T: **Ne taata. Mba njagala nnyo bwe ntuukayo ne balya akaceere. Ne balya akaki?**
And father. I want to get to that place and eat rice. And they eat what...
- 16LS: **Akaceere.**
Rice.
- 17T: **Bannange kampoomera! Ennyama, ebijanjaalo kyokka n'akawunga n'akaki?**
I really like rice! Meat, beans and maize meal and what...
- 18LS: **N'akawunga.**
Maize meal.
- 19T: **Kyokka bw'emala okuwooma emmere eyo ennyamba okumpa amaki? Amaanyi. Ne nnyamba okuzimba omubiri gwange ne guba nga nkula nga ndi wa maanyi eeh? Ago nange ge mawulire gange.**
But after enjoying that food, it helps me to get what? Energy. It helps me to build my body so that I grow energetic. Yes? That is my news.
- 20LS: [Learners thank teacher in a song]: **Weebale nnyo, weebale nnyo, kale n'olulala okolanga bw'otyo.**
[Learners thank teacher in a song]: *Thank you very much, thank you very much, do the same another day.*

IT1.BP1.38-40

There were also teachers who did not want to engage in the news period.⁹⁴ The reasons teachers gave for their resistance to the news period included that it wasted time that could have been spent on “real” lesson content, and that it added unnecessarily to teachers’ already too heavy workload⁹⁵. There was no mention during interviews of the news period being an opportunity for language development or for increasing proficiency in the MT and/or L2. The next extract is from an interview with a P3 teacher in RakaiRG-B about the news period, and her views are representative of those of the other participating teachers.

⁹⁴ During the time I spent at the schools, I observed only two news lessons. Both of these were conducted by the teachers at my request so that I may observe these lessons in order to ascertain what takes place in a news period and what types of language are used during this period by the teachers and the learners. Given that only two lessons were observed, generalisations about the latter cannot be made.

⁹⁵ Recall that a sample timetable in RakaiRG-A (see Figures 3A&B in section 6.6.2) appeared “deceiving” to an outsider as, even though news is officially allocated a slot on the timetable, the news periods were not carried out (only upon my request; see footnote 94). Instead, teachers used these allocated time slots to focus on other examined content, as was the case with MT lessons.

Extract 77: *Teacher's views about the news period*

- 1MS:** Ok, nandyagadde nnyo okulaba engeri gy'osomesaamu news period eyo. Oba after lunch obadde oagenda kusomesa ki? Nandyagadde nnyo okulaba engeri gy'osomesaamu, kubanga ndabyeko mu P1. Oba mu P3 wo gaba galya?
I would very much want to see how you teach the news period. I wonder what you were going to teach after lunch. I would very much want to see how you handle that, I have already seen it in P1; I wonder how this looks like in P3.
- 2T:** Amawulire, kale bw'oba okyagadde, nsobola okukikola lesson eyo ne bagisomako naye nga tetutera nnyo kugisoma olw'ensonga...
News? Yes, if you want it. If you want it I would organise a lesson but we do not usually have it because...
- 3MS:** Uhm.
Yes.
- 4T:** Engeri gye ndimu nzekka, subjects ezo ezisinga, ntera okuzifisa.
Because I am alone in class, I leave out most subjects.
- 5MS:** Kubanga ebintu bingi?
Because the load is too much?
- 6T:** Ahaa, ebintu bingi, era nze ebiseera ebisinga, ntera okusoma writing, n'eyo okusoma n'okuwandika bye nsinga okuteekako amaanyi. Olumu ne tugendako ne mu P.E kale. Naye ebyo mbu olulimi olwogere, oyo literature, olwo olulimi olwogere, kale tutera kusomeramu ngero. Nazo ezo mu butuufu nnyinza okukugamba nti mu wiiki nnyinza okukikolamu omulundi gumu kubanga, ebyo bitera okujja mu paper, abaana bababuuza engero ensonge ezo. Kati ne ndaba engero eziri mu theme eyo gye tuba tukoze ki? Ze tuba tusomyeko. Ne nzibasomesa. Ne mbigattikana byonna oba bibadde mu periods ssatu, ne mbigatta wamu ne mmanya nti kasita bano bakoze ki? Babifunye.
Yes, the load is too much. For me most of the time I teach reading and writing, that is where I put most of the effort. At times we go into P.E. But such things like oral literature, literature; for oral literature we sometimes learn it through proverbs. But even for that, I could say that I do that once a week because such usually comes in papers; learners are sometimes asked about those proverbs. So I look up proverbs related to the theme that we would have looked at; then I give them to learners. I combine them like that, whether it is content for three periods, I just combine them all at once and then I know that that has been done.
- 7MS:** Uhm.
Yes.
- 8T:** Naye nga news tetutera, ekyo sija kukulimba.
But for the news, we do not usually do it, I will not lie to you.

IT1.BP3.169

Another indication that the NCDC guidelines were not followed was the scheduling of the news period. The NCDC states that the news period should be the first period of every school day. An investigation of school timetables revealed that this is not the case. See, for example, Figures 3A and 3B in section 6.6.2, in which news was given the first slot in P1 on two days of the week, and occurred later in the day in P2 and P3. Normally, if learners are not given the chance to share their news early on in the school day, the activities they engage in at school could cause them to forget their out-of-school experiences (cf. NCDC, 2006b; Manyak, 2004, 2006, 2008), leading to less participation in this period.

In summary, the news period was suggested by the NCDC as a teaching strategy for P1 to P3 children, but teachers had mixed feelings and different understandings about it. In addition, although literature indicates that news is a learning strategy that can aid in literacy development by, for example, developing learners' vocabulary, the teachers interviewed in this study thought that the news period was not only a method for subject content delivery but also a waste of their teaching time.

7.5.2 Educational implications of the news period

The voluntary omission of the news lesson and/or the misapplication of it, as discussed above, has educational implications for learners in Uganda. Particularly in the case of rural learners who have limited or no out-of-class exposure to English as well as limited or no out-of-class opportunities to speak English, the news period could be a helpful resource to develop oral and written competencies, not only in English but also in learners' MTs (cf. Cummins, 2007; Manyak, 2004, 2008).

7.6 Chapter conclusion

The evidence presented here demonstrates that there is a huge gap between *de jure* and *de facto* language-in-education policy. The data discussed has also revealed that teachers can enact their own policies (Johnson, 2009): see for instance that even as policy guidelines discourage the use of the MT in English lessons and in classes after transition, teachers employed the MT to facilitate the teaching and learning process. We have also seen that teachers who refrained from using MTs in English-instructed lessons had very limited learner participation. It is argued here that it is the appropriation of teacher training to practical classroom language demands, and the matching of teacher training to language policy stipulations that will see improvement in literacy acquisition and meaningful learning among rural children in Uganda.

Chapter 8

CHALLENGES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MT CURRICULUM AND SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONING TO ENGLISH AS LoLT

8.1 Introduction

In Chapter 6, I discussed some of the challenges that the teachers reported they and their learners experience with the MT curriculum and the transitioning from MT as LoLT to English as LoLT. In this chapter, I provide a more comprehensive list of challenges; some of these were also reported by these teachers, but others were identified by me during classroom observations. These challenges include those specific to MT education as well as those that would be a challenge regardless of the curriculum followed and the language-in-education policy implemented.

MT education in African communities has been observed to experience challenges not only at the design stage but also at the implementation stage. Some of the challenges include resistance from parents, lack of trained teachers, inadequate learning materials, inadequate time allocated to the teaching of the MT, and the ideological stance towards English (Bangbose, 1991, 2004; Dutcher, 2003; Glanz, 2013; Heugh et al., 2007; Okonkwo, 1983; Stroud, 2001, 2002). Scholars like Kaplan and Baldauf (1997:127-139, 2003:217-220) have pointed out that once a language-in-education policy has been formulated, there are certain issues which must be worked on in order for the implementation of the policy to be successful. These authors have termed these issues “the seven areas of policy development for language-in-education policy implementation”, and include curriculum policy, access policy, personnel policy, materials and methods policy, community policy, resourcing policy, and evaluation policy. A close reading of the challenges of MT education in Uganda presented here reflects that these seven policy areas have not been given due attention by the government at the time of introducing MT education in Uganda. In the next sections, I relate the challenges of MT education identified in this study to Kaplan and Baldauf’s seven areas of language-in-education policy implementation.

8.2 *Curriculum-related challenges*

In section 6.3.3, I discussed teachers' opinions on the thematic curriculum. The teachers viewed this curriculum as “shallow” (OT5.AP3.56), and were unsure of whether or not to expand the content thereof (IT1.BP3.170-171). They thought that the curriculum was incomprehensive in that core English language content was excluded (OT5.AP3.56), and that it did not prepare learners well for the content-based curriculum followed from P4 onwards. Teachers in the private schools gave the latter as a reason for not teaching the thematic curriculum.

Because the thematic curriculum and MT education were implemented at the same time, the two are often seen as synonymous; hence, MT education is criticised even when the criticism is actually levelled at the thematic curriculum (e.g., Acemah, March 2, 2014; Ahimbisibwe, 2014; Ssenkibirwa & Ahimbisibwe, 2014). In order to show how the public synonymises MT education and the thematic curriculum, I quote from a news article on the website of a local newspaper, in which, Acemah (March 2, 2014) inquires whether “[the – MES] thematic curriculum [is – MES] a panacea or a gimmick to hoodwink the wananchi [...]”⁹⁶. He says,

With regard to thematic curriculum, what has intrigued me is why the political elite and policy makers in Uganda have not set a good example by sending their children to the UPE [Universal Primary Education – MES] schools where this “new scientific idea” [referring to instruction through MT – MES] is being implemented! If it is true that children who learn in vernacular do wonders, how come none of the top schools in Kampala and elsewhere in central and western Uganda are using thematic curriculum? They all use English from kindergarten up to S6.

In sum, the poor sensitisation towards the value of MT education versus an English-only medium (foreign language), and the failure to monitor the implementation of curriculum policy have encouraged two “warring” curricula: private schools still teach the pre-2006 curriculum while rural government schools teach the thematic curriculum.

8.3 *Access-related challenges*

Early Childhood Development appears to be one of the challenges facing MT education in Uganda. The findings in this study reveal that rural private schools have nursery schools whereas government schools in the same areas do not. In fact, pre-primary schooling is

⁹⁶ *Wananchi* is a Kiswahili word for “citizens”.

compulsory in private schools while it is not available in government schools. As there is no language policy in Uganda to guide those individuals who open up nursery schools, learning in these schools is conducted in English. Indeed, the primary reason why parents send their children to nursery school is because they want them to learn English as early and as fast as possible. Gardner (2012:251) explains that such forces “have led to an unprecedented increase in young learners of and in English in mainstream school systems, alongside a flourishing industry of private kindergartens and private cram schools”. Consequently, at the end of the two or three years that children spend in a pre-primary school, they are expected to have picked up a certain amount of communicative English as well as some knowledge of mathematics, social studies, and science. For children to join private schools (in P1), they must pass an interview, conducted in English, to prove that they are “fit” to join that primary school.

A very different scenario presents itself in government schools. Learners join P1 in rural government schools at the age of 5 or 6, not having had any previous educational training. Teachers in the government schools in this study recounted that they struggle to impart content that should have been taught in nursery school⁹⁷, and at the same time start children off with the primary curriculum content. The public, however, expects learners in P1 in government schools to be at the same competence level (in terms of English proficiency and content subject knowledge) as those in private schools. The teachers contended that this is not the case at the beginning of P1, and it is very difficult (or even impossible) to see to it that this is the case at the end of P1. Recall that national assessments indicate that learners in private schools fare better than those in government schools; in this regard, the public generally believes that teachers from government schools do not do their work well. The challenge becomes worse when the public considers learners’ ability to speak English. As discussed in Chapter 6, learners in private schools have better communicative English than learners in rural government schools. Consequently, those parents who can afford to do so move their children to private schools (in the central region of Uganda, at least), which parents believed do more teaching than government schools.

⁹⁷ Age of school entry is a contentious issue in the literature but, given the scope of the study, this is not discussed here (see, e.g., Almon, 2013).

The following extract is part of an interview I had with a P5 teacher in RakaiRG-B. The teacher elaborated on how the lack of pre-schools in rural government schools is a distractor and a challenge to MT education and the transition to English in Uganda.

Extract 78: *The effect of having pre-primary education in some schools and not in others*

- ¹T: Challenge w'ejjira, kwe kuba nti wamma private schools ate ekitali wano, bo abaana bali basomera emyaka, Oluzungu wano nga kati mu P1 w'atandikira okulusoma wano, aba alusoma mwaka gusooka.
Where the challenge comes in is for the private schools, something which is not here, the other children study English for some years. But here a child comes to P1 to learn it for the first year [the first time – MES].
- ²MS: Bano aba wano?
Do you mean children here [viz. the interviewed teacher's school]?
- ³T: Yee. Ate oli, ne bwe luba Luganda, ate ng'oli ow'essomero kati nga bw'ogambye nti aba alusoma mwaka gwakusatu, ebigezo ate ne bigenda bijja kumpi nga bye bimu.
Yes, even if it is Luganda, a learner of that school like school D would be learning it for the third year, and then exams come looking almost similar.
- ⁴MS: Mhm.
Yes.
- ⁵T: N'eno ku end nga bijja kujja bye bimu, ng'oli asoma mwaka gwamwenda ng'ono asoma gwamusanvu
Even at the end, there will be similar exams. The other learner would be in his/her ninth year while this one here is in the seventh year.
- ⁶MS: Olw'okuba nti bali balina nursery.
Because the other schools have pre-schools.
- ⁷T: Mhm. Tebasobola kukwatagana.
Yes, they cannot be the same.
- ⁸MS: So kati tulinga abalina systems ebbiri. Kati private schools zo ziringa ezimala emyaka omwenda?
So it appears as though we have two systems. Private schools appear as though they spend nine years [teaching English – MES]?
- ⁹T: Mhm, nze nange era ndaba nga mu myaka mulimu oku-cheating-a. Ono azze mu P1 tamanyi nti 'a' y'efaanana bw'eti, oli w'ajjira mu P1 ng'asobola okuyunga ekigambo 'mata' ka tugeze. Asobola okuwandiika ekigambo nti 'mata' ono tamanyi nti oba 'a' ebeera etya!
*Yes, I also notice that in the number of years, there is cheating. This one comes in P1 without any knowledge of how 'a' looks like, by the time the other comes in P1 they can write the word 'mata', for example. S/he can write the word 'mata' while this one does not know how 'a' looks like!*⁹⁸
- ¹⁰MS: Tagimanyi.
S/he doesn't know.
- ¹¹T: Tagirabangako.
S/he has never seen it.
- ¹²MS: Kwe kugamba wano P1 oba osomesa ebya nursery eby'emayaka ebiri, ate n'ebya P1 byennyini.
That means in P1 here, one is teaching the content of the two years of pre-primary and that of P1.
- ¹³T: Ate n'ebya P1 bye tuba tuliko. Naye abantu badda eyo boogera bingi ku masomero nga gano aga gavumenti naye ey'ensonga tebagirowoozangako, teri yali agirowoozezaako

⁹⁸ Recall that in section 6.7.4, I explained that government school teachers in the lower classes (P1 and P2) had difficulty teaching their learners letter shapes, while the difficulty faced by the teacher in private schools was with teaching good handwriting (where letter shapes were no longer problematic).

wabula bo bakanya kuvuma buvumi nti teri mulimu gukolebwa naye nga tekisoboka, tetusobola kukwatagana.

Including the P1 content which we are handling at that time. But people do not think about all this when they are talking about these government schools. Nobody has ever thought about this; people simply abuse us saying we do not do any work here. But the truth is, we cannot be the same; our performance cannot be similar.

14MS: Eeh, temusobola.

Yes, you cannot be similar.

15T: Kati n’otwala omwana ka ngeze nti nno omututte mu private schools nga zino ezitandika kati ng’e Kasaka wali, oyo omwana owa P1 bamuwa interview ne balaba nti eeh, oyo asobola okubeera mu P1. Naye kati ono owa P1 tamanyi nti ‘a’ ebeera bw’eti tamanyi nti ekkalaamu bagikwata bwe bati.

So when you take a child, say, to start private school – for instance, there is one in Kasaka – the child of P1 is given an interview to determine whether they are fit for P1. But this one here in P1 does not know how ‘a’ looks like; s/he does not know how to hold a pencil.

16MS: Mhm. Nange nnali sikifumiitirizangako.

Yes, I had never thought about it.

17T: Aaa, nze nakirowoozaako dda, n’owulira oli ng’akugamba nti omwana wa P1 wali egindi, asobola okukola bw’ati, naye ono owammwe tasobola. N’ogamba kaakati ono oba kiki ky’ayogedde!

Oh, yes, for me, I thought about it already. You may hear someone telling you that a P1 child in school x is able to do this and that, but that this one here is not able to do that. So you wonder what that person is talking about.

IT2.BP5.10

Gardner (2012) notes that a British Council Survey carried out in 1999 found that, in many countries, the learning of English was starting at the age of 8 in government schools, but that private school children began to learn English at a younger age. To a certain extent, the findings in this study are consistent with those of Gardner’s. Clearly, learners in government schools lack the foundational skills expected of P1 learners entering private schools. This situation is similar to that which Wren (2000:8) describes when he talks of the Matthew effect in reading (adopted from the Bible, Matthew 25:29) which, loosely paraphrased, means “the rich get richer and the poor get poorer”. Going by what happens in rural government and private schools, learners in rural government schools who did not attend pre-primary are considered “poor” compared to those in private schools who have attended pre-primary. Wren (2000:8) states that

If children who lack the foundational skills do not develop those skills early on, their peers leave them behind. At kindergarten and first grade, the gap is surmountable, and teachers can help all children gain the necessary foundational skills for reading success. Beyond the first grade, however, the gap becomes increasingly larger. By fourth grade, helping children to gain these foundational skills is time-consuming and usually very frustrating for the child. Worse than that, however, it is also usually unsuccessful.

Respondents in this study also recounted that when parents transfer their children from government to private schools, the latter are demoted by two years. The justification for this

demotion is that it is a compensation for the two or three years that a learner missed in pre-primary, and that this is the only way in which a learner can compensate for what they should have learnt in pre-primary.

We can clearly see that pre-primary schooling in Uganda is a big challenge to the implementation of MT education. Given the fact that there is no language policy to govern this level of education, private schools instruct learners in English. As they use English as a LoLT in pre-primary, it is difficult for these schools to turn to MT as LoLT when learners are promoted to P1 (if they have to operate by the language policy in place), and then later return to English after P3. Since pre-primary schooling is not compulsory in Uganda, a number of parents enrol their children straight into P1 (in government schools), for financial and logistical reasons. A strong Early Childhood Development policy could see all children in Uganda enjoy the same access to learning opportunities, including the same language learning opportunities. At present, all Ugandan children have access to free education in government schools; there is however a need for a shift from school access to learning access.

8.4 Personnel-related challenges

Personnel-related challenges observed in this study include (i) teachers' adherence to their specified work hours; (ii) teachers' lesson preparation, and (iii) teacher training. Due to the sensitivity of the topic, the discussion in this section is deliberately vague in the sense that teachers are not identified by school code or by the class that they taught, in order to protect their identities from their colleagues and employers. After the discussion of these challenges, the particular challenges posed by the one-teacher-one-classroom system will be discussed.

I begin with the first personnel-related challenge, teachers' availability during school hours: government schools start their lessons at 8:30 am, but teachers often miss several minutes of at least the first lesson of the morning because they arrive late for work. For instance, in one school, two observed lessons (a P1 Writing lesson and a P2 Mathematics lesson) – which were supposed to last 30 minutes each – lasted 17.12 minutes and 15.19 minutes, respectively, because the teachers arrived late for class. Where teachers regularly lose teaching time in this manner (cf. Hornberger & Chick, 2001), learner evaluation might be inaccurate: learners can be taken to be weak, and the curriculum thus unsuccessful, when learners fail to perform well during assessment due to a lack of teaching.

There are many reasons to explain teachers' (partial) absence from school. First, the teachers argue that they are paid a very small salary which cannot sustain them. They therefore have to look for alternative means of income, and their second jobs often have to be done before reporting to school. Second, some teachers experience logistical problems in getting to work on time. They live far from school and have to make their own arrangements to commute there. When these arrangements fail, absenteeism or being late for work is the result.^{99,100}

Apart from (partial) absence, caring for their own children is another aspect that limits the availability of (female) teachers during school hours. Two teachers were observed bringing their children to work with them,¹⁰¹ with the children following their mothers in every class they went to. These children were a distraction to the teaching and learning process in three ways. Firstly, the children at times were noisy in class (e.g., banging on desks), and imitated whatever the teacher and learners said, at which the teacher and learners would laugh. This (briefly) diverted their attention from the learning process. Secondly, the teacher would sometimes ask one of the learners to take the children out of the class or to fetch something for the children from the staff room. While this learner was attending to the child, teaching continued, and the learner thus missed parts of the lesson. Thirdly, teaching time was wasted when teachers attended to their children during class time. Whereas it is not necessarily unacceptable in Uganda (especially in the rural areas) for teachers to have their children accompany them to work, the presence of babies and pre-schoolers in primary school classrooms should be controlled so that teaching and learning is not disrupted.

The second personnel-related challenge observed is a lack of lesson preparation. Some teachers were observed doing lesson preparation during the lesson. This was exhibited by these teachers opening textbooks within the lesson, he/she would keep quiet for a few minutes (usually about 3 minutes) while he/she read the content, teach or speak for a while on the content he/she has just read (usually about 10 minutes), and then repeat the cycle until the

⁹⁹ One interviewed teacher spent the night in the staff room whenever he failed to secure transport back home.

¹⁰⁰ Ariba (May 1, 2013), in a news article on teacher absenteeism in Uganda, quotes a head teacher as saying that such absenteeism arises from lack of accommodation near the schools, and that teachers who live far from school often send electronic messages to report illness; it is, however, difficult to verify whether the teachers are indeed ill or are experiencing other problems that are keeping them from coming to work. Also see Ssejjoba and Nakamya (March 4, 2014) who report in a news article, *'Teachers sleeping in the classroom'*, that teachers in Nakaseke district in Uganda turned classrooms into bedrooms at the close of school each day because of accommodation and transport difficulties.

¹⁰¹ One teacher had two of her children with her (aged approximately 2 and 4 years) and the other had her baby (younger than 2 years) with her. This is not atypical in rural Uganda.

end of the lesson. A lack of lesson preparation can have at least two effects. The first is that the lesson content in the curriculum is not conveyed accurately. In this regard, see Extract 79, taken from a Social Studies class. Here, the teacher asked a question to which she appeared not to know the answer. She then consulted her textbook for a few minutes while the learners talked amongst themselves, waiting for her to finish reading and resume teaching. Throughout, she does not comment on the (factually and socially) inappropriate answers that the learners give; in fact, during turn 13, she wrote the incorrect answers given by the learners up until that point on the blackboard. In this manner, she was hampering learning as the learners obtained no indication that their answers were not those specified in the curriculum and differed from the answers expected in the examination.

Extract 79: *Under-prepared teacher accepting socially unacceptable and factually incorrect answers from learners*

- 1T: Tubakubenga kibooko? Abatemu ate nabo?**
Should we just beat them [criminals – MES] up? What about the murderers?
- 2L: Tubatte.**
Let us kill them.
- 3T: Uh?**
Yes?
- 4LS: Tubatte.**
Let us kill them.
- 5T: Uh?**
Yes?
- 6LS: Tubatte.**
Let us kill them.
- 7T: Tubakole tutya? Nabo tubakole ki?**
What should we do to them? What should we do to them?
- 8LS: Tubatte.**
Let us kill them.
- 9T: Tubatte?**
Should we kill them?
- 10LS: Uh!**
Yes.
- [Moment of no activity on the teacher's side; learners talk amongst themselves]
- 11T: Ani ayogera? Ababbi tubakolere ki?**
Who is talking? [Teacher consults her textbook] What should we do to the thieves?
- 12LS: Bookebwe.**
Let them be burnt.
- 13T: Bookebwe. Bookebwemu! Okwewala okulwana; abatemu nabo battibwe; abawamba abaana basibwe mayisa. Mugalabye? Eeh? Tubasibenga nabo. Mukitegedde? Ee? Nga bwe bakuwamba bagenda kukutta. Mukiwulira? Eeh? Nammwe abaana abato, mulina okwewala okutambula ekiro. Mulina okwewala okukola ki^...?**
Let them be burnt. They should experience fire! Avoiding fighting; the murderers should be killed; the kidnappers should receive life imprisonment. Have you seen that? Yes, we should imprison them also. Have you understood? Yes? When you are abducted, you are heading for death. Have you heard that? Yes? Even you, young children should avoid walking at night? What should you avoid doing^...?

OT4.AP2.45

The second effect that a lack of lesson preparation can have is that teachers fail to use language in a way that is accessible to the learners. For instance, one teacher on various occasions thought aloud, wondering to which of the several synonyms he should expose his learners, which of the words his learners would understand (see OT1.BP4.251). Had the teacher been better prepared, he might have (i) made that decision before the class started, or (ii) considered ways in which to expand the learners' vocabularies by explaining the nuances in meaning of each of the words.

Inadequate training of teachers is the third personnel-related challenge. There were a number of unqualified teachers in the private schools (see section 7.2) involved in this study. Scholars recommend that the most qualified teachers should be allocated to lower classes so that they can build a firm foundation for learners (Dutcher, 2003). Unfortunately, this is not usually the case in Ugandan private schools, where teachers whose highest qualification is Senior 4 (11 years of school of which four were in high school) are employed to teach pre-P4 children. Even qualified teachers have not received specific training in most of the MTs that qualify as LoLTs in Ugandan schools, in language teaching (MT and English), and in the child-centred thematic curriculum. For teachers to use the strategies required by the language-in-education policy (recommended by the NCDC), they need to be retrained and/or prepared to change their practices. Cohen and Ball (1990) have observed that teachers should not be expected to teach using methods that they have not learnt before (also cf. Benson, 2004; Spillane et al., 2002; Wang, 2008), but this is what seems to be expected in the case of Uganda.

The last point concerning teacher training is that many teachers need to improve their English proficiency, as many frequently make use of ungrammatical constructions and demonstrate idiosyncratic uses of certain words; as such, they serve as poor models of English to the learners, for whom in rural areas they are often the only models of English.

Scholars have observed that sometimes teachers are asked to take on tasks for which they have not been trained (e.g., Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003; Luke, 1998). A personnel training-related issue, one that pertains to MT and not to English, concerns training in Luganda orthography and grammar. All teachers interviewed in this study admitted that teaching Luganda orthography and/or grammar was a great challenge to them. Many of them stated that they had never studied Luganda in an academic environment. In addition, teachers reported that there was little effort from the Ministry of Education and Sports to support them

in learning to write their MTs. Also, there are inadequate reading materials for teachers to learn the rules of writing their MTs. Moreover, my inspection of the curriculum materials for local languages, teachers' resource books, revealed that these materials contain some misleading information as far as Luganda orthography is concerned. For example, on page 21 (NCDC, 2006c) alone, *ebinyonyi* ("bird") was misspelt as *ebinnnyonyi*, and *wetegerenze* ("take note") as *wetegerenze*. In addition, the word *walifu* ("alphabet") was written in two different ways, *walifu* and *waliifu*. On this page, there were also misleading orthographic rules; I will cite two here as given by the NCDC (2006c:21).

Ennukuta z'oba wetegerenza (sic.) 'B' ennukuta eyo bw'eba etandika ekigambo eba eggumidde. Oba tolina [ku]gigatta [ku] ginnayo (sic) singa eddoozi liba liggumira e.g., B oba (") so si Bbosa (x). bale (") so si Bbaale (x).

The letters that you should pay attention to 'B' when this letter is at word beginning it is (written) double. You are not supposed to add it to the other if it is a geminate e.g., B or (") but not Bbosa (x), bale (") but not Bbaale (x).

Singa ennukuta eno eba wakati wennukuta (sic.) empeerezi ebbiri awo osobola okuwandiika ebbiri okulaga 'b' bweba (sic.) ng'eri mu kigambo ekitaliimu kuggumira kwayo tuwandiika emu e.g., abaana oba bala.

If this letter is in the middle of two vowel letters, you may write it double to show 'b' if it is in a word which has no geminate we write one e.g., abaana or bala.

The above two rules are not only incorrect but have been presented in a way that is difficult to understand. If teachers who have little or no knowledge of Lugandan orthographic rules take these two rules to be correctly stated and attempt to apply them, this could be confusing to both the teachers and their learners.

In a classroom observation in RakaiRG-B in P2 with the school deputy head teacher, she pointed out that most teachers in her school did not know how to write Luganda (their MT): *"We all know the language but, generally speaking, most teachers do not know the language. They do not know how to write it; they give learners wrong stuff"* (OT3.BP2.87). When I asked a P1 teacher in the same school about her greatest challenge in MT teaching, she replied, *"It is writing it"* (IT1.BP1.6). A P3 teacher, also in this school, stated too that her greatest challenge in using MT as a LoLT was orthography: *"Writi... orthography, it is the greatest challenge"* (IT1.BP3.164). A P1 teacher from RakaiRG-A confessed that she did not know how to write some Luganda words, adding that teachers needed a Luganda dictionary to help them in this regard: *"The difficulties would be in writing those words. I don't know some; we need a book called, I think nkuluze [i.e., dictionary – MES]"* (IT1.AP1.137). The

first comprehensive monolingual Luganda dictionary was published in 2007 (Kiingi, 2009) and revised in 2008, but many schools do not have access to it.

In the next extract (80), two teachers in RakaiRG-A (IT1.AP4.131) discuss how confusing Luganda orthographical rules can be.¹⁰² One teacher referred to the skill to write Luganda orthography correctly as “*a talent*” (see turn 2), and that in his entire school there was probably nobody who had this “talent” (turn 4). In turn 6, teacher T1 explained that this challenge came from over-concentrating on English. According to this teacher, the older people possibly had a better education through Luganda and were therefore able to spell correctly in the language (see turn 8), because they did not start their learning in the medium of English. He added that English was introduced in the older people’s P4 year and in the classes before this, all teaching took place in Luganda only (see turn 12).

Extract 80: *Teachers discussing confusing Luganda orthographical rules*

- 1T3:** Ate era waliwo w’owulira nga mu kwogera owangaala naye nga mu kuwandiika tojja kuwangaala.
Also, there are instances where you feel as if a syllable is long, but then when in writing, you will not show the long vowel.
- 2T1:** Kati ebyo, abalina talent eyo be baki?
In all that, those who have that talent [of writing – MES] are what?
- 3MS:** Be batono.
Are few.
- 4T1:** Be batono. Era bw’oba ng’ogenze kuvvoola banno nti nno ekyantutte kuvvoola munnange, oyinza okugamba nti nno throughout mu ssomero nti nno temuliimu n’omu amanyi kuwandiika Luganda bulungi.
They are the few. If you went out your way to belittle your colleagues, you may say that throughout the school, there is nobody who knows how to write Luganda in a proper manner.
- 5MS:** Mhm. Awo! Eeh, ebintu wamma si bya lusaago!
I see, yes, it is not an easy task for you.
- 6T1:** Anti kati ffe twagenda ne twesiba ku kintu kimu Lungereza.
The problem is that we simply went in for English.
- 7MS:** Mhm.
Yes.
- 8T1:** Abantu okwonooneka, kati bw’osanga omuntu, bazeeyi baffe abaakoma mu Junior ezo simanyi mu P4, abaasoma ebbanga eryo bawandiika Olulimi Oluganda n’alutereza buli kimu.

¹⁰² Luganda has a number of adjacency pairs, i.e., in written form, some words can only be distinguished by long vowels and long consonants. Thus, when a word is to be written with a double vowel or a double consonant and one does not do so, the reader will interpret a different word. Consider, for example, *okusima* (“plough”) and *okusiima* (“to be thankful”), *okusiga* (“to sow”) and *okusiiga* (“to paint”), *bana* (“four”) and *baana* (“children”), and *okukula* (“to grow”) and *okukuula* (“to uproot”). Examples of words with geminates are *okuta* (“to release”) and *okutta* (“to kill”), *okuba* (“to be”) and *okubba* (“to steal”), *omuto* (“the young”) and *omutto* (“cushion”), and *okusogola* (“to brew”) and *okusoggola* (“to plough”). In addition, some words can be written as compounds while others cannot, and some are joined with an apostrophe while others are not.

People are wasted now. You may now find that only the old people who studied up to Junior level or P4, only those who studied at that time are able to write Luganda with proper spelling.

9MS: **Mhm.**

Yes.

10T1: **Kubanga emphasis y’Olulimi lwabwe yaliwo. Kati ate ffe bwe twajja, Oluzungu ne tulutandikira mu P1, ky’ova olaba nga n’Oluzungu baalumanya nnyo okutusinga. Tebaagatangamu akagambo ne boy yadde akamu mu P1.**

Because they had an emphasis on their language. But when we came in, we started learning English right from P1, that is why they know better English than us. When in P1, they did not codeswitch with even a smallest word like “boy”.

11MS: **Mhm.**

Yes.

12T1: **Baatandikanga nga kati bwe bagamba mbu nno Oluzungu balusomere mu P4, gye lwandibadde lutandikira. Ne bayiga P4 Oluzungu. Kati ffe ate kye batakoze era baalulekayo eno mu thematic nti mulusomese nga Oluzungu.**

They began, just as the case is now, that English should be taught in P4; it would be proper to start English in P4. They would start learning English in P4; something which has not been done in our case. They still maintained English in the thematic curriculum so that it should be taught as a subject.

IT1.AP4.131

During classroom observations, it was also clear that the teachers had many challenges with Luganda orthography and/or grammar. The notes that the teachers wrote on the blackboard contained orthographic errors, as did the wall charts. Below I give examples of such errors on wall charts in RakaiRG-A and RakaiRG-B:

<i>essaawa y’omu kibiina</i> ‘classroom wall clock’	was misspelt as	<i>essaawa yomukibiina</i>
<i>emmeeza y’ebyobutonde</i> ‘teaching aids table’	was misspelt as	<i>emmeeza y’obyobutonde</i>
<i>ekifo ekiwummulirwamu</i> ‘resting place’	was misspelt as	<i>ekifo ekiwummulirwamu</i>
<i>ekkanisa</i> ‘church’	was misspelt as	<i>ekanisa</i>
<i>okusoma n’okuwandiika</i> ‘reading and writing’	was misspelt as	<i>kusoma nokuwandiika</i>
<i>madinda</i> ‘xylophone’	was misspelt as	<i>madiinda</i>
<i>toyogerera mu kibiina</i> ‘do not talk in class’	was misspelt as	<i>toyogerera mukibiina</i>
<i>wekuume ng’oli muyonjo</i> ‘keep yourself clean’	was misspelt as	<i>wekuume nga oli muyongo</i>
<i>yanirizanga abagenyi</i> ‘welcome visitors’	was misspelt as	<i>yaniriza nga abagenyi</i>

Examples of errors that teachers made while writing on the blackboard, apart from confusing the orthographical rules for *j(j)* and *g(g)y*, include the following:

<i>ennyingo</i> ‘syllable’	was misspelt as	<i>enyingo</i>
<i>erinnya</i> ‘name’	was misspelt as	<i>elinnya</i>
<i>erya</i> ‘it eats’	was misspelt as	<i>elya</i>
<i>enkukunyi</i> ‘tick’	was misspelt as	<i>enkuukunyi / enkukuunyi</i>
<i>mu kaabuyonjo</i> ‘in the toilet’	was misspelt as	<i>mukabuyonjo</i>
<i>mu bibira</i> ‘in forests’	was misspelt as	<i>mubibbira</i>
<i>mu bifo...</i> ‘in places’	was misspelt as	<i>mubifo...</i>

wandiika amannya g'ebifaananyi bino was misspelt as *wandiika amannya ge'bifaananyi binno*
 'write the names of these pictures'

When learners were asked to take notes (which meant that they had to copy what their teachers wrote on the blackboard into their notebooks), they took notes containing these errors. Learners regarded these spellings as correct, and yet they are not.

Regarding Luganda orthography rules, consider Banda's (2008, 2009) explanation that there are African languages of which the orthographies are motivated by English sounds. The example of Nyanja that Banda refers to applies to Luganda as well, which is that Nyanja does not have a [r] sound but orthography rules require use of [r] and [l] in different environments. This and many other problematic issues are appearing in the writing of Luganda (as could be seen in the *erinnya/elinnya* and *erya/elya* misspellings above). It is perhaps necessary to systematise and/or simplify some Luganda orthography rules for easy accessibility to the users. Such attempts have been made by Kiingi (2010) and Namyalo et al. (2008), but they have not been formalised or implemented.

In terms of Luganda orthography, there is a gap between the training teachers receive and the practice expected of them. In addition, there is a lack of in-service and refresher courses. As explained in section 7.2.2, since 2006/2007 when the language-in-education policy was rolled out nationally, there have not been any follow-up training/workshops to address teachers' challenges. Teachers report that they rely on their colleagues, head teachers and/or textbooks in the absence of training. It has been shown that these consultation sources are problematic: teachers (including head teachers) received inadequate preparation and orientation prior to the re-introduction of the MT policy, and teachers' resource books were not carefully prepared and, as such, contain misleading information about Luganda orthography and grammar, as discussed above. This could compromise MT teaching, both as a subject and as a LoLT.

Teacher unavailability, non-commitment, and lack of training obviously negatively affect the implementation of any language-in-education policy, also that of Uganda's policy of MT teaching of the thematic curriculum. Class time cannot be used effectively if teachers are not present for the full duration of the period, not proficient speakers of the languages that they are teaching (in), do not prepare well for lessons, receive no post-school training, and are not trained in practices that maximally support language and literacy development.

Turning now to the one-teacher-one-classroom system, consider the remark made in Extract 81 by a P1 teacher in RakaiRG-A on this system:

Extract 81: *Teacher lamenting insufficient training in implementing the one-teacher-one-classroom system*

T1: **Gavumenti emanyi olw'okuba nti yakutraininga, course n'ogiyita, nti byonna obimanyi nnyo. The government thinks that because it trained you, you passed the course, so you know everything well.**

IT1.AP1.141

This study has identified the one-teacher-one-classroom system as a hindrance to the implementation of MT and the thematic curriculum. In government schools, classes P1 through P3 are run under a one-teacher-one-classroom system. Within this arrangement, teachers are expected to teach all curriculum content independently.¹⁰³ The government school teachers spoke of a too heavy teaching load considering their other classroom obligations. They stated that, because of this load, they cannot teach all the curriculum areas; they therefore concentrate on what they consider examinable and leave out the rest. Also, because of the varied nature of the teaching required from them, teachers stated they do not have enough time to prepare well for class (IT1.BP3.167-168).

Particular questions on the questionnaire were included in order to obtain teachers' views on the one-class-one-teacher system and how it affects their teaching practices. Rural P1 to P3 teachers (those who were required to work in this system) mostly agreed that it is easy to manage a thematic curriculum class by themselves as set out by the ministry guidelines (61.5%), and that they are able to teach all the thematic curriculum areas through MT (again 61.5%). However, during follow-up interviews, different views were expressed, as the following extracts (83 and 84) point out.

Extract 82: *The challenge of a one-teacher-one-classroom system in RakaiRG-B*

₁MS: **Kaakati ekya class okuba nti ogirimu wekka, okiwuliramu buzito ki? Now that you are alone in class, what challenges do you have in that regard?**

₂T: **Kimanya ne ssekumenya. Ekyo nkiwuliramu obuzito kubanga obuzibu bwe nkifunamu, sifuna budde bumala kusobola kutegekerwa baana bange kintu kye nnaabasomesa. It is too much on me. It is a great challenge, because I do not get enough time to prepare what I want to give to my children.**

¹⁰³ Recall that before the introduction of thematic curriculum, teachers taught with some sort of specialisation. For instance, one would be a teacher of English and Social Studies, of Mathematics and Science and/or Social Studies, etc. Since the curriculum and policy now demand that the teacher handles all thematic areas alone, some teachers find certain areas, which do not fall under their "specialised" areas, challenging.

- 3MS: Okuva ku makya okutuuka olweggulo.
From morning till evening.
- 4T: Ahaa, sifuna budde bumala kusobola kutegekera baana kiki kye nandibawadde. Singa mbadde nninayo co-wange, wadde naawe oyingira mu lesson ng'otegedde nti at least ka ngende, ngennda kusomesa ekintu bwe kiti mmaze okukitegeka. Naye olunaku lulamba okuva ku makya ppaka kawungeezi nga ggwe oli mu kibiina, olumu weekanga nga mu butuufu by'obasomesezza tebafunye ki ky'oyagala ate nga ate nga naawe omusomesa ky'osomesezza si kye wandyetaaze kubawa naye olw'obukoowu bw'obeera olimu, okooye, ate ggwe olina okuva mu lesson eno, ggwe odda mu eno, ggwe ogenda okumarkinga ebitabo...
Yes, I do not get enough time to prepare what I want to give to these children. If I had a colleague, I would go to a lesson sure that I have at least adequately prepared for it. But spending a whole day, morning to evening, one teacher in a class, at times you find yourself teaching and yet learners are not getting what you really want them to get and yet even you, the teacher, you are giving them something which you would not want to give them, but because you are already tired, you are tired, and yet it is you to leave this lesson and go to another; it is you to mark the books
- 5MS: Yea, kikooya.
Yes, it is tiresome.
- 6T: Okiraba?
Do you understand that?
- 7MS: Uhm.
Yes.
- 8T: Kikooya.
It is tiresome.
- 9MS: Tolina lunaku na lumu lws you to pend
Do you not have any day when you receive help?
- 10T: Nze sirina lunaku lwonna lwe nnyambibwako.
For me, I do not have any day when I receive help.
- 11MS: Ekitegeeza kati bwave anoliwow
So that means when you are not around...
- 12T: Mpozzi lwe siriiwo...
Unless when I am not around...
- 13MS: Eeeh, kati kye mbadde ngennda okukubuuza nti lw'otaliwo, ani abeera mu kibiina.
Yes, that is what I was going to ask you, who takes your class in your absence?
- 14T: Aaa, lwe siriiwo wano, ffe tweyamba. Class omusomesa nga teyazze, tebeereraawo kuzannya ppaka lwe bagenda ewaka. Abasomesa bannange bagendayo.
No, when I am not around, we help one another. When a teacher is not around, a class is not left to play until they go back home. My fellow teachers take it [the absent teacher's class – MES] on.
- 15MS: Ate nabo bwe baba balina?
What if they also have classes to take?
- 16T: Ate nabo baba balina, era kwe kugamba.
Yes, but they also have classes to take. Yeah, it is complicated.
- 17MS: Tewaliiwo lwe muyinza kugatta class bbiri ng'oli taliwo?
Is there no instance where you could combine two classes in one in one's absence?
- 18T: Tukikola. P1 etera okugattibwa ne P2, owa P2 ng'abadde teyazze. Kati ate nze Ms R ye atera okutwala abange n'abatwala mu P4. Oba okumala okuwa work mu P4 n'ajja ne mu P3 n'akola ki?
We do it. P1 is usually combined with P2 if a P2 teacher is absent. But for me, it is Ms R who usually takes my class to P4, or she would give some work in P4 and then she also comes into P3.

IT1.BP3.167-168

Extract 83: *Teachers of RakaiRG-A explain the challenge of a one-teacher-one-classroom system*

- 1T1:** Ahaa, point endala esaana balowoozeeko, gavumenti ky'esaana okulowoozaako ekirala, ogamba otya omuntu omu okusomesa abantu kikumi mu ssaawa musanvu, ddakiika asatu asatu nga ye oyo omu?
Another point that the government should think about, something else that the government should think about is: How can you ask one single person to teach one hundred pupils in seven hours, the same person appearing every thirty minutes?
- 2T3:** Ahaa, ate n'ova okwo bakwagala gundi eno erondoola abaana, eya individual ate n'eyawamu yonna n'osanga...
And then after that they need you to work on this thing which you use to evaluate learners, individually and as a group, so you find that...
- 3MS:** Lessons ziri kkumi oba ziri munaana?
Are there ten or eight lessons?
- 4T1:** Kkumi.
Ten.
- 5T3:** Ziri munaana.
There are eight.
- 6T1:** Ezammwe kkumi. Ezaffe ze zandibadde kati omunaana.
You have eight lessons. It is ours that would have been eight.
- 7T3:** Ezammwe ziri munaana?
Are yours eight?
- 8T1:** Ez'abo kkumi. Hmm, nze nabatya!
Theirs are ten. Yes, I am really amazed at what the government did.
- 9T3:** Kati oteekeko n'okukola lesson plan, wamma omulimu gutukooya! Yadde gavumenti yo egamba nti mbunno biki, naye ebintu bingi bye batuteekako ebitakyakoleka.
And that includes preparing lesson plans. Indeed this kind of work is so tiring! Much as the government says this and that, the truth is we have a heavy load on us we can no longer manage to handle.

IT1.AP1.138-139

From these extracts, it transpires that (i) teachers find it tiring to teach several consecutive lessons without a break (in fact, from turns 3 to 8 of Extract 84, it appears that the teachers themselves are uncertain about how many 30-minute lessons are supposed to be in each teaching day) as well as performing continuous assessment and working out lesson plans, especially where class sizes reach 100 learners; (ii) teachers do not find sufficient time to prepare for classes (turn 2 of Extract 83), and (iii) teaching is compromised when one teacher is absent,¹⁰⁴ as two classes (P1 and P2, or P3 and P4) are then combined in one classroom and/or under one teacher. Note that combining learners is only possible in instances where the learners are few, as is the case in RakaiRG-A and RakaiRG-B. In instances where classes range in size from 70 to 100 learners per class (as is the case in RakaiRP-C and RakaiRP-D), it is impossible to combine two classes, because there are no unoccupied seats in these classrooms, meaning that desks would have to be moved from one classroom to another, but the classrooms are too small to allow this. This means that one teacher has to alternate

¹⁰⁴ Recall that teacher absenteeism was rife in especially government schools.

between two classrooms, severely compromising teaching. Also note that combining learners across school years in one class requires certain skills from a teacher, one of which is possession of multigrade or multilevel pedagogy. A teacher would need multigrade pedagogical skills because s/he would be teaching learners of different ages and of different grades. Ugandan teachers have not yet been trained in multigrade pedagogy. A last noteworthy point made in Extract 83 is that the presence of a colleague who could co-teach a particular class would have assisted teachers to prepare well and enter a class with confidence. It is possible that the teachers were referring here to a lack of consultation possibilities and a lack of a “sounding board”, leaving them less confident in what they do.

The above two extracts are from interviews with government school teachers. Regarding teachers in private schools, they are generally committed to their work. Two reasons can be offered to explain the source of their commitment. Firstly, as the majority of teachers in private schools have no (teaching) qualifications, they do not have job security. If their performance is unsatisfactory, they could easily be replaced by a more committed person. Secondly, private schools are run by business people who closely supervise the work of their employees. (Of interest here is that rural private school teachers are paid far less than government school teachers, which is not to say that government school teachers earn a comfortable salary.)

Even though the Ugandan government recognises that learning is easier and faster through MT, and have implemented MT education in the first few years of school, modifying the LoLT alone cannot ensure effective learning (cf. Read & Enyutu, 2004). There is a need to set a standard teacher-learner ratio which should not be exceeded, and where learner numbers increase beyond those which are acceptable/comfortable, additional teachers should be employed (in both government and private schools).

8.5 Materials and methods-related challenges

One of the greatest challenges facing MT education in Africa appears to be inadequate teaching and learning materials. This problem has been reported by a number of authors, including Bamgbose (2004), Dutcher (2003, 2004a, 2004b), Glanz (2013), Read and Enyutu (2005), Stroud (2001, 2002), and Tembe (2006). In addition, in Uganda’s context, Trudell et

al., (2012) and Nabirye and De Schryver (2010) report that materials for teaching and learning MTs for all the years of primary schooling are very scarce. Such a scenario has resulted in, for example, teachers using an advanced user dictionary to teach P1 to P3 learners the MT (Nabirye & De Schryver, 2010). The teachers in this study reported that the materials provided by the government are insufficient and of poor quality, as the materials do not fully address the curriculum areas, the materials do not arrive on time, and teachers are supplied with different materials from those which they requisition/recommend (IT1.APA.132-133). Of particular interest here is that the teachers pointed out that they are aware of good publishing companies in Uganda, but when they recommend/request materials from such companies, Ministry of Education and Sports officials instead purchase materials from other companies which are deemed cheaper. (Although respondents referred to such companies by name, these companies are, for ethical reasons, not named here.) The teachers wondered whether in fact the process of procuring teaching and learning materials in government schools involved institutionalised influence peddling.

Although there was a general consensus concerning the scarcity of teaching and learning materials in both sets of schools, the situation was deemed to be worse in the government schools. The government school teachers recounted that since the time of curriculum change in 2006/2007, there are some curriculum areas and/or subjects that have never received curriculum materials to guide teachers in the teaching and learning process. Yet, teachers are expected to transmit such curriculum content to learners (IT1.APA.132-133).

In all the classroom observations conducted in this study, there was only one class (a P5 English class in RakaiRG-B) where a teacher was seen bringing some textbooks (although still not enough for each learner to have one) into the class for the learners to use. Apart from complaints about quantity, there were also complaints about the quality of the teaching and learning materials. The government teachers narrated that especially the English language textbooks they have are poor compared to those of the private school teachers, that the textbook content does not match the current syllabus, and the learners are not well exposed to all the English language issues expected of them in the first three years of learning because the materials in their schools are incomprehensive. Generally, the teachers said that the curriculum is not completely covered by the existing textbooks (or that some textbooks distributed to schools are unrelated to the existing syllabus), and that the textbooks are

published in English, even for P1 to P3 where the LoLT is MT. Furthermore, the new curriculum was introduced in schools before being provided with the necessary teaching and learning material. Consider Extracts 84 and 85 in this regard, which are representative of the types of responses teachers gave during the follow-up interviews.

Extract 84: *The challenge of providing teaching and learning materials*

- 1T1:** Gavumenti egenda n'erimitinga ssente zaayo, n'erowooza nti nno ekintu ky'ereese kirungi ate n'etandika okugamba ssente, kati ne kifuuka ekizibu.
The government limits its expenditures thinking that what they have introduced is good, but then they begin to limit money and this makes it difficult.
- 2MS:** Mhm.
Yes.
- 3T3:** Ne batatuwa na bitabo oba ffe ne balowooza nti tunaabiggya wa?
They even don't give us books. I wonder from where they expect us to get them.
- 4T1:** Kuba kati tolaba singa syllabuses zonna baazifulumya from P1 up to P7, naye from P5, five six seven, tezirina butabo buli ku syllabus.
Look, it would have been helpful if all syllabuses were published from P1 up to P7, but unfortunately P5, 6, 7 do not have books related to the current syllabus.
- 5T2:** Kyakubiri.
Secondly
- 6MS:** Ekyo sikiwulidde bulungi!
I didn't hear that.
- 7T1:** Kati syllabus, baakyusaamu syllabus, enkadde eri...
The old syllabus was revised. The old syllabus is...
- 8MS:** Mhm, mhm.
Yes, yes.
- 9T1:** Okulaba nga bagikyusizza okulaba nga waliwo amagundi ge baggyamu ne baleeta empya ze tulina okugoberera. Kati mu kuzigoberera, kitegeeza bw'ofulumya syllabus n'ebitabo bibeeramu, bibeera mu press. Texts zirina okubeera nga weeziri, kati texts teziriwo, syllabus efulumye mwaka mulamba ate texts tezifuluma.
The syllabus was modified to see to it that some learning areas were taken out and new syllabi were published, which we are supposed to follow now. When you publish a new syllabus, it means that at that time books are in press. Textbooks must be in place but unfortunately they are not there. The syllabus was published; it is now a year, but the textbooks are not coming out.
- 10MS:** Mhm. Eeh!
I see.
- 11T1:** Okiraba? Kati ffe baatutendeka transition mu 2010 ate gundi syllabus n'efuluma, gwali mwezi oba Gwokusatu, ate syllabus n'efuluma mu Gwamunaana. Syllabus bw'efuluma mu Gwomunaana, 2011 ne balyoka baleetayo ku butabo.
Do you see that? For us, we were trained on how to handle the transitional class in March 2010 but the syllabus came out I think in August. When the syllabus was published in August 2011, it is at that time when some texts were brought to us.
- 12MS:** Nga wayiseewo mwaka mulamba.
When a whole year is gone.
- 13T1:** Yee.
Yes.
- 14MS:** Ate nga mubadde mukola?
And yet you have been teaching/working?
- 15T1:** Ate bakugamba genda okole.
Yes, they tell us to go and work/teach.
- 16T2:** Kati P5 egeberera thematic class, P5, P6, P7, naye ate abo tebafunangako yadde n'ekitabo n'ekimu. Kati otuuka nga syllabus ekugamba kusomesa lesson eyo n'ogenda mu old text nga temuli lesson n'emu.

- P5 is following the thematic classes, P5, P6, P7, but these classes have never received any textbook. When the time comes that the syllabus demands that you teach such a lesson, you go to consult the old textbook, but you do not find any relevant lesson content.*
- 17T1: **Kati olaba waliwo n'ebitabo bye bataleeterangako ddala bye tulinamu obuzibu.**
There are textbooks which were brought to us, but we have problems with them.
- 18T3: **Tebiriyo.**
The textbooks are not there.
- 19T2: **Awo bwe buzibu.**
That is the problem.
- 20MS: **Mhm, mhm, Eeeh!**
I see.
- 21T2: **P1, basomeramu awo mu lulimi Oluganda...**
P1 learns through Luganda.
- 22MS: **Mhm.**
Yes.
- 23T2: **Naye text ze baabawereza za Luzungu. Kati ekyo nakyo kikuwa obuzibu.**
But the textbooks sent to the school are in English. That is another problem to the teacher.
- 24MS: **Eee!**
Oh!
- 25T3: **Ezimu tezituukana na syllabus gye baatuwa. Obinoonyaamu nga tebiriimu mu butabo bwe batuwadde.**
Some of the textbooks are not related to the syllabus given to us. You look for the relevant content, but you cannot find it in the given textbooks.
- 26MS: **Eeeh!**
Oh!

IT1.AP4.133

Extract 85: *Teachers experience difficulty translating curriculum material into MTs*

- 1T2: **P1, P2, P3 babawereza textbooks za Luzungu, kyokka ate nga bakwagala osomese mu lulimi lwo lwonna. Mu lulimi lwo lwonna.**
P1, P2, P3 were given English textbooks and yet you are expected to teach in your mother tongue. In any mother tongue that applies to you.
- 2T1: **Mu Luganda.**
In Luganda.
- 3T3: **Naddala mu Luganda. Abalala tugamba nti bitulemeredde.**
Most especially in Luganda. Some of us are saying that we have failed to do this.
- 4MS: **Temusobola kubivvuunula?**
Are you not able to translate those materials?
- 5T3: **Ffe situli Bazungu.**
We are not English.
- 6MS: **Ate Omuzungu ye yandikaluubiriddwa kati ggwe oba oyanguyirwa anti Omuganda!**
It is the English who would find it difficult, but you the Muganda [speakers of Luganda – MES] find it easier!
- 7T1: **Aha, problem eriwo...**
The problem at hand...
- 8T3: **Anti nange waliwo ebigambo by'Oluzungu bye ssimanyi.**
But there are some English words which I do not know.
- 9MS: **Mhm.**
I see.
- 10T1: **Voca, waliwo ekibakaluubirira!**
Voca,¹⁰⁵ there are some words which are difficult.
- 11T3: **N'eby'Oluganda gye biri nga nkyogera naye empandiika n'ennema.**
There are Luganda words which I can say but cannot write them out.

IT1.AP1.129

¹⁰⁵ *Voca* (short for *vocabulary*) is a word in Ugandan English used mostly by the youth to mean “a word of which you do not know the meaning”.

In turn 1 of Extract 85, teacher T2 mentions that the Ministry of Education and Sports sent English textbooks to schools and yet they were supposed to teach in the MTs. In turn 3, teacher T3 says that some teachers had failed to implement what was expected of them. When I asked them whether they could not translate the materials into Luganda (turn 4), T3 answered somewhat sarcastically, “*We are not English*”. This was a strong statement from the respondent; she meant that if she were expected to teach in Luganda, she should be given materials in Luganda and not in English. The teachers explained that there are English words they do not know, something that would hinder their attempts to translate the curriculum materials into MT. In addition, T3 added that there are Luganda words that they cannot write even when they can pronounce them (turn 10). (See section 8.4 in which I discuss teachers’ difficulty in spelling in Luganda.) If this is the reality (that teachers are not able to translate from English into MT when teaching), then the question arises as to why teachers do not receive MT material to teach the MT curriculum. One possible reason why teachers’ guides were written in English could be a desire by government to emphasise this language (i.e., a reason pertaining to linguistic ideology) (cf. Stroud, 2002; Tollefson, 1991). As there is no shortage of professional English-Luganda translators, the reason could not be a logistical one, unless there is limited funding for such translation.

The teachers’ narratives highlight the following:

- (i) Even when teachers do not have the relevant textbooks, they continue to teach. The question arises as to what they are teaching and where they obtain the material to do so.
- (ii) Learners do not get what they are supposed to at the times stipulated by the syllabus. For example, the teachers explained that the transitional class (P4) reference materials got to schools in 2011 and yet the first transitional class was in place in 2010. This might mean that in 2010 teachers improvised on what to present to learners that year. The same applies to P5 through P7, classes that teachers say have never received textbooks that match the current syllabus.
- (iii) Private schools opt for materials other than those recommended by government, because the materials that the government selects are incomprehensive and at times unrelated to the syllabus.
- (iv) On the open market, there are publishers which teachers regard as good producers of quality materials, but the government does not procure such materials, arguing

that they are too expensive. Private schools are at liberty to buy their materials from reputable publishers and in many cases have the funds to do so. Government school teachers would like to use the materials employed by their private school counterparts (the former referred to these materials as “richer”); they however have no option but to use the materials provided for them, because if they do not and it becomes known to inspectors, they are reprimanded.

The fact that teachers do not have the desired teaching and learning materials could be one of the reasons why they often revert to safetalk (see section 7.4), reducing teaching and learning to memorisation and “parroting” tasks (Brock-Utne, 2004b:59) which result in very little literacy acquisition. If MT materials cannot be equally availed as they are in English, literacy acquisition in MT will remain minimal and/or poor. This will particularly be the case in rural areas where exposure to English is limited. Evidently, Kaplan and Baldauf’s (1997, 2003) policy criteria of methods and materials were not carefully considered in implementing the current MT programme.

8.6 Community-related challenges

The community of which parents are a part has been viewed as a vital stakeholder in language-in-education policy implementation. Success has been reported in areas where parental involvement in the education system has developed (Iyamu & Ogiegbaen, 2007; Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, 2003; Klaus, 2003). However, parents have also been reported to resist school language policies (Association for the Development of Education in Africa, 2005; Stroud, 2002). Parents usually resist MT education because, according to them, children already know their MT by the time they start school, and parents reason that they do not send their children to school to learn a language they already know (Dutcher, 1997).

In the current study, the teachers in government schools reported that parents are not aware of the values of MT teaching. They recounted that parents believe that their children are already fluent in MT and need to learn English. As a result, they transfer their children from government schools to private schools which use English as a LoLT right from P1. Teachers added that those parents who have their children stay in government schools generally fall in

one of two categories: (i) those who do not care about their children's education,¹⁰⁶ and (ii) those who cannot afford private school fees. Stroud (2002:8) remarks that “wishes of parents and local community may well not be in favour of using local languages as instructional media, even though this may go against the recommendations of expert discourses”. This is why Kaplan and Baldauf (1997, 2003) argue for the consideration of the policy issues prior to the introduction of a language-in-education programme.

In the questionnaire, teachers were requested to state whether or not they agree with certain statements on parental views and influences on MT education. 92.3% (9/13) of rural P1 to P3 teachers agreed that parents want their children to learn a local language or MT. Four teachers strongly agreed with this. Similarly, 92.3% (12/13) of the rural P1 to P3 teachers agreed that parents wanted their children to learn English as fast as possible. These responses are to some extent similar to what Iyamu and Ogiegbaen (2007) found amongst Nigerian parents: parents in Nigeria appreciated the value that comes with MT education, but they preferred their children to be educated in international languages like English (cf. Tembe & Norton, 2008; Tse, Shum, Ki, & Wong, 2001).

Given these findings, it is not surprising that when the rural P1 to P3 teachers were asked to indicate whether parents often transfer their children from schools that instruct in MT to schools that instruct in English, the majority of them (84.6%, 11/13) agreed that parents did this. Yet only 23.1% (3/13) of these teachers agreed with the statement that parents did not want their children to learn through their MTs.

Research indicates that children whose parents are directly involved in their learning are more likely to succeed than those whose parents are not (Barron, 2012; Cummins, 1992; Cummins & Genzok, 1991; Iyamu & Ogiegbaen, 2007). Parental participation in children's education is likely to be easier if the LoLT at school is similar to that spoken at home, because in such conditions, learners can more easily consult with their parents on homework exercises, with the result that parents feel they are part of the learning process (Barron, 2012; Cummins & Genzok, 1991; Dutcher, 1997; NCDC, 2011; Ramirez et al., 1991). Teachers'

¹⁰⁶ Some children are kept home to do chores or jobs (such as grazing the family's cows – see OT3.BP2.159). Other children, because of intolerable home circumstances, run away from home to go and work in the city. Achoba and Naulele (March 19, 2013) recently reported in a news article, *Alupo warns parents on absenteeism*, that the Ugandan Minister of Education directed local leaders in the communities to arrest parents who keep their children out of school, and to remind parents continually of their responsibilities, such as providing school materials for their children.

responses to the statement “Teaching in local languages/mother tongue makes parents much more involved in children’s learning than it would be in English” concur with this: 84.6% (11/13) of rural P1 to P3 teachers, 74% (6/8) of rural P4 to P5 teachers, and 84.6% (12/14) of urban school teachers agreed. Teachers’ responses indicated that they were aware of increased parental involvement in education if the LoLT was similar to the language spoken at home.

It appears that there is a clear difference in parental involvement between northern Uganda and other parts of the country, and some success in the implementation of MT education has been reported in the former. The success of MT education that some schools in the north are enjoying can partly be attributed to parental and community involvement in the education of children. In the north, where the Mango Tree Laŋo Literacy Project is based, a literacy awareness kit for parents, amongst other things, has been developed. Each participating school is given a kit to use in a parents’ meeting each school term. The project has also developed a parent-friendly report card in Leblaŋo, the local language. In the sensitisation meetings, parents are trained on how to interpret this report card. In this way, parents are able to follow their children’s learning activities, and give them support from an informed point of view (Mango Tree Laŋo Literacy Project, 2013).

The Mango Tree Laŋo Literacy Project works together with the Laŋo Language Board. The project consults with the board on issues of orthography and grammar (Mango Tree Laŋo Literacy Project, 2013), which is indirectly another form of community involvement in the curriculum. As explained in sections 1.9 and 3.7.1, the mandate to develop local languages in Uganda rests with District Language Boards. Unfortunately, some districts in Uganda do not have operational language boards, and their efforts have been constrained by lack of resources that include finances and expertise in linguistic issues. The northern Uganda districts benefit from the presence of organisations such as the Mango Tree Laŋo Literacy Project, Unicef, and Literacy and Adult Basic Education (see section 3.3), which do advocacy work among parents on the benefits of MT education. This is a possible explanation for the higher number of learners in government schools sampled in Oyam district in the north, than those in government schools in Rakai district in the south. (I should however mention here that MT education is not the only reason compelling parents to transfer their children to private schools.)

Based on the findings in this study, it appears that parental involvement in children's education is a bigger challenge in Rakai district than in the rural north, where, as previously explained, parents are mobilised and rally behind the implementation of the MT policy. This could be an indication for the need of a centralised, nationwide, parent-directed campaign around the benefits of not only MT education but education in general.

8.7 Resourcing-related challenges

One of the factors that provide a good learning environment is adequate classroom structures in which learners can be housed with a certain degree of comfort. In this study area, two government schools (RakaiRG-A and RakaiRG-B) and one private school (RakaiRP-D) had good permanent classroom structures. RakaiRP-C had no permanent structures, as seen in Figures 5A (1 and 2) below.



Figure 5A (1 and 2): Non-permanent school building (RakaiRP-C)

Schools that have no permanent structures for learning purposes face challenges, both weather-related and noise-related. For instance, when it rained at RakaiRP-C, the rain blew into the classrooms; these structures also had no heat insulation, resulting in learners becoming uncomfortably cold during the rainy season. Furthermore, what was said in one classroom was clearly audible in the neighbouring classrooms. These conditions are not conducive to good concentration. Recall however that RakaiRP-C has a higher number of learners than, for example, RakaiRG-A and RakaiRG-B (see section 5.2) that have good facilities as far as infrastructure is concerned. Also, parents pay school fees for their learners

to attend private schools such as RakaiRP-C (despite its lack of resources in terms of infrastructure) instead of government schools where school fees have been eliminated and the buildings are better.

Another challenge observed in private schools is overcrowding. Classrooms are full, and there are not enough seats for learners. RakaiRP-D, for instance, had desks but learners had to share them. RakaiRP-C, on the other hand, had very few desks (and there were none for P1). In RakaiRP-C, during the time of instruction, learners sat on benches. When learners had to take notes or do exercises in their notebooks, they knelt on the floor and the benches became their tables. In such an environment, it is difficult for these learners to write neatly or to practise writing. Teachers find it difficult to move around in class and to reach individual learners. For the classes I observed in RakaiRP-C, the teacher could only move about in the front of the class; accessing the back of the class was impossible. If a teacher called upon a learner to write on the blackboard, this learner had to move over desks and benches to reach the front of the class. Such conditions, predominantly found in private schools, are not conducive to learning and to the implementation of a child-centred curriculum.

8.8 Evaluation-related challenges

Spolsky (2009:98) remarks that “he who manages high-stakes examinations also has a hand in managing languages”. Examinations are identified as a challenge to MT education implementation due to the fact that MTs are not examined at the end of primary school in Uganda, that teachers do not set these examinations themselves, and that teaching appears to be examination-focused. These interrelated issues are discussed below.

Cleghorn, Merritt, and Abagi (1989) have reported, in reference to the Kenyan situation, that end-of-primary-school examinations have an effect on instruction in schools (cf. Wolff, 2002). These scholars explain that at the end of standard 8, examinations in Kenya are written in English. In addition, these examinations are a determinant to a child’s entry to secondary school, and are used to rank schools according to performance. They explain that this in a way indirectly assesses teachers and headmasters. These authors state that because of such expectations, teachers orient their teaching practices to what is essential for examination purposes (cf. Kendrick, Jones, Mutonyi, & Norton, 2006). In addition, “examinations do not

provide teachers with an adequate incentive for understanding what they teach well enough to construct explanations for students” (Cleghorn et al., 1989:24). In the same vein, Ndlovu (2013:232) states that “much of language education policy is actually realised through tests as the indirect action and practice that serves as de facto language education policy”. In other words, language in tests signals whether or not a language is important in education (Cooper, 1989; Makoni, 2011; Shohamy, 2006). Some teachers in this study contended that they did not see the value of teaching (in) the MT when, at the end of primary school, learners were going to be examined in English only, and, in general, what is not going to be examined is regarded as not necessary to be taught or even learnt (see section 6.2). In the extracts provided in this section, an illustration is given of how teachers’ teaching practices are attuned to examinations. Consider in this regard Extract 86 (itself an extract from Extract 20), from an interview with a P5 teacher in RakaiRG-B:

Extract 86: *Teachers attune their lesson content to what will be examined*

- ¹T: **Mhm. Egeri gye tubeera nti tuli batonotono, nga bw’olabye abasomesa, twettanira nnyo bino ebigenda okubuuzibwa, bye tusinga okuteekako amaanyi. Kale weesanga nga babiwadde n’erinnya nti major subjects, zino minor subjects.**
Yes. Since we are quite few, just as you have observed the number of teachers, we tend to concentrate on what is to be examined; that is where our energies are rested. You find that subjects are given names such as major and minor subjects.
- ²MS: **Mhm.**
Yes.
- ³T: **Kati omwana ng’ali bubi nnyo mu kubala, kizibu nnyo okugamba nti oli ave mu kumusomesa okubala ate adde mu Luganda.**
If a child is badly off in Mathematics, it is very difficult for one to leave Mathematics and instead teach Luganda.
- ⁴MS: **Mhm.**
Yes.
- ⁵T: **Nga tetulabayo abimubuuza. Kye kimu ku binafuya abantu okusomesa Oluganda.**
And yet we do not anticipate anybody to examine him/her in that. That is one of the reasons that demotivate the teaching of Luganda as a subject.

IT2.BP5.8

As examinations are the motivation for teaching, teachers tended to structure their lessons in the form of examination questions. I use an example of a P3 Religious Education class in RakaiRP-C to illustrate this (Extract 87 below). In this class, the teacher introduced the lesson with a question. In turn 8, the teacher asks the learners to read what he had written on the blackboard. In turn 12, the teacher immediately introduces a question and mentions to the learners that an examiner might ask them a question such as the one he asked them to read in turn 13. Pontefract and Hardman (2005) and Walsh (2011) have observed that lessons

normally take the form of “Introduction, Delivery and Evaluation”, a format that is sometimes referred to as “Initiation-Response-Feedback”. These authors have reported that some teachers do not follow this format; some simply start delivering without introducing what is to be learnt. The lesson in Extract 87 below is typical of what these authors describe. As the lesson progressed (not shown in the extract), the teacher continued to emphasise the issue of examinations (“Evaluation”) to the learners, stating, “So if I ask you this question, I want you to memorise the answer” (OT3.CP3.153).

Extract 87: *Teacher alerting learners to a question that might appear in the examination*

- ₁LS: [Clap hands to welcome teacher] You are most welcome, dear teacher.
₂T: Thank you. Good morning!
₃LS: Good morning, Teacher.
₄T: How are you?
₅LS: We are alright, thank you, Teacher.
₆T: Don't make no^...? [Teacher writes on blackboard]
₇LS: Noise.
₈T: Yes, **munsomere mpulire.**
Yes, read for me.
₉LS: The role of Moses in the story of Exodus.
₁₀T: **Kati nkakasa nga twayogerako ku Exo^...**
I am sure we talked about Exo^...
₁₁LS: Exodus.
₁₂T: Exodus. Now I told you that the examiner is likely to ask you that. Can you read for me this?
₁₃LS: In which book of the Bible do we find the story of the Israelites leaving Egypt?

OT3.CP3.151

In none of the four study schools in Rakai district do the teachers set the examinations, be they end-of-term or end-of-year promotional examinations. All exams are bought from private companies which have fronted themselves as specialised examination setters at district level. The examinations set are of two kinds, one for government schools and another for private schools. Upon asking teachers why they did not set the exams themselves, they reported that it is expensive for them to do so – buying them is cheaper and more convenient. A danger related to external examinations is that teachers may fail to concentrate on what is supposed to be taught, and base their lesson content on the content covered by past papers, identifying material for learners to “cram” instead of engaging learners in active/actual learning. As the above extract shows, and as was observed in classroom observations (e.g., OT3.CP3.151), some teachers’ teaching practices are indeed driven by examinations.

Another danger is that, if teachers are not able to assess the learners themselves, the content of the question papers may fall outside of the scope of what learners have covered. The scope of the question paper could be too wide or too narrow when the examination is set externally. This means that the learners' scores will give an incorrect impression of the level of their achievement at particular times. This is not to argue that learners in different schools cannot sit similar exams; rather, this is to argue that learners need to be prepared slowly and guided for the national examinations which usually take place at the end of primary school.

A review of some examination papers revealed that they contained several language errors¹⁰⁷ that could reduce the comprehensibility of the questions for the learners. As teachers are not generally conversant with Luganda orthography (see section 8.4), it is doubtful whether such errors would have been corrected for the learners during the examination session. Below are samples of examination scripts (for government schools) with grammatical and/or orthographical errors identified (the errors in the original text are immediately followed by the corrected text in square brackets.):

Sample A: Eddiini, '*Religious Education*', P3 end-of-term-2 examination

- No.2. **yatonda [yantonda] ansiza [n'ansisa] ku nsi**
God created and placed me on earth
- No.9. **Ani yawebwa [yaweebwa] ebiragirowo 10 ku lusozi sinaayi [Sinaayi]**
Who was given the 10 commandments on Mt Sinai?

Sample B: Okusoma, 'Reading', P2 **Ekigezo ekikomekerezwa [ekikomekkerezwa] olusoma olusooka** – Thematic Curriculum
Okusoma, 'Reading', P2 End-of-term-1 examination, – Thematic Curriculum

- No.1. **Ekifo abayizi gyebagenda [gye bagenda] okuyiga kiyitibwa**
The place where children go to learn is called
- No.3. **Menya ebintu bibiri essomero lyebifuna [lye bifuna] okuva ku murirwano [muliraano]**
Mention three things which the school gets from neighbours
- No.5. **Omulirwaano¹⁰⁸ [Omuliraano] kye ki?**
Who is a neighbour?
- No.6. **Omuyizi yandiyambadde atya ng'ali kussomero [ku ssomero]**
How would a pupil dress while at school?
- No.7. **Omukulu wessomero [w'essomero]; sente [ssente]**
Head teacher; money
- No.8. **kilagala [kiragala]; myuufu [mmyufu]**
green; red

¹⁰⁷ Non-language-related errors were also present, such as incorrect (and confusing) numbering of questions.

¹⁰⁸ Notice that two related forms are spelled in different ways by the examination setters: *murirwano* in No. 3 but *omulirwaano* in No.5.

- No.9. **akasiisira [akasiisira]**
hut
- No.13. **kuwerera [kuweerera]; kuzanya [kuzannya]**
paying school fees; play
- No.16. **Tunaaba omubiri gwaffe nga tugyako [tuggyako] ekko**
We wash our body to rid it of dirt
- No.17 **Enyindo [Ennyindo]**
nose

Sample C: Eddiini, ‘*Religious Education*’, P1 end-of-term-2 examination

- No.2. **Bwetufuna [Bwe tufa] tugenda mu; gulu [ggulu]; taka [ttaka]**
when we die we go to; heaven; soil

I should also mention that the teachers reported that government school learners do not sit the same examinations as those of private schools, even when examinations are bought from the same company (for instance, see Sample B above). Teachers recounted that they had tried to have their learners sit similar examinations with private schools but that the learners failed miserably and as such they stopped the practice. They also mentioned that the examination setters are aware of this, which is why they produce two different sets of examinations.

An evaluation-related challenge to the successful implementation of MT education that is also, to a certain extent, access-related concerns the learners’ ability to read and comprehend examinations on their own. In Extract 88, from an interview with a teacher in RakaiRP-C, it is reported that the learners in this school were able to independently read and answer examination questions although all, apart from the Luganda examination, were set and written in English. The teachers in the government schools state that their learners in P1, P2, and sometimes P3, cannot independently read examination questions because they cannot read and understand English well enough yet. It is their teachers who read and interpret the questions for them before the learners supply the answers. This disparity can be explained by the number of years the two sets of learners have spent in school. Recall that these two types of schools use different LoLTs for P1 to P3, and so learners have different competencies in English in terms of reading, writing, and comprehension (see section 5.3).

Extract 88: *Learners’ ability to comprehend examination questions*

- ₁MS: **Uhm. Ekitegeeza wano ng’oggyeeko Oluganda subject zonna muzibuuza mu Luzungu?**
Okay, that means that apart from Luganda, all other subjects are examined in English?
- ₂T1: **Yee, era zonna ezisigadde ziba za Luzungu ate tetubasomera.**
Yes, the rest are in English and we do not read [questions – MES] for them.
- ₃MS: **Beesomera?**
Do they read by themselves?

- 4T1: **Beesomera.**
They read by themselves.
- 5MS: **Uhm, ne mu P1?**
Even in P1?
- 6T1: **Bonna, right from P1. Okuggyako abayambibwako, baby ne top.**
All of them, right from P1. It is only the baby and top classes that we give a hand to.
- 7MS: **Aba tannaba kukakasa kusoma kuli?**
A learner is not yet sure of reading?
- 8T1: **Uhm, eeh naye bano mu subjects endala era ky'omunnyonyola wano atakutte wano ng'osomesa mu kigezo omuwa buwi lupapula okuggyako question etali clear. Eeh, gy'omuddamu n'omusomera ate era tomunnyonyola omusomera busomezi, n'omugamba kino ky'abadde question yabadde bw'eti ne bw'eti ye n'asobola okwekolera.**
But the others in the rest of the subjects, whatever you teach, if one does not pick it up at the time of teaching, when an exam comes, you just give them an exam script. We only come in to assist if the question is not clear; for the unclear question, we can read for them, but still we do not explain further. You just tell them that this requires this and that, and then they can answer it by themselves.

IT2.CP2.115

The current state of examinations has several implications for the implementation of MT education and literacy development. Firstly, examinations have led to the neglect of MT teaching, as MTs are not examinable at the end of primary school. As Ndlovu (2013) and Shohamy (2006) point out, examinations are indicative of the *de facto* language-in-education policy. Tests are used to frame learners, teachers, parents, and the society at large into accepting a *de facto* language-in-education policy. Indeed, Shohamy reasons that one way of promoting indigenous languages is by formalising their testing in schools. Stroud (2002:45) argues that “the emphasis on metropolitan languages as languages of instruction at higher levels may negatively influence the attitudes towards the use of local languages at the lower levels”. Since there is no testing of any local language at the end of primary school, many schools do not see a reason for teaching such languages in their schools, not even in the lower grades (cf. Wolff, 2002).

Secondly, meaningful teaching and learning is not taking place because the teaching and learning is attuned to examinations; thus, there is a lot that is left out, e.g., learners are not given explanations (cf. Cleghorn et al., 1989) that would allow them to relate what they learn to their own life experiences. Some teachers encourage learners to “cram” what they are given, as the examiner is likely to assess it in the way the teacher passes it on to the learners.

Thirdly, learners do not focus on learning itself but on strategising to pass examinations. This means that upon leaving the school system, when examinations have either been passed or failed, that which was “crammed” for examinations purposes may not have meaningful

application elsewhere in the learners' lives. As such, the benefits of MT education – such as lifelong learning, which partly means finding meaning and utilising what was learnt throughout life – is not attained.

Apart from the seven areas identified by Kaplan and Baldauf (1997:127-139; 2003:217-220) as areas in which challenges can arise for a language-in-education policy (curriculum, access, personnel, materials and methods, community, resourcing, and evaluation), two further challenges were identified, namely letter naming and dialectal differences, and are discussed below.

8.9 The challenge posed by differences in letter naming

One of the first steps to reading is letter and sound identification and naming (cf. Hoover & Gough, 2013). This is the point at which the challenge of teaching reading in Uganda starts. As such, this then also poses a challenge for the success of MT education. Traditionally, letters and sounds have been taught differently in Luganda than in English. Luganda shares an alphabet with English except for two letters, /ŋ, ɲ/, which Luganda employs in its orthography but English does not. In addition, sounds/letter names in English (e.g., [bi:] for /b/, [ɛm] for /m/, [keɪ] for /k/) differ from the names assigned to the same sounds in Luganda (e.g., [ba] for /b/, [ma] for /m/, [ka] for /k/); all letter names for consonants in Luganda have /a/ added on to the consonant. Therefore, as teachers teach Luganda and English simultaneously from P1 onwards, the learners need to remember that the letters in each language have different names, even though the letters look the same.

The extract below (89) comes from an English lesson in a P1 class of 34 learners in RakaiRG-A (a government school). As the teacher¹⁰⁹ was teaching English, she expected the learners to respond to questions “in English” not “in Luganda”. In this lesson, the teacher asked the learners to spell the words that they had been learning about that day. In turn 1 of this extract, the learners were asked to spell the word *banana*. While doing so (in turn 2), some learners pronounced the letter /b/ as [bi:] and others as [ba]. After the main “culprit”, a boy named Kaweesi, had been identified (see turn 7), this learner was reminded by his

¹⁰⁹ When interviewing this teacher about her views on teaching learners in their MTs, she said that she felt “bad and sad” about it (see Extract 31), and that she did not expect learners to properly acquire English unless they had it as a LoLT. She herself had received all her schooling with English as the LoLT (IT1.BP1.5). This teacher shares this belief with many of the teachers who were interviewed in the study.

teacher that he was in an English lesson, not a Luganda one. When this “problem” persisted, Kaweesi was called (see turn 9) to the front of the class. He was asked to pronounce the letter “in English” not “in Luganda” (see turns 9 to 12). In addition, he was asked to write the letter on the blackboard.¹¹⁰

Extract 89: *Learner confuses English and Lugandan letter names (1)*

- ₁T: Okay, sit on your desk. Can you spell, let us spell this word. We are going to spell the word ‘bananas’. Let us spell it. Letter^...
- ₂LS: b [bi:]. [Some learners say “ba”]
- ₃T: Letter^...
- ₄LS: b [bi:]. [Some learners say “ba”]
- ₅T: This is letter^...?
- ₆LS: b [bi:]. [Some learners say “ba”]
- ₇T: **Bannange KAWEEESI**, is this letter “ba”? We are in English. We are not in Luganda **KAWEEESI**. **Owulidde KAWEEESI**? This is letter b [bi:].
Friends, KAWEEESI, is this letter “ba”? We are in English. We are not in Luganda, KAWEEESI. Have you heard, KAWEEESI? This is letter b [bi:].
- ₈LS: b [“bi”]. [One child still says “ba”]
- ₉T: **KAWEEESI**, come. **KAWEEESI**, come. Letter [ba] **yo gy’oyogerako, olwo Luganda. Owulidde?** But now we are in^...? English. We are in^...?
KAWEEESI, come. KAWEEESI, come. Your letter [ba] is in Luganda. Have you heard? But we are now in English. Have you heard? But now we are in^...? English. We are in^...?
- ₁₀KAWEEESI: English.
- ₁₁T: We call it letter “bi”. Letter^...?
- ₁₂KAWEEESI: “bi”.
- ₁₃T: Can you write it for me there? Write letter “bi” for me. Get this piece of chalk. **KAWEEESI** is going to write letter “bi”. **Uhm**, get a piece of chalk, write it there. Write letter “bi”. Letter “bi”. **Bannange KAWEEESI** is that letter “bi”? **Nedda nedda, bannange KAWEEESI** this is not letter “bi”. Who can write for us letter “bi”? **KAWEEESI** cannot. **Uhm, KIMERA** get... That’s why we call it letter “bi” when we are in English. **Wamma KIMERA** help us. **Eeeh, bannange labayo akatwe kano, naye nki? Ntuufu..**
Can you write it for me there? Write letter “b” for me. Get this piece of chalk. KAWEEESI is going to write letter “bi”. Yes, get a piece of chalk, write it there. Write letter “b”. Letter “b”. Oh KAWEEESI, is that letter “b”? No, no, KAWEEESI, this is not letter “b”. Who can write for us letter “b”? KAWEEESI cannot. Yes, KIMERA get... That’s why we call it letter “b” when we are in English. Please, KIMERA, help us. Look at this long stick, but is it what? It is right. Let us give him soda.
- ₁₄LS: **Saanukula, saanukula omuwe.**
Open, open, give him.
- ₁₅T: **Tanywedde soda waffe tumuddemu tumumuwe, yenna ayiise mu ttaka!** Let us give him a soda.
He has not drunk our soda, it all spilled on the floor! Let us give him a soda.
- ₁₆LS: **Saanukula, saanukula omuwe.**
*Open, open, give him.*¹¹¹

OT2.BP1.60-161

¹¹⁰ Although Kaweesi finds the task in turn 13 challenging, he does eventually succeed at it a short while later in the lesson, and then receives a round of applause from his classmates.

¹¹¹ The applause is given in the form of a gesture, namely that of opening a bottle of soda and giving it to him to drink. In rural areas, soda is a drink that people do not normally have and children love it. It is usually served on special occasions, e.g. at functions or to a visitor at home. Hence, the phrase is used here by the teacher as a gesture to thank and reward the learner (Kaweesi).

Recall that the curriculum and policy guidelines for P1 to P3 call for a one-teacher-one-classroom system. A teacher assigned to a class thus handles all the learning areas in the curriculum alone. This also adds to the challenge of letter naming: Learners hear their teacher say, for example, /b/ [ba] in a Luganda lesson and, within the hour, the same teacher tells them to call the same letter [bi:] in an English lesson. This is potentially confusing for the learners, particularly those in government schools, who come into contact with letter/sound correspondences for the very first time in P1.

Even the private school learners, who have attended pre-school and have done so in English, find these letter naming conventions confusing. Extract 90 below shows an interaction in a P2 class in RakaiRG-B, a private school. As in Extract 89, the teacher reminded the learner of the language that they were currently studying. Unlike in Extract 89, this was a Luganda lesson, and so the learners had to name letters using their Luganda names. These teachers appeared to aim at keeping the two languages, Luganda and English, separate, adhering to the the NCDC stipulation that the use of MT in English lessons is prohibited.

Extract 90: *Learner confuses English and Lugandan letter names (2)*

- ₁T: **Uhm, MAWANDA wamma ggwe olabyewo ki?**
 Yes, MAWANDA, what do you see?
- ₂MAWANDA: “y” [waji]. [English pronunciation instead of [ja], the Lugandan pronunciation – MES]
- ₃T: **Aaa, tuli mu Luganda.**
 No, we are in Luganda.

The main challenge illustrated in Extracts 89 and 90 relates to the question of how best to handle letter names: how should letter names be pronounced in the teaching of reading? As mentioned earlier, in the Ugandan context, there are two parallel systems for teaching sound/symbol correspondences and there is ample room for confusion. Yet more variation in practice derives from the co-existence of different methods for teaching reading, especially when English is the LoLT. There are schools which teach graphic symbols to represent sounds from an alphabetic point of view when teaching English, while others teach them from a phonics point of view. The NCDC encourages teachers to use the phonics approach. This approach is beginning to take hold in some urban schools in Uganda but as yet not many teachers are familiar with it. Before the advent of this practice, the teaching of sounds was handled from a purely alphabetical point of view, that is to say, English letters were pronounced differently from those in Luganda, i.e., English letter names included /b/ as [bi], /k/ as [ket], and /z/ as [zed], while Lugandan letter names included /b/ as [ba], /k/ as [ka], and

/z/ as [za], etc. When these two systems run concurrently, difficulties arise for some learners, especially since they are also learning two languages at the same time. The fact that English and Luganda share the same alphabet should be an opportunity to find common ground for handling the teaching of these sound/symbol correspondences in a way that does not confuse learners. Hoover and Gough (2013) have observed that letter knowledge has been shown to be a predictor of later reading success. Therefore, the lack of a unified approach to the teaching of letters and sound/symbol correspondences could well have a substantial effect on the rate at which children acquire reading skills, and thus on the perceived success of MT education. The confusion of sounds/letter names is a challenge to teaching in both Luganda and English in Uganda. If teachers used and adhered to the phonic method suggested by the NCDC, there would probably be fewer challenges in this regard (cf. Lomofsky, 2004). This should be possible since Ugandan languages use a similar alphabet to that of English.

8.10 Dialectal problems

Luganda, the dominant language in the study area, has several dialects.¹¹² Rakai district, the district in which the four study schools (RakaiRG-A, RakaiRG-B, RakaiRP-C and RakaiRP-D) are located, is part of a county, Buddu, in which one of the dialects of Luganda, Olunnabuddu, is spoken. This dialect of Luganda has some lexical terms that are different from standard Luganda. Other lexical items only differ from standard Luganda in terms of their tone. I present one extract to indicate the nature of dialectal issues in the classroom. (An in-depth discussion of these issues falls outside of the scope of this dissertation.) Extract 91 is from a P3 Science lesson in RakaiRG-B, where the theme of this lesson was disease vectors. When a learner named *enswera* (“flies”) as one such vector (turn 4), the teacher corrects this learner (turn 7) and asks the rest of the class to pronounce the correct word, “*All of you say, ensowera*” (turns 7 through 11). Note that the learners obey but then engage in a discussion amongst themselves about why the known word, *enswera*, would be incorrect (turn 12).

¹¹² Luganda is generally thought to have about five dialects, but no major study has established whether this is indeed the case.

Extract 91: *Dialectal differences in the classroom*

- 1T: **Endwadde. Amannya g'ebiwuka ebisaasaanya endwadde tugenda okulwala endwadde, tubeerako n'ebintu ebisaasaanya obulwadde obwo. Tubeerako n'ebintu ebisaasaanya ki?**
Diseases. Names of disease vectors. When we fall sick there are vectors responsible for spreading such diseases. We have vectors which do what?
- 2LS: **Obulwadde.**
[Spread] diseases.
- 3T: **Olowooza nga biki? NAKAMYA.**
What do you think these are? NAKAMYA?
- 4 NAKAMYA: **Enswera.**
Flies.
- 5T: **Enki?**
What?
- 6 NAKAMYA: **Enswera.**
Flies
- 7T: **Tugiyita ensowera. Mugambe nti ensowera.**
We call it "ensowera". All of you say, "ensowera"
- 8LS: **Enswera.** [Supposedly standard word for flies]
- 9T: **Enki?**
What?
- 10LS: **Enswera.**
Flies.
- 11T : **Enswera.**
Flies.
- 12LS: [Learners murmur that the word "ensowera" sounds different from what they are familiar with, namely "enswera".]

OT2.BP3.206

In the follow-up interview with this teacher, I established that she hails from the county in which this school is located, namely Buddu. The teacher narrated that it was the school head teacher that asked teachers to stop using the word *enswera* and instead use *ensowera*, the supposedly "standard" word for "flies". The teacher explained why she had to act the way she did in class, as shown in Extract 92 below.

Extract 92: *Teacher explaining choice of "standard" term over local dialect's term*

- 1T: **Bannange bonna babade tebakimanyi. Kubanga era emabegako awo, twalina student teacher, kubanga omulamwa ogwo gwajja nga tulina student, be baatandika n'okusomesa "our health".**
None of my colleagues knew about it. Because, recently, we had a student teacher; we reached that theme at the time we had student teachers. It is them who started teaching the theme, "our health".
- 2MS: **Uhm.**
Yes.
- 3T: **Naye omwana headmistress yasanga awandiise mbu "enswera" n'amugamba nti tewali kye bayita "nswera", kiyite "ensowera". Nange okuva olwo ne mmanya nti tugiyita "ensowera".**
But the headmistress found the student having written "enswera" and then the headmistress told her that there is no such a thing called "nswera", call it "ensowera". From then on, I thought we call it "ensowera".

IT1.BP3.164

Although this teacher says in turn 3 that ever since the head teacher “corrected” the student teacher, she thought that the correct word was *ensowera*, she did not use the so-called “correct” word when referring to flies in the rest of the lesson. This dialectal issue seemed to be a constructed problem in this class and/or school, because there was no teacher identified as coming from a different part of Buganda to warrant their use of the “standard” word *ensowera*. Elsewhere, dialectal issues have also been reported by other scholars. For instance, Woldemariam (2007) presents a case in Ethiopia where teacher placement was not planned, something that resulted in dialectal problems in schools. As teachers were placed seemingly randomly, they ended up being in areas where the dialects of the Gamo language were different from those they spoke. This created misunderstandings between learners and teachers. At times, teachers ended up misevaluating learners, something that upset the learners.

The educational implication of this challenge is that teachers need to be sensitised about the dialectal issues in teaching MTs both as a subject and as LoLT. In addition, examiners should also be sensitised about such issues so that learners are not wrongly evaluated, especially at the time of writing national examinations.

8.11 Conclusion

As this study set out to compare rural schools in southern Uganda to rural schools in northern Uganda and urban schools in Kampala, this chapter concludes by presenting the challenges for MT education in the north and in the capital. When asked what challenges teachers faced when teaching MT, the teachers in the rural, northern comparative schools responded as follows:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Respondent N1: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mixture of tribes. 2. Negative attitudes towards mother tongues. 3. Lack of clear curriculum. |
| Respondent N2: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Some words in English are not there in Luo. 2. Where mixture of tribes are, teaching through MT is difficult, e.g., in Barmwony where there are prison officers with different tribes and with different L1. |
| Respondent N3: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are no reference books. 2. There is negative attitudes towards teaching and learning mother tongue. 3. Criticism from parents (negatively). |
| Respondent N4: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children who are not acquainted with the language. 2. Children who were once in nursery schools. 3. Teachers who are not well trained in teaching local language. |

The responses from the northern rural school teachers resonate well with those reported by rural teachers in Rakai district, possibly indicating that the challenges in Rakai district may not be unique to that area. In section 6.2.1, I indicated that teachers regarded the presence of many languages in schools as a threat to MT teaching (see Respondents N1 and N2). In addition, there is a negative attitude in Oyam district towards MTs, as is the case in Rakai district (see Respondent N1). Negative parental attitudes towards MT are also seen to pose a challenge in the north (Respondent N3), once again, as is the case in Rakai district. As stated in section 8.6, in Rakai district, parents transfer their children from government to private schools because of the desire to have them learn English quickly and also to attend pre-school. Respondent N4 also mentioned the challenge of nursery schooling.

As regards the thematic curriculum, teachers in the north also viewed it as unclear (see Respondent N1). In addition, Oyam teachers lack teaching and learning materials, as Respondent N3 points out. There is also a challenge of translating/accessing the curriculum in local languages; for instance, Respondent N2 said that “*Some words in English are not there in Luo*”. This is an indication that the northern teachers face a challenge in translating thematic content into their MTs, and later on passing it on to the learners. There is also the challenge of teacher training in this area, as mentioned by Respondent N4. This data demonstrates that the challenges of MT education and the transition to English in Uganda are widespread and not limited to Rakai district.

When urban teachers in Kampala were asked about the challenges they face teaching in their environment, their responses were as follows:

- Respondent U1: The challenge I would say is tribalism. But as I said, it is pointless to talk about diversity of language background because learners find it easier to learn in a dominant language than learning in foreign language due to wide range of interaction.
- Respondent U3: Yes children are of different tribes and get many languages in my class. It is hard to use one local language so I must use English.
- Respondent U4: Not at all.
- Respondent U5: Expressing yourself or communicating to a child especially when they are from a different country.
- Respondent U6: As well there is a language problem some children find difficult to speak the same language with other.
- Respondent W1: Most schools are multilingual making it difficult to teach in one mother tongue language.
- Respondent W4: Large number of learners in class.

Respondent W5: Yes, language promotes and preserves culture however in town, there are different languages.

Respondent W12: Learners who come from rural areas not knowing English thus communication becomes difficult.

In Chapters 5 and 6, I demonstrated that the greatest challenge facing language policy implementation in urban schools is the assumption that policy makers and teachers have about the nature of multilingualism in urban schools. This view was strongly voiced in the above teachers' beliefs – see, for example, Respondents U3, U5, W1, W5, and W12. While not denying the fact that learners in urban schools speak different languages, I argue, based on the findings presented in Chapter 5 concerning the language repertoires of learners and teachers – and on earlier scholars' observations, e.g., Obanya (1999), Benson (2008) and Ndoleriire (2004), which demonstrate that urban areas may not be as completely multilingual as generally assumed – that, in the case of the two urban schools studied, Luganda is clearly the dominant language of learners, and it might then indeed be possible for these schools to select a dominant language as LoLT (cf. Ndoleriire, 2004).

In conclusion, the weight of the challenges discussed in this chapter has been increasing, some since the introduction of Universal Primary Education in 1997 when free access to schooling was granted for four children in every family in Uganda. This chapter has shown that most children in Uganda do not have well-trained and dedicated teachers and/or suitable learning materials, and that the education system is somewhat dysfunctional due to pre-primary education being offered only in English, being optional to children who join government rural schools and not being overseen by the Ministry of Education and Sports (or any government body for that matter). English is thus promoted at the expense of MTs during the pre-primary years, a situation which does not lend itself to the successful implementation of MT education from P1 onwards. Unless the challenges discussed in this chapter are addressed, the Education For All goals that Uganda set out to achieve with the introduction of MT education will remain out of reach.

Chapter 9

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND POINTERS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

9.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter provides a summary of the findings in this study and discusses the implications of these findings for the language-in-education policy and practices in schools. The focus I took, i.e., that of studying how teachers understand and manage the process of transitioning from MT as LoLT to English as LoLT in rural schools in Uganda, has ethnographically yielded an understanding of how teachers receive, understand, interpret, and act on language policy stipulations. Section 9.2 provides a summary of findings as they are related to the research questions and objectives. Section 9.3 considers the recommendations of this study which include suggestions that can possibly lead to improving the implementation of the language-in-education policy and related practices in Uganda. Section 9.4 highlights the potential contribution of this study to the body of knowledge on MT education, and section 9.5 addresses some of the lines of research that can be pursued in future to improve and strengthen the findings of this study.

9.2 Summary of findings

9.2.1 Language profiles in schools versus language-in-education policy

Language profiles of study schools, individual classrooms, as well as individual teachers were compiled in this study. This was done in order to gain an impression of the nature of multilingualism in rural and urban schools. It was thought necessary to establish the linguistic repertoires of learners and individual teachers with the awareness that the language-in-education policy requires rural schools to select a dominant language in the community/school to be used as LoLT. In addition, the language policy assumes that urban schools are multilingual to the extent that they cannot choose a dominant local language; as such, urban schools may use English to instruct learners throughout primary school.

The nature of multilingualism in Ugandan communities appears as a source of various challenges that are currently facing MT education in Uganda. Notably, private schools have

constructed as a problem the selection of one dominant local language in the community to be used as LoLT; the presence of different languages among learners in urban schools is given as the reason for not offering them MT education. However, the linguistic repertoires of individual schools (both government and private), classrooms, and individual teachers have revealed that extreme multilingualism is in fact not a challenge, and I argue that MT education is possible even in private schools, on three counts:

- (i) Considering the language-in-education policy of selecting a dominant local language: all schools in this study have a clear dominant local language that can be used as a LoLT. In the case of Rakai and Kampala districts, this language is Luganda (as was found in other studies as well; cf., Read & Enyutu, 2004, and Ndoleriire, 2004).
- (ii) Considering the linguistic repertoires of learners in schools: this study has found that there are classrooms which teachers labelled as comprising only Luganda speakers, while others had one to five learners who spoke other languages. Moreover, people in multilingual contexts usually learn a dominant language in a community (cf. Obanya, 1999; Glanz, 2013). Children can even have more than one MT, and sometimes it is hard to tell which of the languages that they have in their repertoire is in fact their MT (cf. Brock-Utne, 2011). The multilingual repertoires of learners can be used as a resource to contribute to MT education rather than hinder it.
- (iii) Thirdly, even though private schools claim to be too multilingual, they are able to select Luganda as the MT to be taught as a subject for the first three years. In addition, in instances where a teacher had to use “learners’ MT” in the classroom instruction (for instance, during code switching to give instructions or supplementary explanations), Luganda was used, and teachers often referred to this language as “our mother tongue”. Therefore “extreme multilingualism” is a constructed problem, particularly in rural private schools.

Considering the above, using MT as LoLT should be possible in rural communities in both government and private schools. Records of linguistic repertoires of schools as undertaken in this study should be performed on a wider scale (cf. Benson, 2005 who explains how PRAESA, an NGO, carries out linguistic profiling in South African communities) in order to see whether this constructed problem of multilingualism is wide spread.

For urban schools (those studied here, at least), it has also been found that there is a clear dominant language. Although other urban schools may have complex multilingual profiles, it may be wise to decentralise the language policy in urban schools so that schools with clear dominant languages can provide learners with MT education. The two urban schools investigated in this study – both located in the capital, Kampala, a district believed to be too multilingual for MT education – had a clear dominant language. This has been evidenced by the linguistic repertoires provided by teachers, and the explanations that these teachers have given to support their repertoires.

9.2.2 Teachers' attitudes towards language policy and practice

Language policy documents indicate that the main objective of employing MTs in education is to facilitate easy access to learning not only the English language but also non-language subject content in the first years of primary schooling. In support of this, some teachers in this study voiced their belief that learners do indeed find learning in their MTs easier. This study has revealed, however, that there are also teachers, in both government and private schools, who believe that MT education is not very helpful to learners. The overriding arguments underlying this strongly held view among teachers is, firstly, that learners cannot become proficient in English after having used it as the LoLT for only four years (from P4 to P7), and therefore learners can best learn English by using it as LoLT throughout primary school; and, secondly, that MT teaching is a “waste of time” as it is not examined at the end of primary schooling.

In addition, urban teachers believe that, as their classrooms are “too multilingual”, it is wise to use a foreign language as the LoLT. They suggest Kiswahili and English as the suitable languages of learning in Uganda's education system. The ideas that teachers express are indicative of misinformation on the value of MT education as well as ignorance about the possible pedagogies of learning a L2 like English. As pointed out earlier, the beliefs and opinions that teachers hold are symptomatic of the colonial legacies of viewing English as the only language through which knowledge can be acquired, and as a tool to climb the social and economic ladder (cf. Stroud, 2002; Tollefson, 1991).

9.2.3 *Teachers' views on the thematic curriculum*

This study also sought teachers' views on the thematic curriculum which is instructed through MT. Respondents in this study reported that the thematic curriculum is problematic in many ways: It has been called "shallow" and "repetitive in nature" by respondents. In addition, the curriculum does not have enough supportive materials to assist teachers in instructing it; those that are available are either irrelevant to a certain degree or not sufficiently detailed, while some learning areas have been reported to have no guiding materials at all. Furthermore, the curriculum is not wholly translated into the various MTs, which means that it is inaccessible to many teachers. This study's findings reveal that the available materials furthermore contain misleading information and many language errors (e.g., in NCDC, 2006b).

The thematic curriculum is contested by private schools in preference for a subject-based curriculum. The disregard of the thematic curriculum by private schools creates competition between private and government schools, to the extent that some teachers in government schools "stealthily" use private school materials to instruct their learners. These practices are indicative of a dysfunctional educational system, especially when what happens in private schools is in sharp contrast to what happens in government schools, yet both sets of schools are under the administration of one education system. These practices appear not to be monitored by the authorities at all, something that has complicated the process of MT teaching and the teaching of English as a subject. This study has also revealed that teachers misunderstand the terms "MT" and "thematic curriculum", in the sense that the two are considered synonymous. This is partly the reason why private schools disregard the thematic curriculum; they consider teaching "MT teaching" to mean "thematic curriculum" and vice versa.

9.2.4 *The teaching and use of mother tongue as language of learning and teaching*

Research and scholars in bilingual education recommend long-term use of MTs in education. When MT is limited to only the first three or four years of primary schooling, it is likely that the positive effects of instruction through a familiar language disappear after learners have transitioned to another LoLT. Respondents in this study had mixed feelings about the

teaching and use of MTs in education. Some believed that MTs facilitated children's learning whereas others thought otherwise.

The teaching of MT as a subject is limited to only the first three classes, i.e., P1 to P3, in government and private schools. Recall that in government schools, the teaching of MT is done at the teachers' convenience, as they believed that it is not worth spending energy on a subject that will not to be examined. As for private schools, MT teaching is done in P1 to P3, not because of examinations, but because they do not want to appear completely opposed to the official language-in-education policy. So the (lack of) teaching of and disregard for MT as a subject in the early years of primary school is partly linked to the (lack of) examinations expected at the end of primary school.

Regarding the use of MT as LoLT, only government schools' practices are consistent with this policy. Private schools do not use MT as LoLT, claiming that they are "too multilingual" to select a local language to be used as LoLT. This practice of disregarding MT in preference for English in private schools has been observed to arise from the pressure from parents, who want their children to learn English as fast as possible. However, some success in the acceptance of MT education has been noted in the northern Ugandan schools where the Mango Tree Lajo Literacy Project is operative; this has come about because of parental involvement and education about the importance of schooling in MT. The success of MT education in this region is also attributable to the presence of many NGOs, including the Mango Tree Lajo Literacy Project, which promote MT education in this area.

Evidence in this study has revealed that learners are more lively and active in lessons instructed through MT and in MT-as-a-subject lessons. Whenever a teacher allowed learners to use their MTs, they freely, quickly, and correctly participated in the learning process. This means that if teaching and learning is to be more meaningful to learners, opportunities should be created for them to learn in their MTs.

9.2.5 Literacy development

Experts in the field of bilingual education who have studied the importance of literacy acquisition in MT – like Alidou (2006), Cummins (2000a, 2005, 1992), Heugh (2011), Trudell et al., (2012), etc. – have emphasised the ease with which children begin to learn to

read. However, this study has revealed that most teachers (both in private and government schools) have a preference for early learning of English. In addition, we have seen that reading, the prime predictor of later success in education and development (e.g., Trudell et al., 2012), is handled in a disjointed manner: learners encounter difficulties when they are introduced to reading in two different languages (mostly in government schools), and also when they are introduced to reading first in English and later in MT and then again in English (as in private schools). The classroom vignettes discussed have revealed a need for a careful laying of the foundation of learning in the early years and that teachers need more support in this regard. The greatest challenge identified in this respect is letter/sound naming and identification. This is attributable to the wider policy context where the LoLT varies significantly due to the gap between language-in-education policy and practice, and to the discretionary pre-school provision that tends to be in English in private schools. The challenge that this poses to the teaching of reading has been discussed.

One thing remains sure, though – that “reading, writing, and use of print and screen texts are now crucial means of getting things done in the world of work and education, as well as in local life worlds” (Martin-Jones, 2011:249). If reading is best and easily acquired in one’s most familiar language (MT), then there is no shortcut for Ugandan children to easily and quickly acquire literacy skills apart from fortifying the endeavours of MT education in Uganda.

9.2.6 Learners’ fluency in English before and after transition

The data gathered in this study indicates that learners’ fluency in English before and after transition is poor. Furthermore, findings in this study indicate that learners in private schools are more proficient in English than those in government schools. This difference is explainable on three counts. The first is that learners in private schools attend pre-primary and learn (in) English at this stage, whereas learners in government schools join P1 without this background. Secondly, learners in private schools learn in English in the years during which government school learners learn in their MTs. Thirdly, learners in private schools are forced to speak English at school while those in government schools communicate with one another and to their teachers in their MTs. These three scenarios position these two sets of

learners to receive different exposure to the English language, and English language learning opportunities are not comparable between them.

It is also deducible from this study that the NCDC's (2008) predictions of learners' fluency and of having acquired a vocabulary of up to 800 words in English by the end of P3 are unrealistic and are not supported by research. These predictions set false expectations among teachers and learners. The teaching of English and learners' fluency in English are complicated in government schools: firstly, teachers are of the opinion that the time allocated to the subject is not sufficient. Secondly, the teaching and learning materials used by government school teachers do not facilitate proper acquisition of the language.

It is however worth pointing out that the English receptive skills of learners in government schools are more developed than their production (oral and written) skills. This has been evidenced by learners being able to respond appropriately to questions and instructions given in English by answering back in their MT (Luganda).

The conclusion drawn here is that learners' inadequacy in English is partly attributable to their limited exposure to the language, not only at school but also in their communities. As such, learners need more time to learn English, and this can be created in two ways, namely (i) by increasing the number of years of MT education – experts recommend 6 to 8 years, and (ii) by increasing the number of hours for teaching English as a subject in schools. I should however point out that if the length of MT education in primary schools is increased without convincing teachers and parents about the importance of this type of education, the gap between policy and practice will remain as is.

9.2.7 Teachers' perceptions of the teaching and learning of English

This study has revealed that there is a widespread perception among teachers that the best way to learn English is to use it as a LoLT. When teachers were asked how they felt about teaching learners in their MTs while they themselves received their schooling in English, their responses were negative, and they indicated that they did not think that learners would be successful in English unless it was used as a LoLT. The aim for better acquisition of English is also one of the main reasons for private schools' disregard of MT as LoLT in preference for an early start of English instruction. As discussed in Chapter 2, it is a

misconception that the best way to teach English is to use it as a LoLT. There is evidence to suggest that learners who first learn in their MT while studying English as a subject for an extended period do better in English than those who use it as a LoLT from the start of their schooling (Cummins, 1992; Fafunwa et al., 1989; Ramirez et al., 1991; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2011; Thomas & Collier, 2002; Walter & Chuo, 2012). These authors indicate that the belief, which is also held by teachers in this study, has been around for many years and is not supported by research.

The teaching of English in private schools is complicated even further by the employment of un(der)qualified teachers. In addition, the failure of the Ministry of Education and Sports to monitor such practices should be viewed as a warning sign for the poor quality of education in the country. (The decisions to employ un(der)qualified teachers affects the implementation of any curriculum negatively, but I need to point out that the teaching of MT as a subject is obviously also negatively affected here, because someone who did not study teaching and did not receive any schooling in MT now teaches learners the vocabulary, grammar, and orthography of MT.)

Another observation about the teaching and learning of English in Uganda is that the language needs to be handled as though it is a L2 for learners. There is a very small minority of children in urban areas (Kampala in particular) who already know English by the time start school. For the majority of children in Uganda, English is heard and learnt for the first time in the school context. To suggest that these children learn in a language which they do not yet know and have no opportunity to acquire outside of school is to do them a linguistic injustice.

9.2.8 Teachers' perceptions of what contributes to failure of transfer to English

Teachers have mixed feelings about transfer of skills to English. For instance, teachers believe that MT skills can transfer to English, but when asked whether learners who start learning in their MTs do better than those who learn in English right from the start, there was an almost equal number of those who agreed and disagreed.

It is also noticeable that teachers in this study do not differentiate between learning a language and learning in a language. In other words, teachers do not draw a distinction between a language taught as a subject and a language being used as a LoLT. Teachers are

not concerned about the fact that learners start school with no knowledge of English; they seem unaware that for a language to be used as a LoLT, one should first acquire it up to a certain level of proficiency. In addition, it is not obvious to teachers that it is challenging to learn a language while simultaneously learning in that language. This is why many teachers think that it is more beneficial for learners to learn in English as soon as they start school, as they sit their examinations in English at the end of primary school. Teachers and policy makers should be sensitised to the difference between learning a language and learning in a language (cf. Cummins, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c).

Concerning learners dropping out of school because of a change of LoLT, the respondents in this study believe that a change of LoLT from MT to English is not a key factor in this issue. However, evidence elsewhere indicates that MT education plays a significant role in helping learners to continue in the education system (Barron, 2012; Benson, 2005, 2008b; Cummins, 1979; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2011). This study cannot confirm the teachers' claims, as no data was gathered on learner enrolment in order to study dropout rates.

It has also emerged from this study that the transition class, P4, is not handled well. Even if one acknowledges that three years of MT teaching is not enough to allow transfer to English, the teachers in this study are not well equipped to handle the transition class. Firstly, the training they received in this regard was inadequate. Secondly, neither the teachers nor the learners of the transition class were provided with appropriate materials. Thirdly, the dual switch, i.e., from MT to English as LoLT and from themes to subjects, appears to be problematic, as reported by teachers. In sum, teachers of P4 and P5 classes believe that, by the end of P3, learners are not ready to transition to English as LoLT due to the manner in which English as a subject is handled, and due to the manner in which content in other language areas is taught. They are particularly concerned about the fact that what is learnt in P1 to P3 is regarded as “news”, which learners do not take very seriously, and therefore this manifests as a challenge later in P4 and onwards.

9.2.9 Teacher training and preparation

This study has revealed that teacher training needs are a great challenge to MT education and to the transition to English. Given that Uganda's education system does not offer training for MT education for primary school teachers, teachers feel unprepared to handle MT teaching.

They specifically feel that their orthography and translation skills are very limited. In addition, there is no intensive training offered in teaching English as a language. Even though teachers may qualify as English teachers in primary schools, there is a need to prepare them to manage the transition process and also to upgrade their training to graduate level.

Scholars like Heugh et al. (2007:109) recommend that if English is learnt as a L2, it should be taught by well-trained teachers who have a “near-native-like proficiency” if this language is to be effectively learnt by learners. However, Kirkpatrick (2013) is of the opinion that it is no longer necessary for teachers to have a native-like accent; he argues instead for a specialisation in intercultural communication. His argument is based on the fact that there are now many different “world Englishes” which makes it difficult to have a so-called “native-like accent”. Even though Kirkpatrick argues for intercultural communicative competence in English, he agrees with other authors who state that teachers should be very proficient in English for them to facilitate its acquisition among learners, especially in many African communities where exposure to the language is often limited to that received in school contexts.

Concerning teacher preparation, this study has found that at the time of introducing MT education, teachers received hurried and superficial training. In addition, very few teachers were trained at each school; these teachers were then expected to replicate the training for others but they could not do it well, because they themselves felt inadequately trained. This has made implementation of MT teaching difficult, because teachers cannot satisfactorily consult among themselves. Fafunwa et al. (1989) have noted that teacher preparation in the form of in-service training, evaluation workshops, as well as special workshops for the introduction of new materials and for writing and teaching methods, etc. is crucial before programme implementation can commence. As was the case in Nigeria, as Fafunwa et al. (1989) report, the NCDC and the Ministry of Education and Sports may have assumed that teachers can teach their MTs without having to be retrained, something these authors regard as an error.

As an indicator of a dysfunctional educational system, the current education system in Uganda is set to downplay MT education. For instance, ever since the inauguration of this policy in 1992, there are no Primary Teacher Colleges that train teachers to teach MTs. Also, of all the local languages used as LoLT in primary schools (over 36), only eight (UNEB,

2013) are opted for by students who are the prospective candidates for Primary Teacher Colleges. One wonders then where teachers of MTs in Ugandan primary schools are trained.

9.2.10 Teachers' educational strategies to scaffold transition and transfer to English

The results of this study indicate that although policy guidelines require transition to occur in the fourth school year (in the case of government schools), P4 is too early for learners to do so. Teachers try to introduce English instruction in the fourth and fifth years, but learners need more time to learn English as a subject to allow for complete transfer of skills from MT to English. Teachers use code switching, translation, safetalk, as well as the simultaneous use of MT and English to scaffold the transition to English in P4 and P5. The findings of this study have also revealed that even though code switching may be viewed as scaffolding for transition and transfer, some teachers use it as a mechanism to cover up their limited proficiency in English.

This study also found that since the teaching and learning of English and non-language subject content are not comprehensively handled in the first three years, transition and transfer are constrained. As demonstrated in Chapter 7 and 8, there are many issues involving English and other non-language subject content which are not covered in P1, P2 and P3 due to teacher absenteeism, a too heavy workload, poor delivery methods, and a lack of reference materials. Because of these weaknesses, teachers have to revisit in P4 and P5 all that should have been learnt in the first three years (recall, e.g., P5 learners in RakaiRG-A who could not provide a set of vowel letters in English and their teacher telling them that they needed to be demoted to P1). Overall, respondents in this study reported that transfer and transition only begin to occur in P6. This point (P6) corresponds well to the recommended minimum number of years of MT education (Ball, 2010; Cummins, 1980, 1992; Dutcher, 2003; Gándara, 1999; McCarty & Nicholas, 2012; Ramirez et al., 1991; Walter & Chuo, 2012). This is evidence to suggest that the MT education model in Uganda is due for revision.

9.2.11 Challenges of mother tongue education and the transition to English

This study has revealed the following (amongst others) as challenges affecting MT education in Uganda: pre-primary schooling that occurs selectively but always only in English, the non-

examination of MTs at the end of primary school, parents' negative attitudes towards MT teaching, lack of teacher training in MTs, poor attendance and commitment of teachers, paucity of teaching and learning materials, the one-teacher-one-class system, dialectal differences, and teachers' negative attitudes towards MT teaching. I have argued, in reference to Stroud (2002) and Tollefson (1991), (i) that the challenges appear to be a response to the colonial language policy structures that are still existent or that have been set up by government structures, and (ii) that there were not enough preparations done before introducing MT education (cf. Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, 2003). The current government structures greatly undermine policies that promote MT education in communities. For example, the officialisation of English, not only in the education system but also in all government bodies, is a clear signal to the community that proficiency in this language is key to accessing opportunities in the country. Subsequently, it is "natural" for schools to introduce English in the early years of learning. This is reinforced by the myths surrounding L2 learning, as argued by Benson (2008), Dutcher (1997), and McLaughlin (1992).

Because of these challenges, there is a wide gap between stated policy and policy in practice. The task ahead could be to convince teachers and parents that MT education is not intended to deny children the opportunity to learn and become proficient in English, but that introducing learning in a child's familiar language(s) makes it easier and simpler for the child to learn and even to acquire other languages like English (cf. Cummins 1980, 1981, 2000). In addition, it is important to understand the linguistic ideologies in schools where language policies are implemented.

9.2.12 The teaching of English and exposure to English language learning

This study has also revealed that there is an imbalance in English language competency between government and private school learners. This disparity is partly created by the limited exposure to English for government school learners. As other scholars have pointed out, and as observed by the NCDC, rural learners may have their teachers and/or school as the only source of spoken English. This study has found that government school learners' inadequacy in English is partly attributed to this. I have argued that there is a need for concretising the learning and teaching strategies suggested by the NCDC in the teaching and learning of English. I particularly want to point out the use of the news period, which should

present learners with an opportunity to practise oral English and, at times, allow teachers to ask learners to write their news in both their MT and English. Such speaking and translation exercises provide invaluable opportunities for learners to expand their vocabulary by learning from one another, as the classroom vignettes from Manyak (2004, 2006, 2008) have demonstrated. To set the record straight, I should mention that there were no assessments conducted to determine whether there is also an imbalance with regard to the knowledge of subjects, themes or topics between government and private school learners.

It has been revealed that the teaching of English and MT, particularly of sounds/letter names, is problematic for teachers. For instance, the teachers emphasised to their students that sounds/letters are named differently in English from how they are named in Luganda. I indicated in Chapter 8 that this approach confuses learners in the learning process as they are simultaneously learning the sound names of these two languages.

In summary, private schools in rural areas teach pre-primary and follow the pre-2006 (old subject-based) curriculum in primary school (all in English), whereas the neighbouring schools (government schools attended by learners whose parents cannot afford to send their children to a private school) in the same larger community provide no opportunities to attend pre-primary school, and follow the thematic curriculum in MT up to P3 after which a switch is made to the subject-based curriculum in English. Children (specifically those in rural areas who attend private schools) are triply disadvantaged as they are taught (i) by teachers who are substandardly trained, (ii) in a language that they do not know, and (iii) in a language to which they have no exposure once they leave the school compound. All of these issues directly affect the teaching and learning of English.

9.2.13 The transition class

This study has demonstrated that learners who attend government schools experience two critical stages of transition when they are promoted to P4. They transition to learning from MT to English as LoLT and also from thematic curriculum to subject-based curriculum. Recall that teachers have reported that the teaching and learning in P1 to P3 (in government schools) is not “serious” as content is given to learners in form of news and so children do not take it seriously. On the other hand, learners who attend private schools do not have these two points of transition: learners in private schools start learning English and through English in

pre-primary while those in government schools start learning English in P1 and through English in P4/5.

9.3 Practical recommendations

The findings in this study clearly point to challenges and impediments in the implementation of MT education in Uganda. The challenges range from loopholes in the policy guidelines to the lack of facilitation of the MT programme. Generally speaking, the recommendations of this study focus on changes that should occur in the language-in-education policy and its implementation before learners will be able to reap the benefits of MT education.

9.3.1 Language-in-education policy

In her recent publication “Keeping the promise of the Millennium Development Goals: Why language matters”, Romaine (2013:3) states that “language policy matters because the poorest groups in society tend to have least access to the dominant languages favoured at school”. She adds that “as long as education is delivered in international languages at the expense of local vernaculars, education will reproduce rather than reduce inequality of access. Only by putting language at the centre of development can we close the gaps” (Romaine, 2013:6). In concluding her reflection, Romaine (2013:18) remarks that “development cannot reach to the most marginalised without speaking to them in their own languages”. Romaine’s insights denote that language-education is a pivotal action in the attempt to live up to the promises of the Millennium Development Goals and Education For All (or Learning For All; World Bank, 2011). However, the challenge observed in this study is that learners’ MTs are removed very early on in their school careers, are handled irregularly, and are not used as LoLTs by private schools, practices that deny learners the opportunity to enjoy and learn through familiar languages. It is hoped that Ugandan learners can learn better than is currently the case. Even though there are some benefits that accrue from early-exit programmes, these benefits have been reported to disappear soon after transition away from the MT as LoLT (Benson, 2008a; Walter & Chuo, 2012).

It is against this background that I suggest that if Uganda is to uphold the transitional model, then transition to English as LoLT be delayed until P6, so that MT education lasts for 5 years.

Fortunately, the teachers who were the respondents in this study have observed that learners stabilise in learning in English in their sixth year of schooling. In addition, classroom observations in government schools have indicated that even after transition, learners in P5 had not developed their communicative English except for their receptive skills. This suggests that learners need more time to acquire sufficient vocabulary and grammar in English to enable them to access what is being taught in this language.

I therefore suggest that the language-in-education policy be modified to match that of a late-exit model. Although the Government White Paper (1992) is not fully operationalised, it is opportune that it provides for eight years of primary schooling. It is stated that MT is the LoLT for four years but without a transitional year.¹¹³ If the language policy is modified to that of a late-exit model, the years for primary schooling can be extended to eight years (as it is stated in the Government White Paper), so that MT education lasts for five years (P1 to P5) with transition then taking place in the sixth year (P6), and English becoming the LoLT in P7 to P8. In addition, experts recommend that MT should be kept as a subject as this also benefits learners' acquisition of skills in their L2s. This study has also revealed that when MT is not examined at the end of primary school, it is a demotivator to MT implementation.

That aside, considering that the exposure to spoken English in rural communities is very limited, it would be more beneficial if bilingual education, i.e., simultaneous use of MT and English as LoLT, is formalised and encouraged in schools. This study's findings have revealed that when teachers taught in English but allowed learners to contribute to learning in their MT, the learning process was livelier than that in classes where teachers stuck to the monolingual use of English where learners were constrained and could only repeat after their teacher. Given the fact that the current language-in-education policy in the end promotes English only which ultimately turns out to be a monolingual language-in-education policy, the promotion of a bilingual form of education (or translanguaging) would be practically more useful to Ugandan learners.

Another recommendation is that questions on linguistic matters be included in national censuses. This will help government to know which languages are spoken where and by how many people which, in turn, will help in language-in-education planning.

¹¹³ The transitional class was introduced in the policy in 2006/2007 when MT education was rolled out.

9.3.2 Curriculum design and implementation

This study has established that the current MT curriculum, namely the thematic curriculum, is problematic. It is evaluated by teachers as shallow, non-comprehensive, and repetitive in nature. In addition, it is accompanied by inadequate and poor teaching and learning materials. A careful consideration of this problem reveals that, because of the linguistic ideology towards English, curriculum planners regard investment in MT curriculum and materials as less profitable (see Stroud, 2001, 2002; Tollefson, 1991 for an exploration of the reasons why MTs receive less investment than English). It is herewith recommended that the thematic curriculum be translated into all MTs through which it is to be instructed, and appropriate accompanying materials be developed and distributed. In addition, if thematic teaching is to be pursued in the long term, teachers should receive training on it in their teacher training colleges.

9.3.3 Nursery/pre-primary education in Uganda

The disregard for pre-primary education and the absence of a MT policy at this level of education are viewed as symptomatic of a dysfunctional education system. The pre-school level should be made compulsory for all Ugandan children. As reading and writing are critical skills to master in the early years of learning, and since they determine the progress of a child's educational life (Trudell et al., 2012; Walter & Dekker, 2011), this should be a priority area for investment in education. A strong Early Childhood Development policy could see all children in Uganda enjoy the same learning opportunities, including the same language learning opportunities. Evidence presented in this dissertation indicates that the elective pre-school provision is currently creating a huge gap between learners within a single education system. In order to minimise the difficulties encountered in language-policy implementation in P1 (in private schools) resulting from the use of English during pre-primary schooling, the government of Uganda should expand its current language-in-education policy to include this level of education. This should lead to prolonged exposure to MTs for all pre-school Ugandan children, and allow these children to first develop their MTs before they are exposed to English as a L2 and as a LoLT. In such a manner, additive instead of subtractive bilingualism will be promoted. Secondly, with the benefits that come with starting school in the MT, and the dangers that might come when children are introduced to learning another language without mastering their MT (cf. Collier, 1987; Cummins, 2000b,

2001; Fillmore, 1991; Lee, 1996; Thomas & Collier, 1997), government should consider providing equal opportunities to all children to start their learning in their MTs. Thirdly, a language-in-education policy for this level of education should come with a harmonised national curriculum.

9.3.4 Teacher preparation/training and education

I have demonstrated in this study that teachers in rural primary schools have either inadequate or no training as far as MT education is concerned. I have also demonstrated how teachers in these schools teach and handle learners in class. Furthermore, I have indicated that teachers are aware of their inadequacy in MT teaching. However, even where teachers have not admitted their inadequacy in English language teaching, the evidence provided in this study gives clear indications that the teaching of English is poorly handled. Scholars have reported that it is wrongly assumed at the introduction of MT education programmes that teachers who can speak their MTs well can also teach them well. This assumption is based on the thinking that persons who have been trained to teach, for instance Mathematics, can transfer such pedagogical methodologies to the teaching of MTs (e.g., Benson, 2008; Cohen & Ball, 1990; Fafunwa et al., 1989; Spillane et al., 2002). In this regard, Cohen and Ball (1990:223) ask a pertinent question: how can teachers teach a mathematics that they never learned, in ways they never experienced? This is why Probyn (2009) and Klaus (2003) argue for the need to match sets of practical needs in the education system. In this case, there is a need to match teacher training to practical needs in the education system.

A further recommendation is that the Ministry of Education and Sports should be more vigilant in monitoring, supervising, and regulating the recruitment of teachers in private schools. There is a need to determine minimum competencies in English for one to be assigned the role of English teacher. This will enable learners to be exposed to teachers who have received formal training, who have the skills to relate to children, and are able to gauge the appropriate content to present to learners at different ages.

It is further recommended that the one-teacher-one-classroom system¹¹⁴ be revised as this has proved to be impractical. The practice not only places a heavy preparation and teaching load on teachers, but teachers are also asked to teach curriculum areas which they may not be comfortable handling. This affects the quality of teaching and thus also the quality of learner output.

9.3.5 Teaching and learning materials

It has emerged in this study that government schools are poorly provided for in terms of teaching and learning materials, and that the situation is worse in classes taught in MTs. Where materials in government schools are available (in certain cases, such materials are completely unavailable), they arrive late, are inadequate in terms of curriculum coverage and/or are completely unrelated to what the curriculum stipulates. It is recommended that the Ministry of Education and Sports provides schools with not only enough teaching and learning materials but also materials that are suitable given the curriculum demands. Although one can appreciate the fact that Uganda is a multilingual country, and that providing learning materials in all of its 46 languages (or more) is challenging both logistically and cost-wise, evidence elsewhere suggests that this is possible with proper planning (cf. Klaus, 2003). Scholars have demonstrated that provision of teaching and learning materials is possible especially if the community is involved in producing these materials locally, thereby reducing the costs involved (cf. Malone & Paraide, 2011; Klaus, 2003; Fyle, 2003.) It would also be beneficial if teachers can be trained in material development (cf. Fafunwa, et al., 1989). I want to emphasise that the teaching of MT cannot flourish if it is obvious to teachers that there is no will from the government or the Ministry of Education and Sports to provide as much and as relevant learning materials for MTs as they do for English.

One other aspect related to teaching and learning materials that should be revised and closely monitored is the issue of examinations. This study has revealed that examinations are a great distractor to MT teaching. There is a need to have MTs examined at national level in primary

¹¹⁴ This would be functional if the system allowed for the division of classes into smaller groups (e.g., three streams) of learners, as the workload would then be reduced. In this case, teachers would be responsible for the three P1 classes and for teaching all the material. This would only be possible if they are trained to teach the thematic curriculum (rather than individual subjects). However, this comes with serious implications for teacher training.

schools, and results from this subject should contribute to children's entry requirements to secondary schools. In addition, it is important that teachers start setting their learners' examinations at the end of each term. Having general/broad-based examinations set by private individuals from whom schools then purchase already set examination papers creates tension and unnecessary competition in schools. I have also demonstrated that since the teaching and learning has become examination-oriented, the teaching and learning in class is at times almost superficial, targeting examination questions only.

9.3.6 Advocacy for the value of mother tongue education

In light of the findings of this study, it has become apparent that teachers and parents are not familiar with the benefits of MT education in children's formative years. There is a need to educate parents, teachers, and the general public about the benefit of starting school in a familiar language. In the case of Papua New Guinea (Klaus, 2003), a similar problem of advocacy existed: In communities where parents had fears related to their children's advancement due to a lack of English, learning in MTs was not introduced. As time went by, however, parent opposition was largely overcome, and now it is parents who demand that the government speeds up the process of developing learning materials in local languages so that their children do not lose out on the benefits of MT education. However, such change in parental demands comes with advocacy efforts. Fortunately, there are NGOs in Uganda which have embarked on advocacy, as discussed in Chapter 3 (see, e.g., Mango Tree Lanq Literacy Project, 2013; Tumwebaze, 2012), and the efforts of these NGOs have brought larger acceptance of MTs as LoLTs in northern Uganda. It is important that the Ministry of Education and Sports strengthens these efforts by, for instance, funding outreaches that educate the public on MT education also in areas outside of northern Uganda.

I want also to argue that the practical realities of the use of languages in Ugandan communities should be reflected in the education system, as Fafunwa (1990) has suggested (see Brock-Utne, 2004:12):

We impart knowledge and skills almost exclusively in these foreign languages, while majority (sic) of our people, farmers, and craftsmen perform their daily tasks in Yoruba, Hausa, Wolf, Ga, Igbo, Bambara, Kiswahili, etc. (...) The question is: why not help them improve their social, economic, and political activities via their mother tongue? Why insist on their learning English or French first before modern technology could be introduced to them?

The fact that many Ugandan children speak more than one language at school entry should be reflected in the language-in-education policy and its implementation. Expecting children to learn academic concepts solely in a language they do not (fully) understand, and to which they have little or no access outside of school, disadvantages their learning.

9.3.7 *Methodological lessons*

As pointed out in Chapter 4, that which teachers report on the questionnaire does not necessarily accurately reflect their classroom practices or the views they truly hold. Recall that many of the teachers observed did not want me to enter their class even when they were visibly ready (e.g., holding a book and piece of chalk) for a lesson. Therefore, when collecting data on literacy acquisition in the classroom, using an outsider to the community for such data collection should be avoided, for the reasons explored in Chapter 4. If an outsider is used, for instance, to collect data to inform policy or to provide data for a project, the outcome of the project may be affected negatively. In addition, it would be beneficial for Ministry of Education and Sports officials to conduct impromptu and unannounced visits to schools so that they can discover what actually takes place in the classrooms.

9.3.8 *National assessment*

Drawing from the findings reported here, it is clear that learners in rural government schools are different from those of rural private schools in terms of language and academic backgrounds. It is therefore prudent that when national assessments, such as those alluded to in Chapter 1, are conducted, they should consider the fact that children in rural government and rural private schools are not exposed to the same learning experiences, and that children in government schools have not received any pre-schooling. Therefore, exposing rural government school children to the same national assessment is unfair, and the results from such assessments do not reflect the potentials and abilities that government school children possess.

9.3.9 *Luganda orthography*

This study has revealed that teachers experience difficulties in accessing Luganda orthography during the teaching and learning process but also when producing learners' materials, e.g. wall charts. In addition, there are orthographical errors and misleading Luganda orthography rules in curriculum materials. This data suggest that Luganda orthography is not handy to its users and this potentially poses challenges to the teaching of this language but also to learning through it. Moreover, Luganda orthography combines specialised IPA symbols with ordinary graphemes. Recall that the challenge of orthography besets most African languages. This therefore means that the challenge of orthography should be investigated in order for meaningful teaching and learning in African languages to take place.

9.4 *Contribution of the study*

9.4.1 *Contribution to research*

This study is one of the few thus far to study the process of transfer of skills from MT to English as a LoLT (cf. Piper, 2010) in the African context. The study has provided insights both theoretically, to academics, and practically, to language-in-education role players. The data provided herein is useful in the theorisation of issues pertaining to MT education. In addition, the study has contributed to the available body of knowledge on MT education, particularly on early-exit models. Some of the findings of this study are consistent with earlier scholars' observations (e.g., Ball, 2011; Benson, 2008; Cummins, 1992, 1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c; Cummins & Genzok, 1991; Heugh, 2011a; Ouane & Glanz, 2010; Walter & Chuo, 2012), for instance, the finding that MT education for only three or four years is not enough. This study has found that children are not only incapable of expressing themselves in English but also the transfer of skills to English after only three years of MT is difficult. In addition, the study has revealed that it is important to prepare teachers and the general public before introducing a MT programme, and that continuous follow-up of challenges encountered in the programme implementation is important if success is to be registered.

In this study, I tried to establish the causes of problems related to the implementation of MT education in Uganda, such as inadequate training of teachers, paucity of teaching and

learning materials, etc. As other scholars have said, the lack of instructional materials in African MTs not only hinders the teaching and learning of and through MTs but also reinforces the superiority of foreign languages which have readily available materials. I have attempted to show that the origin of these challenges is deeply entrenched in the inherited colonial government and educational structures, as well as the linguistic ideology that teachers, parents, and policy makers have towards English. Studies which investigate the place and strength of these explanations are needed as it is findings from such studies that will inform national language planning which includes issues of language development and corpus planning.

9.4.2 Contribution to language-in-education policy and practice in Uganda

This study provides practical insights about the language-in-education policy in Uganda. At present, there are calls for ethnographic studies, for example, studies into classroom practices in the global South (cf. Johson, 2009 and Shoba & Chimbutane's 2013 volume) will greatly assist in informing language-in-education policies in multilingual contexts (also see McCarty's 2011 volume). This study has made a contribution to this call. The study has revealed that there is a discrepancy between *de jure* and *de facto* language-in-education policy in both private and public schools in Uganda. The insights provided in this study can help to inform the uniform implementation of MT education policy in Uganda. Specifically, evidence provided in this study has revealed that an enforceable language-in-education policy in Uganda should have strongly-worded clauses running from pre-primary to the end of primary school.

9.5 Pointers for further research

Even though this study has provided a comparative view of what happens elsewhere in the country, e.g., in urban areas, in the rural northern district of Oyam, and in western Uganda (e.g., Kisémbó, 2008), I do not claim countrywide generalisability of these findings. Also note that classroom observations were not conducted in Kampala and in Oyam district for logistical reasons. I should also mention that the statistics given (i.e. counts of teachers and percentages of responses) may not be generalizable country-wide. More studies in similar settings should be conducted in order to have a representative picture of what is happening in

the country if we are to make meaningful generalisations about language-in-education policy and practice in Uganda.

Furthermore, there is a need for practical studies on the best ways of creating exposure to the English language for rural learners who live in communities in which access to this language appears to be in the school context only. It is prudent that practical ways of practising this language communicatively and in writing are devised without having to “force” learners (especially those at the very beginning of their acquisition of English) to speak English whenever they are at school.

I also note that the news period, which the NCDC proposed as a teaching and learning strategy, has been neglected and misinterpreted, and yet elsewhere this method has been shown to aid L2 acquisition. News reporting, as documented by Manyak (2004, 2006, 2008), involves spoken reporting, written exercises, and translation, all of which are practical ways of helping learners to improve their skills in both the MT and English. Through translation, learners are able to broaden their vocabulary by learning from their peers. I suggest that more studies be carried out to determine the relevance of this method in the Ugandan context.

Tollefson (1991:49) has also stated that “language in education could be properly understood within the broader context of language in society, including how languages are acquired, their role outside school, parental attitudes, and economic differences among language groups”. Following this argument, more research is needed to investigate why challenges to MT in Uganda have persisted. Sociolinguistic studies on issues of linguistic ideologies and postcolonialism might help to reveal the reason(s) for the persistence of these challenges and propose solutions to them.

This study has also revealed that the northern part of Uganda is generally doing better in MT education. For instance refer to the Mango Tree Laŋo Literacy Project work and NABE’s activities (e.g. as reported on by Heugh & Mulumba, 2013). The success of MT education in this area suggests that there is a connection between humanitarian aid, and financing of civil society organisations and promotion of MT education. It is proper to explore this area to reveal such connections.

Finally, more studies are needed in which learners' proficiencies in both their MTs and English are profiled. This should be done at the point when transition to English is initiated and at the end of primary schooling.

9.6 Reflection

There are many other researchers who have offered solutions to the challenges of MT education, yet these challenges persist, as alluded to above. I propose that we can draw on the theoretical works of scholars such as Tollefson (1991, 2006) and Stroud (2002), who have offered insights into postcolonial educational structures in different African countries, and who have both called for the deeper interrogation of the resistance to MT education, which may be entrenched in “linguistic ideology” and “common sense” visible in government and education structures. (Also see Makoni, 2011, who offers a historical analysis of the neglect of minority languages in Zimbabwe.) Specifically, Tollefson (1991:2) makes the following challenging statement: “[l]anguage is built into the economic and social structure of society so deeply that its fundamental importance seems only natural. For this reason, language policies are often seen as expressions of natural, common-sense assumptions about language in society”. In the same way, Spolsky (2009) states that schools' language policies are built on language practices and beliefs that exist in society.

The attitudes towards, practices regarding and challenges of MT education arise precisely because of the beliefs about the English language: English is seen as an “educational strategy aimed at improving national proficiency in English in order to increase competitiveness in the global economy” (Romaine, 2013). As such this language is used to sustain the already existing power relationships (Sigcau, 2004; Tollefson, 1991). Romaine (2013:13) also remarks that English has become “an essential basic skill” and that “success in other areas of the curriculum becomes dependent on success in English. Also, Ugandan parents prefer their children to learn English rather than MTs (Tembe & Norton, 2008), because they believe that it would help their children to improve their social status and give them better access to jobs (cf. Bamgbose, 1991; Stroud, 2002; Tollefson, 1999).

Although parents have a desire for their children to learn English as fast as possible, knowledge of local languages is essential in Uganda for social functions, in trade, in religious circles, for accessing the media, etc. (cf. Rosendal, 2010). Even though there is no traceable

study that has focused on language use in Ugandan workplaces, local languages are far more widely used than English. This means that if local languages are taught well and relevant knowledge is disseminated through them, MT education will prove to be more relevant in Uganda. When this goal is achieved, the learning of English becomes even easier when people know the reason for learning it, as Kirkpatrick (2013) has argued. However, as indicated earlier, the government structures and the education system in Uganda promote English as the *de facto* language of education, and hence little value is seen to exist in MT learning.

In Uganda, the activities of language planning (for instance status and acquisition planning) are affected by this linguistic ideology which is deeply entrenched in government and educational structures, and which filters through to the classroom teacher who interprets and appropriates the policy (Canagarajah, 2011; Johson, 2009). Also, drawing from the arguments of Tollefson (1991) and Stroud (2002), the linguistic ideology, as far as it concerns English, covertly promotes English and not MTs (cf. Canagarajah, 2011). The question is whether MT education can ever be successful in an environment in which English is esteemed far higher than MT. Consider Canagarajah's (2011:93) question in this regard: "can scholars and policy makers succeed in acquisition planning, when community members assign different valuations for the competing languages according to their priorities and value systems?"

Apart from ideological issues, there are several practical matters that currently negatively affect the implementation of MT education in Uganda, but that would also negatively affect the implementation of any other curriculum in any country. These include overcrowded classrooms, high rates of absenteeism amongst teachers and learners alike, un(der)-qualified teachers, learners reporting to school without learning materials, and absence or poor quality of teaching materials. There are also unsatisfactory teacher recruitment and allocation practices. In this regard, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2013) has reported that "the supply of teachers is failing to keep pace with the demand for primary education", and has embarked on a campaign dubbed *Every Child Needs a Teacher*. This campaign aims at raising awareness of Education For All and appeals to governments, United Nations agencies, the private sector, NGOs, etc. to ensure that children have well-trained and well-supported teachers. The benefits of this campaign, however, have not yet been felt by Ugandan learners.

Amidst challenges of a practical and ideological nature, the Ugandan government instituted MT education and a thematic curriculum for P1 to P3 in 2006. Given the benefits of MT education commonly described in the scholarly literature, the question arises as to why, seven years later, teachers are not giving positive reports on this curriculum, on MT education, on learners' proficiency in MT and in English, and on the P4 transition year. The answer probably lies in:

- (i) a lack of resources, such as learning materials, permanent school buildings, and universal access to pre-primary facilities. This has led to learners not being well prepared for receiving MT education;
- (ii) a lack of careful planning on the part of government, as regards length of MT education before a switch is made to English as LoLT, preparation (in-service training) of existing teachers, curriculum revision for Primary Training Colleges responsible for the training of new teachers, and material development and roll-out. This has led to teachers not being well prepared and not being well equipped for providing MT education; and
- (iii) a lack of parental involvement, as government has not attempted to educate parents on the reasons why MT education was instituted despite parents' desire for their children to be educated in English. This has led to many parents not embracing MT education (cf. Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, 2003).

Three of the main stakeholders in the school system are thus ill-prepared for their part of the implementation of the language-in-education policy. A fourth major stakeholder, namely government, devised the current language-in-education policy which appears to acknowledge the benefits of MT education and simultaneously revised the curriculum; government, however, does not enforce the policy, and based it on the assumption that certain areas are too multilingual to institute MT education, thus undermining the policy from the start.

MT education was instituted in Uganda mostly in reaction to the poor literacy rates of its learners. Whereas MT education in a setting in which major stakeholders are ill-prepared or ill-informed is bound to fail, the alternative, namely an all-English education from pre-primary to the last year of high school, is likely to render even worse literacy results. However, MT education in Uganda is at present being given a bad name (apart from in the northern region), not because it does not hold promise as far as improving literacy skills and

school retention are concerned, but because of the manner in which it is implemented. The findings of this study indicate that the Ugandan school system at present probably does not support the implementation of any curriculum well; until the system is overhauled, literacy rates are bound to remain low. That said, government has taken a step in the right direction by implementing MT education for three years; given the outcome of this, this period needs to be extended if gains in literacy rates are to be seen in the midst of the existing challenges.

In sum, it is laudable that the government of Uganda instituted MT education, but it is absurd that they did not implement it correctly (they chose an early-exit model, did not offer proper training to teachers, did not make suitable materials available, etc.). These mistakes need to be corrected and certain basic problems within the education system need to be sorted out (e.g., overcrowded classrooms, teacher absenteeism, learners pitching up without learning materials, failure to make pre-primary schooling compulsory, etc.) if Ugandan children are to reap the benefits of MT education. Basically, one can argue that it is not MT education that is responsible for the low literacy rates of Ugandan learners, but the specific manner in which MT education is currently implemented in this particular education system.

The overall objective of this study was to ascertain how teachers manage and understand the process of transitioning from MT to English as LoLT in multilingual contexts in Ugandan primary schools. The results of this study indicate that teachers, the main stakeholders in the implementation of any language-in-education policy, are ill-prepared and insufficiently supported for their pivotal role in this implementation, and that Ugandan learners are unfortunately not at present reaping the benefits of MT education or of having English as a LoLT. The reasons for this have been identified and discussed in detail. However, when considered carefully, it does transpire that the challenges pertaining to the successful implementation of MT education in Uganda (while plentiful and severe) are not insurmountable, and thus improved literacy rates and lifelong learning are, in theory, not unattainable in Uganda.

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Appendices

A. Ethical Clearance approval: Stellenbosch University



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

Approved with Stipulations New Application

14-Aug-2012
Ssentanda, Medadi Erisa
Stellenbosch, WC

Protocol #: HS851/2012

Title: Mother tongue education and transition to English in Uganda: Teachers perspectives and practices versus Language policy and Curriculum.

Dear Mr Medadi Ssentanda,

The New Application received on 17-Jul-2012, was reviewed by Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities) via Committee Review procedures on 26-Jul-2012.

Please note the following information about your approved research protocol:

Protocol Approval Period: **26-Jul-2012 -25-Jul-2013**

Present Committee Members:

Theron, Carl CC
Somhlaba, Ncebazakhe NZ
Viviers, Suzette S
Van Zyl, Gerhard G
Fouche, Magdalena MG
Van Wyk, Berte B
Hansen, Leonard LD
Horn, Lynette LM
De Villiers-Botha, Tanya T
Newmark, Rona R
Prozesky, Heidi HE
Beukes, Winston WA

The Stipulations of your ethics approval are as follows:

General:

Copies of signed letters of permission must be sent to the office of the REC before the research can commence.
Researcher must be sensitive as to not upset class routine during class observations.

Questionnaire:

Question 31 refers: Participants are requested to comment on other teachers' practices of code switching. There is a potential risk here, unless code switching is commonly accepted as sound teaching practice and a practice accepted by the relevant "authorities". The researcher should secure mitigation of risk, by inter alia avoiding at all cost revealing "other" teachers' identity. If it cannot be secured, the researcher might consider removing this question or altering it to include only self-reflective question 27, rather than reporting on someone else's behaviour.

SECTION B: LANGUAGE DIVERSITY OF LEARNERS refers: Q12 and Q14 requires a response about teachers' ability, while the heading implies otherwise. researcher must take note of this note; no response to REC required.

Standard provisions

Standard provisions

1. The researcher will remain within the procedures and protocols indicated in the proposal, particularly in terms of any undertakings made in terms of the confidentiality of the information gathered.
2. The research will again be submitted for ethical clearance if there is any substantial departure from the existing proposal.
3. The researcher will remain within the parameters of any applicable national legislation, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of research.
4. The researcher will consider and implement the foregoing suggestions to lower the ethical risk associated with the research.

You may commence with your research with strict adherence to the abovementioned provisions and stipulations.

Please remember to use your protocol number (HS851/2012) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research protocol.

Protocol #: HS851/2012

Title: Mother tongue education and transition to English in Uganda: Teachers perspectives and practices versus Language policy and Curriculum.

Protocol Approval Period: 26-Jul-2012 -25-Jul-2013

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

After Ethical Review:

Please note that a progress report should be submitted to the Committee before the approval period has expired if a continuation is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) number REC-050411-032.

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki, the South African Medical Research Council Guidelines as well as the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health).

Provincial and City of Cape Town Approval

Please note that for research at a primary or secondary healthcare facility permission must be obtained from the relevant authorities (Western Cape Department of Health and/or City Health) to conduct the research as stated in the protocol. Contact persons are Ms Claudette Abrahams at Western Cape Department of Health (healthres@pgwc.gov.za Tel: +27 21 483 9907) and Dr Helene Visser at City Health (Helene.Visser@capetown.gov.za Tel: +27 21 400 3981).

Research that will be conducted at any tertiary academic institution requires approval from the relevant parties. For approvals from the Western Cape Education Department, contact Dr AT Wyngaard (awyngaar@pgwc.gov.za, Tel: 0214769272, Fax: 0865902282, <http://wced.wcape.gov.za>).

Institutional permission from academic institutions for students, staff & alumni. This institutional permission should be obtained before submitting an application for ethics clearance to the REC.

Please note that informed consent from participants can only be obtained after ethics approval has been granted. It is your responsibility as researcher to keep signed informed consent forms for inspection for the duration of the research.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at .

Included Documents:

Research Proposal
REC Appl
Admin Review
Questionnaire 3
Letter of permission
Letter of permission
DESC App
Question
Consent Form 3
Questionnaire
Consent 3
Letter of permission Cont
Consent Form

Sincerely,
Winston Beukes
REC Coordinator
Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

Investigator Responsibilities

Protection of Human Research Participants

Some of the responsibilities investigators have when conducting research involving human participants are listed below:

1. Conducting the Research. You are responsible for making sure that the research is conducted according to the REC approved research protocol. You are also responsible for the actions of all your co-investigators and research staff involved with this research. You must also ensure that the research is conducted within the standards of your field of research.

2. Participant Enrollment. You may not recruit or enroll participants prior to the REC approval date or after the expiration date of REC approval. All recruitment materials for any form of media must be approved by the REC prior to their use. If you need to recruit more participants than was noted in your REC approval letter, you must submit an amendment requesting an increase in the number of participants.

3. Informed Consent. You are responsible for obtaining and documenting effective informed consent using only the REC-approved consent documents, and for ensuring that no human participants are involved in research prior to obtaining their informed consent. Please give all participants copies of the signed informed consent documents. Keep the originals in your secured research files for at least five (5) years.

4. Continuing Review. The REC must review and approve all REC-approved research protocols at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk but not less than once per year. There is no grace period. Prior to the date on which the REC approval of the research expires, it is your responsibility to submit the continuing review report in a timely fashion to ensure a lapse in REC approval does not occur. If REC approval of your research lapses, you must stop new participant enrollment, and contact the REC office immediately.

5. Amendments and Changes. If you wish to amend or change any aspect of your research (such as research design, interventions or procedures, number of participants, participant population, informed consent document, instruments, surveys or recruiting material), you must submit the amendment to the REC for review using the current Amendment Form. You may not initiate any amendments or changes to your research without first obtaining written REC review and approval. The only exception is when it is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants and the REC should be immediately informed of this necessity.

6. Adverse or Unanticipated Events. Any serious adverse events, participant complaints, and all unanticipated problems that involve risks to participants or others, as well as any research related injuries, occurring at this institution or at other performance sites must be reported to Malene Fouch within five (5) days of discovery of the incident. You must also report any instances of serious or continuing problems, or non-compliance with the RECs requirements for protecting human research participants. The only exception to this policy is that the death of a research participant must be reported in accordance with the Stellenbosch University Research Ethics Committee Standard Operating Procedures. All reportable events should be submitted to the REC using the Serious Adverse Event Report Form.

7. Research Record Keeping. You must keep the following research related records, at a minimum, in a secure location for a minimum of five years: the REC approved research protocol and all amendments; all informed consent documents; recruiting materials; continuing review reports; adverse or unanticipated events; and all correspondence from the REC

8. Reports to Sponsor. When you submit the required reports to your sponsor, you must provide a copy of that report to the REC. You may submit the report at the time of continuing REC review.

9. Provision of Counselling or emergency support. When a dedicated counsellor or psychologist provides support to a participant without prior REC review and approval, to the extent permitted by law, such activities will not be recognised as research nor the data used in support of research. Such cases should be indicated in the progress report or final report.

10. Final reports. When you have completed (no further participant enrollment, interactions, interventions or data analysis) or stopped work on your research, you must submit a Final Report to the REC.

11. On-Site Evaluations, Inspections, or Audits. If you are notified that your research will be reviewed or audited by the sponsor or any other external agency or any internal group, you must inform the REC immediately of the impending audit/evaluation.

B. Ethical clearance approval: UNCST



Uganda National Council for Science and Technology

(Established by Act of Parliament of the Republic of Uganda)

Our Ref: SS 2924

2nd October 2012

Mr. Medadi Erisa Ssentanda
C/o Department of African Languages
School of Languages, Literature and Communication
Makerere University
Kampala

Dear Mr. Ssentanda,

RE: RESEARCH PROJECT, "MOTHER TONGUE EDUCATION AND TRANSITION TO ENGLISH IN UGANDA: TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES AND PRACTICES VERSUS LANGUAGE POLICY AND CURRICULUM, VERSION DATED MAY 2012"

This is to inform you that the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) approved the above research proposal on **22nd August 2012**. The approval will expire on **22nd August 2013**. If it is necessary to continue with the research beyond the expiry date, a request for continuation should be made in writing to the Executive Secretary, UNCST.

The approval covers the following attachments:

- a. Research proposal version 2.1 dated 27th August 2012.
- b. Informed consent documents version 2.1 dated 27th August 2012.
- c. Data collection tools version 2.1 dated 27th August 2012.

Any problems of a serious nature related to the execution of your research project should be brought to the attention of the UNCST, and any changes to the research protocol should not be implemented without UNCST's approval except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the research participant(s).

This letter also serves as proof of UNCST approval and as a reminder for you to submit to UNCST timely progress reports and a final report on completion of the research project.

Yours sincerely,

Leah Nawegulo
for: Executive Secretary
UGANDA NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

LOCATION/CORRESPONDENCE

Plot 6 Kimera Road, Ntinda
P. O. Box 6884
KAMPALA, UGANDA

COMMUNICATION

TEL: (256) 414 705500
FAX: (256) 414-234579
EMAIL: info@uncst.go.ug
WEBSITE: <http://www.uncst.go.ug>

C. Introduction letter: Office of the President, Uganda



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

PARLIAMENT BUILDING P.O. BOX 7168 KAMPALA, TELEPHONE: 254881/6, 343934, 343926, 343943, 233717, 344026, 230048, FAX: 235459/256143
Email: secretary@op.go.ug www.uganda2012.ug www.officeofthepresident.go.ug

ADM 154/212/01

October 15, 2012

✓ The Resident District Commissioner, Kampala District
The Resident District Commissioner, Rakai District

This is to introduce to you **Mr. Ssentanda Medadi Erisa** a Researcher who will be carrying out a research entitled "**Mother tongue education and transition to English in Uganda: Teachers' perspectives and practices versus language policy and curriculum**" for a period of **02 (two) months** in your district.

He has undergone the necessary clearance to carry out the said project.

Please render him the necessary assistance.

By copy of this letter **Mr. Ssentanda Medadi Erisa** is requested to report to the Resident District Commissioners of the above districts before proceeding with the Research.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alenga Rose'.

Alenga Rose

FOR: SECRETARY, OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Copy to: Mr. Ssentanda Medadi Erisa

Uganda 2012



"A 50 Year Journey since Independence (1962 - 2012):
A Good Foundation for Social and Economic Transformation"

D. Introduction letter: Office of the President, Uganda



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

PARLIAMENT BUILDING P.O. BOX 7168 KAMPALA, TELEPHONE: 254881/6, 343934, 343926, 343943, 233717, 344026, 230048, FAX: 235459/256143

Email: secretary@op.go.ug www.uganda2012.ug www.officeofthepresident.go.ug

ADM 154/212/01

October 15, 2012

The Resident District Commissioner, Kampala District
The Resident District Commissioner, Rakai District

This is to introduce to you **Mr. Ssentanda Medadi Erisa** a Researcher who will be carrying out a research entitled "**Mother tongue education and transition to English in Uganda: Teachers' perspectives and practices versus language policy and curriculum**" for a period of **02 (two) months** in your district.

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Please render him the necessary assistance.

By copy of this letter **Mr. Ssentanda Medadi Erisa** is requested to report to the Resident District Commissioners of the above districts before proceeding with the Research.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Alenga'.

Alenga Rose
FOR: SECRETARY, OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Copy to: Mr. Ssentanda Medadi Erisa

Uganda 2012



"A 50 Year Journey since Independence (1962 - 2012):
A Good Foundation for Social and Economic Transformation"

E. Introduction letter: Makerere University

MAKERERE
P.O. Box 7062 Kampala, Uganda



UNIVERSITY
414 530 106

DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES

Your Ref:

Our Ref:

06th September 2012

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

Introduction letter: Medadi Erisa Ssentanda

I am pleased to introduce to you the bearer of this letter, Mr Meddi Ssentanda. Mr Ssentanda is a full time member of staff of Makerere University in the Department of African Languages. He is currently a PhD candidate at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. He is undertaking a study in Ugandan primary schools titled, *Mother tongue education and transition to English in Uganda: Teachers' perspectives and practices versus language policy and curriculum*.

Please accord him the necessary cooperation that he may need in undertaking his study. The results of his study will be very useful in informing future policies and/or revising current policies in line with mother tongue education in Uganda. The information that Mr Ssentanda is looking for is exclusively academic and NOT intended to blackmail and/or jeopardise the running of your school.

Thank you for your cooperation. Should you have any further questions regarding the bearer of this letter please contact the Office of the Chair, Department of African Languages, Makerere University.

Yours faithfully,

Deo Kawalya,
Ag. Chair
Department of African Languages
+256782374210



F. Questionnaire, P1 – P3 teachers



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

**STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

Mother tongue education and transition to English in Uganda: Teachers' perspectives and practices versus language policy and curriculum

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Medadi Erisa Ssentanda, from the General Linguistics Department at Stellenbosch University. The results from this study will contribute to the dissertation that I am writing. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a primary school teacher who handles classes instructed through local languages (mother tongue).

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study is set to examine how teachers manage the process of transition from mother tongue as a language of learning and teaching to English as a language of learning and teaching and to study the nature of multilingualism in P1 through P5 classes.

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to fill this questionnaire, allow the researcher to observe your classroom activities and/or later be interviewed on the same topic.

2. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

This study's major outcome will be used to devise practical ways of empowering teachers with skills and facilities required in strengthening mother-tongue education in Uganda and in helping learners to transition from use of mother tongue to English as a language of learning and teaching.

3. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. No names of any participants will be mentioned; participants will be given a participant number and/or pseudonym that will be utilised in the dissertation for ease of reference, and only the researcher will be able to identify the participant.

The classroom observations and interview will be audio recorded. The recording is aimed at capturing all the details of the activities. It is only the researcher who will have access to the recordings and they will be safely saved onto a password-protected personal computer and used for research purposes only. All the data recordings will be deleted once the PhD dissertation has been completed.

4. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The researcher may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

5. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Medadi E. Ssentanda (*Researcher*): +256 782 333 669, Email: ssentanda@arts.mak.ac.ug
Dr Kate Huddleston (*Supervisor*): +27 (0)21 8082007, E-mail: katevg@sun.ac.za or Dr Frenette Southwood (*Co-supervisor*): +27 (0)21 8082010, E-mail: fs@sun.ac.za

6. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

The information above was described to me by _____ in English / Luganda and I am in command of this/these language(s). I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to the participant. He/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in Luganda and/or English.

Signature of Researcher

Date

Questionnaire: P1 to P3 teachers

Section A: General Information about the teacher and the school

Please tick in the appropriate box

1. Sex

Male

Female

2. Level of education

S.IV

S.VI

Certificate

Diploma

Degree

3. School ownership

Private

Government

4. Which district of Uganda do you come from? *Please indicate it here.*

5. What is your mother-tongue? *Please indicate it here.*

6. Which class(es) do you teach? *Tick all that apply.*

P1

P2

P3

P4

P5

7. Which classes in your school use mother tongue in teaching?

P1-P3

P1-P.

P1-P5

All classes

None

8. For how many years have you been teaching?

1 to 2 years

3 to 5 years

6 to 10 years

11 years and more

9. Please mention any other thing you regard important here

Section B: Language diversity of the learners

10. How many learners do you have in your class? *(please indicate the number)*

Languages

Number of learners

11. Please list all the languages that the learners speak and indicate the number of learners for each language.

Language

number of learners

12. Which of the learners' languages indicated above do you speak and/or are able to write?
(Please name all that is possible)

13. Which local language is spoken by most learners in your school? *Please indicate it here.*

14. All teachers in the school are able to use the dominant local language as medium of instruction in P1 to P4 classes. *(Indicate whether you agree/disagree with this statement.)*

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

15. Please mention any other thing you regard important here

Section C: Knowledge of mother-tongue and its importance

16. Does your school teach the dominant local language in both lower and upper classes as a subject?

Yes No

17. Is the dominant local language your mother tongue?

Yes No

18. If no, do you know how to speak that dominant local language?

Yes No

19. I can teach all themes in the curriculum using the dominant local language.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

20. Please provide reasons for your answer.

21. I am comfortable/happy using the dominant local language in teaching.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

22. Does your school time-table allocate lessons for teaching the mother tongue?

Yes No

23. Does your school prepare any seminars/workshops/trainings to help you better teach the mother-tongue used in this school?

Yes No

24. Who facilitates in those workshops/trainings?

Ministry of Education officials NCDC Fellow teachers from other schools
Head teacher

25. In my training (TTC), I learnt how to teach in mother-tongue.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

26. If you disagree with the above statement and yet you teach mother-tongue, explain how you manage to do it.

27. I sometimes switch from English to mother tongue or from mother tongue to English when teaching.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

28. Please provide reasons for your answer to the above question.

29. If a child learns to read and write in his/her mother tongue first, the knowledge acquired facilitates the reading and writing of English.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

30. Please provide reasons for your answer to the above question.

31. I know of teachers in upper classes (P5 to P7) who switch from English to mother tongue/local language in their teaching.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

32. Can you give an explanation why you think they switch/do not switch from English to the mother tongue/local language?

33. Learners appreciate it when you use local language/mother-tongue to explain difficult concepts?

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

34. Using a local language/mother tongue to explain difficult concepts causes confusion in learning.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

35. Please provide an explanation for your answer to the above question.

36. Now that you are supposed to teach all content in mother tongue in P1-P3, do you prepare your lessons (lesson plans) and class notes in mother-tongue/local language?

Yes No

37. If no, please explain why?

On a scale of 1 to 10 rate the following statements in terms of accuracy, where 1 is accurate and 10 is inaccurate.

38. Learners who learn through English throughout their primary education are better than those who first learn through their mother tongue/local language before shifting to English.

|-----|
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

39. Learning through the mother tongue/local language facilitates acquisition of English.

|-----|
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

40. Mother tongue/local language negatively affects the acquisition of English.

|-----|
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

41. A learner who can read and write his/her mother tongue well is likely to learn English faster and well.

|-----|
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

42. Children who begin their learning in their mother tongue/local language are more likely to do well than children who begin learning in English/nonfamiliar language

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

43. On the whole, I enjoy teaching in local languages.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

44. Teaching in mother tongue/local language improves learners' performance.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

45. Learners can transfer the skills and knowledge acquired in mother tongue/local language to English.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

46. Please explain the reasons for your answer to the previous question.

47. English is given enough time on the school timetable.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

48. Mother tongue/local language as a subject is not on the school timetable.

Yes No

49. Learners are more likely to drop out of school after P3 when the language of learning and teaching is changed from mother tongue/local language to English.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

50. Please give reasons for your answer above.

51. Teaching in mother tongue/local language does not help children to remain in school.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

52. Teaching in local languages/mother tongue makes parents much more involved in children's learning that it would be in English.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

53. Is mother tongue/local language taught as a subject after P.3 in your school?

Yes No

54. If not, please explain why?

55. Teachers do not need training to be able to teach their mother tongues/local languages.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

56. Three years of teaching English as subject is enough to help the learners to master English language so that it can be used in instruction in P4/5 and onwards.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

57. Please mention any other thing you consider relevant

Section D: Challenges in mother tongue teaching

58. Teaching through medium of local language/mother tongue can be challenging.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

59. Please provide reasons for your answer to the above question.

60. From the following options, choose all that apply to your learners at the point when they are promoted to P4.

- a. They can read and speak their mother tongue/local language well
- b. They can write their mother tongue/local language well.
- c. They can read but cannot speak English.
- d. They can speak English but cannot write it well.
- e. They need more time to learn English before it can be used as language of learning and teaching.

61. Teaching in mother tongue/local language is difficult because I cannot write my mother tongue.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

62. Teaching in local language is easy since I was taught how to use it in my training.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

63. Teaching in local language/mother tongue is easy because I can translate all the English words in the curriculum to the local language.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

64. Teaching in local language/mother tongue is difficult because there are many languages in my class.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

65. Teaching in local language/mother tongue is easy since all learners in my class speak the same language.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

66. Teaching in local language/mother tongue is easy because I have all the materials that I need.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

67. Parents want their children to learn speaking English as fast as possible.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

68. Parents want their children to learn local languages/mother tongue.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

69. Parents do not want their children to learn through their local languages/mother tongue.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

70. Parents often transfer their children from schools that teach through local language to schools that teach through English.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly disagree

71. Have you ever been transferred to a school located in an area whose language you don't speak/you cannot teach?

Yes No

72. Is it possible to appeal to the Ministry of Education to transfer you to a school where you are able to teach the language of that area?

Yes No

73. If not, what do you do in such a situation?

74. Please mention any other thing you consider relevant here.

Section E: Language policy and practice in Uganda

75. Are your learners expected to be fluent in speaking English at the end of P.3?

Yes No

76. Children are allowed to speak their mother tongue/local languages at the school compound.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

77. Please provide a reason(s) for your answer to the above question

78. Children should already know English by the time they come to school.

Strongly agree Agree Agree Strongly agree

79. If you agree, how then do you think children should come across English learning? (Choose from the following options.)

- a. From Nursery school
 - b. At home
 - c. From TV and radio
 - d. Other (*please mention*)
-

80. Please explain the reasons for your answer to the previous question.

81. The best way to learn English is to use it as a medium of instruction right from P1.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

82. Pupils in urban areas are more advantaged in learning than rural children.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

83. The earlier children begin to learn English the better English they learn to speak.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

84. For learners to understand classroom instructions clearly, they must be communicated to them in the local language/their mother tongue.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly disagree

85. Would you want anything modified in the present language policy? Please indicate it here.

86. What other observations or comments do you have about the language policy judging from your position as a teacher?

Section E: About the thematic curriculum

87. I was trained in the techniques of using the thematic curriculum.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

88. I can ably teach all the areas of the thematic curriculum.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

89. Although I was not a mathematics teacher before, I can now teach mathematics well in the thematic curriculum arrangement.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

90. In which language do you set tests/exams? (*Choose one.*)

- a. English
- b. Mother-tongue

91. Setting exams in mother tongue/local language is more difficult than setting in English.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

92. Please give reasons for your answer to the previous question.

93. Which areas of the thematic curriculum are problematic in either teaching through mother tongue/local language or setting exams?

94. Introducing the thematic curriculum together with mother-tongue/local language teaching was a sensible decision.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

95. It is easy to manage a thematic curriculum class by myself, as set out by the ministry guidelines.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

96. I am able to teach all the thematic curriculum areas through the local language.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

97. Generally speaking, what is your opinion on the thematic curriculum being taught in mother-tongue/local languages?

98. Please mention any other thing you may regard relevant here.

Section G: Suggestions

99. What suggestions can you give towards improving the teaching of mother-tongue in your school?

100. What suggestions can you give towards improving the teaching of the thematic curriculum in your school or in the country (Uganda)?

101. From the following options, how many years of mother tongue/local language teaching do you think learners should have before they can begin learning through English?

- 1.1.5. 4 years B. 5 years C. 6 years D. 7 to 8 years

102. Please provide explanation/reasons for your answer.

103. Any other suggestions?

Thank you for your time!

G. Questionnaire, P4 – P5 teachers



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STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Mother tongue education and transition to English in Uganda: Teachers' perspectives and practices versus language policy and curriculum

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Medadi Erisa Ssentanda, from the General Linguistics Department at Stellenbosch University. The results from this study will contribute to the PhD dissertation that I am writing. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a primary school teacher who teaches learners that have been instructed through local languages (mother tongue).

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study is set to examine how teachers manage the process of transition from mother tongue as a language of learning and teaching to English as a language of learning and teaching and to study the nature of multilingualism in P1 through P5 classes.

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to fill this questionnaire, allow the researcher to observe your classroom activities and/or later be interviewed on the same topic.

2. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

This study's major outcome will be used to devise practical ways of empowering teachers with skills and facilities required in strengthening mother-tongue education in Uganda and in helping learners to transition from use of mother tongue to English as a language of learning and teaching.

3. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. No names of any participants will be mentioned in the study; participants will be given a participant number and/or pseudonym that will be utilised in the dissertation for ease of reference, and only the researcher will be able to identify the participant.

The classroom observations and interview will be audio recorded. The recording is aimed at capturing all the details of the activities. It is only the researcher who will have access to the recordings and they will be safely saved onto a password-protected personal computer and used for research purposes only. All the data recordings will be deleted once the PhD dissertation has been completed.

4. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The researcher may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

5. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Medadi E. Ssentanda (*Researcher*): +256 782 333 669, Email: ssentanda@arts.mak.ac.ug

Dr Kate Huddleston (*Supervisor*): +27 (0)21 8082007, E-mail: katevg@sun.ac.za or Dr Frenette Southwood (*Co-supervisor*): +27 (0)21 8082010, E-mail: fs@sun.ac.za

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Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to the participant. He/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in Luganda / English.

Signature of Researcher

Date

15. Which of the learners' languages given above do you speak and/or are able to write? (*Please name all that is possible*)

16. Which local language is spoken by most learners in your school?

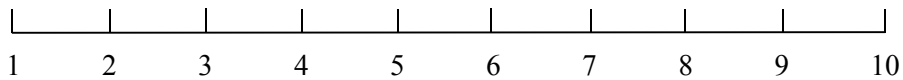
17. Is mother tongue/local language taught as a subject in P4/5?

Yes No

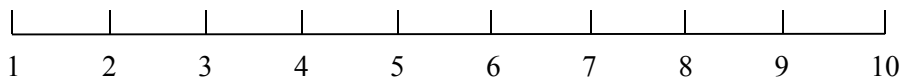
18. Did your learners in P4/P5 study through mother-tongue/local language when they were in P1 to P3?

Yes No

19. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 represents very poor and 10 represents excellent, how do you rate your learners' skills in writing and reading English?



20. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 represents very poor and 10 represents excellent, how do you rate your learners' skills in writing and reading their mother tongue/local language?



21. Who performs better than the other? (*Choose from the following options.*)

21.1. Learners who were taught through mother tongue/local language before being promoted to P4

21.2. Learners who were taught through English before being promoted to P4

21.3. There is no difference between the above two sets of learners in performance.

22. When learners are taught in their mother-tongue in P1 to P3, this later helps them in P4 onwards.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Disagree

23. Please give reason(s) for your answer to the previous question.

24. When learners are taught in their mother tongue/local language they are more likely not to repeat classes.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

25. Children should receive all their primary education in their mother tongue

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

26. For learners to be fully bilingual, they do not need to have their mother tongue/local language as a subject throughout their primary school.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

27. If a child learns to read and write in his/her mother tongue first, the knowledge acquired facilitates the reading and writing of English?

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

28. Learners can transfer the skills and knowledge acquired in mother tongue/local language to English

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

29. Mother tongue/local language teaching contributes to acquisition of literacy skills later in English in P4 and P5.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

30. Children who begin their learning in their mother tongue/local language are more likely to do well than children who begin learning in English/nonfamiliar language.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

31. The earlier children begin to learn English the better English they learn to speak.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

32. The best way to learn English is to use it as a medium of instruction to the learners right from P1.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

33. For learners to understand classroom instructions clearly, they must be communicated to them in their local language/mother tongue.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

34. Teaching in local languages/mother tongue makes parents much more involved in children's learning that it would be in English.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

35. Please mention any other thing you may see as important here.

Section C: Challenges in transition from mother tongue to English

36. Do you have learners who did not learn through the medium of mother-tongue in their P1-P3?

Yes No

37. From the following options, choose what applies to your learners at the point when they are promoted to P4/P5.

(i) They can read and speak their mother tongue/local language well

- (ii) They can write their mother tongue/local language well.
- (iii) They can read but cannot speak English.
- (iv) They can speak English but cannot write it well.
- (v) They need more time to learn English before it can be used as language of learning and teaching.

38. Do you think learners should continue to learn in their mother-tongue even after P4?

Yes No

39. Please give reasons for your answer to the previous question.

40. Mother tongue is not taught well in my school.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

41. Teachers do not need training to be able to teach their mother tongues/local languages.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

42. Please give reason(s) for your answer to the previous question.

43. English is given enough time on the school timetable.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

44. Mother tongue/local language as a subject is not on the school timetable.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

45. Three years of teaching English as subject is enough to help the learners to master English language so that it can be used in instruction in P4/5.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

46. From the following options, how many years of mother tongue/local language teaching do you think learners should have before they can begin learning through English?

A. 4 years B. 5 years C. 6 years D. 7 to 8 years

47. Do you sometimes ask questions in English and learners respond in mother tongue/local language?

Yes No

48. Have you ever set examinations in English and a learner responds in mother tongue/local language?

Yes No

49. Teaching in P4/P5 class is very difficult because learners have not mastered English well.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

50. Teaching P4/P5 class is easy because I can teach while switching from English to local language and local language to English.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

51. Teaching P4 and P5 is difficult because I have to translate all that I teach in a local language for the learners to understand well.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly disagree

52. I was trained on how to help learners transition from use of local language/mother tongue to English as a medium of teaching.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly disagree

53. Teachers need more training in order to be able to help learners to transition from local language to English as a medium of teaching

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly disagree

54. Please mention any other thing you consider important here.

Section D: Suggestions

55. On the whole, what is your opinion about the language policy of Uganda?

56. On the whole what is your opinion about the thematic curriculum being taught in mother-tongue?

57. Please mention any other thing you consider important/relevant here.

Thank you for your time.

H. Questionnaire, Urban schools



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STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
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This study is set to examine how teachers manage the process of transition from mother tongue as a language of learning and teaching to English as a language of learning and teaching and to study the nature of multilingualism in P1 through P5 classes. If you volunteer to participate in this study, you are asked to fill this questionnaire.

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Signature of Participant

Date

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Signature of Researcher

Date

Questionnaire: P1 to P4 urban school teachers
Section A: General Information about the teacher and the school

Please tick in the appropriate box

1. Sex

Male

Female

2. Level of education

S.I

S.VI

Certificate

Diploma

Degree

3. School ownership

Private

Government

4. Which district of Uganda do you come from? *Please indicate it here.*

5. What is your mother-tongue? *Please write it here.*

6. Which class(es) do you teach? (circle all that apply)

P1

P2

P3

P4

P5

7. Which classes in your school teach through mother tongue/local language?

P1-P3

P1-P4

P1-P5

None

8. If none, would you please give reasons why?

9. For how many years have you been teaching?

1 to 2 years

3 to 5 years

6 to 10 years

11 years and more

10. Is there any local language taught in your school?

Yes

No

11. If yes, please name this language

12. Please mention any other thing you consider important here

Section B: Language diversity of the learners

13. How many learners do you have in your class? *Please indicate the number.*

14. Please list all the languages that the learners speak and indicate the number of learners for each language (in your class).

Language

number of learners

15. Which of the learners' languages given in above do you speak and/or are able to write? (*Please name all that is possible*)

16. Which local language is spoken by most learners in your school? *Please name it here*

17. Do all the teachers who teach P1 to P3 in the school speak the dominant local language in the school?

Yes No

18. Please point out any other thing you consider relevant here.

Section C: Knowledge of mother tongue and its importance

19. Learners should come to school when they already know how to speak English.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

20. If you agree, how do you expect the learners to be exposed to English? (*Choose from the following options.*)

A. From Nursery school

B. At home

C. From TV and radio

D. Other (*please mention*) _____

21. My mother tongue/local language is useful in teaching because I can switch from English to local language and from local language to English.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

22. Children are more likely to drop out of school because of using a nonfamiliar language in the teaching and learning process.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

23. Learners should learn in their mother tongue/local language in their early years of schooling.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

24. Learners can transfer the skills and knowledge acquired in mother tongue/local language to English

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

25. Teaching in mother tongue/local language improves children's learning.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

26. Teaching in local languages/mother tongue makes parents much more involved in children's learning that it would be in English.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

27. Children who begin their learning in their mother tongue/local language are more likely to do well than children who begin learning in English/nonfamiliar language.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

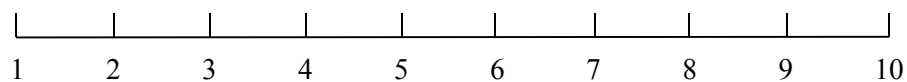
28. If a child learns to read and write in his/her mother tongue first, the knowledge acquired facilitates the reading and writing of English?

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

29. Has your school ever admitted learners who have been taught through mother tongue/local language?

Yes No

30. How do you rate their performance on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 represents very poor and 10 represents excellent?



31. Children should already know English by the time they come to school.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

32. The earlier children begin to learn English the better English they learn to speak.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

33. The best way to learn English is to use it as a medium of instruction to the learners right from P1.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

34. Mother tongue/local language teaching is not possible in urban schools.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

35. Learners who come to school when they have mastered their mother tongue/local language do better than those who haven't.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

36. For learners to understand classroom instructions clearly, they must be communicated to them in their local language/mother tongue.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

37. Please mention any other thing you consider important here

Section C: Challenges in urban schools

38. Do you experience any challenges in teaching in urban schools? *Please name such challenges.*

39. There are so many languages in my classes such that I cannot switch from English to local language /mother tongue.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

40. It is difficult to begin teaching learners straight away in English.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

41. Children would do better if some subjects in this school were taught in mother tongue/local languages.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

42. Do you have learners in your class who if you ask a question in English answer in their local language?

Yes No

43. Do you have learners in your class who answer some questions in the exams in their local language?

Yes No

44. Have you ever been transferred to a school located in an area whose language you don't speak/you cannot teach?

Yes No

45. Can you appeal to the Ministry of Education to transfer you to another school with a local language you can teach?

Yes No

46. Please mention any other thing you consider relevant here

Section D: Suggestions

47. Children in urban schools should begin to learn in their mother tongue/local languages in their early years of schooling.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

48. On the whole, what is your opinion about the language policy of Uganda?

49. Any other suggestions?

Thank you for your time!

I. Questionnaire, Rural schools, Northern Uganda

Questionnaire: for rural North, comparative

Questionnaire for the rural northern Uganda schools

1. District.....
1. School ownership.....
2. Class taught.....
3. How many learners do you have in your class (*please indicate the number*).....
4. Please list all the languages that the learners speak and indicate the number of learners for each language.

Language

number of learners

5. Which of those languages given above do you speak and/or are able to read and write?
.....
6. Does your school teach through mother tongue/local language from P1 to P3?.....
7. Which local language is taught at your school?.....
8. Is mother tongue/local language taught as subject after P.3.....
9. If not why?.....
10. How do you rate your learners in reading and speaking English after P.3?
11. How many years of mother tongue teaching do you think are most suitable before learners can transition to learning through English?
11.1. 3 years b. 4 years c. 6 years d. 7 years
12. What challenges do you face in teaching through mother tongue in your school?

Thank you for your time

J. Interview guide

1. What happens in a mother-tongue lesson (as a subject) if a class has more than one mother tongue?
2. Challenges in teaching mother tongue.
3. Managing language diversity in class
4. Challenges teachers face in transitioning from MT to English as LoLT
5. Challenges children face in transitioning from MT to English as LoLT.
6. Challenges in teaching all learning areas through mother tongue (thematic curriculum)
7. Teacher managing a class singly.
8. Support from school and ministry of education
9. Trainings in mother tongue teaching – who conducts them?
10. Why do you teach the way you do?
11. The relevance of the News period – how it is used and its importance to language development
12. How do you feel about the fact that the children you teach learn through mother tongue but you were taught through English?
13. How has the introduction of the mother-tongue policy affected your performance as a teacher?
14. What do you regard as the greatest challenge in teaching through local languages?

K. Observation guide

1. Language used during teaching and learning process
2. P1, P2, P3: Is it purely mother- tongue or code switching comes in and vice versa for P4, P5?
3. Language strategies to deliver subject material
4. Use of code-switching
5. Explanations – which language used?
6. Language used in giving instructions
7. The news period – how teachers handle it in relation to what literature provides/suggest.

L. Teaching procedures for English recommended by NCDC (2007b)

The NCDC (2007b) proposes the following teaching strategies (called “teaching procedures” or TPs) for the teaching of English:

- English TP1: Presenting new vocabulary
Teachers are advised not to teach more than 5 new words in each lesson per day. The learned words should be revised and applied in sentences that learners can memorize easily (NCDC, 2007b).
- English TP2: Presenting new structures
According to the NCDC, this is to be done by “[t]each[ing] new vocabulary using known structures and new structures using known vocabulary” (NCDC, 2007b:41).
- English TP3: Using short dialogues
These can be developed out of the learnt structures so that learners can talk to one another.
- English TP4: Using pictures and wall charts
The NCDC emphasizes that since children learn by doing and seeing, it is important for teachers to let their learners draw what they learn. The pictures they develop can then be displayed on the classroom walls in addition to the teachers’ other materials to act as teaching aids.
- English TP5: Teaching through songs
Songs are emphasized as a key learning element for two reasons: firstly, children enjoy them, and, secondly, they offer good opportunity for repetition, a practice that is said to be beneficial to the learners. This repetition is done through pronunciation and signs. The NCDC insists that before a teacher introduces a song, s/he must give some background to it and then lead the learners in singing it repeatedly in many other lessons.
- English TP6: Teaching through games
Games are also cited as a good platform for learning new words in context.
- English TP7: Role-play and acting
This technique is to be applied when the children have learnt more words so that they can engage in role-playing with that vocabulary. Through role-play, learners can learn pronunciation, intonation and word stress mechanisms typical of the English language.

The above description indicates what is expected in P1. P2 and P3 methods are more advanced than P1 methods. For instance, in P2, there is use of the phonic method, syllabic method, look and say method and an eclectic method. In the literacy hour for P.2, the time is divided up as the case is in P1, i.e., into to 30-minute slots. The TPs for literacy attainment employed in P.2 include the following:

- TP1: Story-telling
- TP2: Using a story book
- TP3: Teaching a rhyme
- TP4: Listening to children read
- TP5: Teaching spelling
- TP6: Shared reading

For teaching English, the guidelines for teachers also discourages the use of local languages while teaching English. The TPs given for teaching English in P.2 are as follows (NCDC, 2007a:35-41):

- TP1: Presenting vocabulary
- TP2: Presenting structures
- TP3: Using phonics
- TP4: Using short dialogues
- TP5: Teaching through songs
- TP6: Teaching through games
- TP7: Teaching through role-play and acting
- TP8: Teaching through situational games and play lets
- TP9: Teaching through rhymes
- TP10: Speech exercises

In all these teaching procedures, teachers are advised to use real objects and illustrations, to mime and/or to act out situations. Learners should be involved in the lesson by listening, observing and performing. In addition, teachers are advised to develop vocabulary charts and display them in class making sure that they do not introduce new vocabulary before learners have actually mastered that introduced earlier.

M. Teaching procedures for literacy development recommended by NCDC (2007a)

The NCDC (2007a:31-38) suggests six teaching procedures (TPs) for literacy development. These are described below:

- Literacy TP1: Writing exercises
Here a teacher is encouraged to engage learners in writing activities on a blackboard, in the air, on slates and in exercise books or on spare paper. Teachers are advised to monitor children's work as they shade, scribe and/or practice letter shapes and do an evaluation after using this technique.
- Literacy TP2: Pre-reading exercises
This strategy aims at helping learners to recognize sounds, letters and pictures. They can do this by matching same shapes or letters, finding the odd ones out, and recognizing and describing pictures and shapes.
- Literacy TP3: Developing oral skills
This strategy has an aim of developing learners' oral language skills. NCDC suggest that this aim can be obtained through songs, rhymes, games and listening to and telling stories. Teachers are advised to use their own experience to tell stories or at times to borrow a leaf from the Teachers' Resource Book. In whatever activity, a teacher is encouraged to tell the learners the background and essence of the song, rhyme or story. A teacher can also use pictures to tell stories to the learners. This should be done by engaging learners through asking them questions, or having them repeat after the teacher or read by themselves. All these should be done according to the abilities of the learners.
- Literacy TP4: Presenting sight words using flash cards
This literacy strategy aims to aid learners in developing the skill of recognizing whole words or whole sentences. The teacher can arrive at this by using flash cards containing words or sentences. A teacher engages learners by asking them to keep identifying similar cards/words in their bank to that which the teacher may be holding up. All these words should be spoken out by learners to aid mastery of pronunciation.
- Literacy TP5: Teaching children the letters
This literacy development technique aims at letter recognition. Learners are expected to match a certain letter to words, for example, starting with the letter, writing that letter on blackboard, and saying out the sound, writing it out on their slates and drawing a picture of an object of which the name starts with that letter.

- Literacy TP6: Improving children's handwriting

A teacher is encouraged to offer learners enough time to practice writing. The teacher is advised to see to it that learners fully understand what they are doing when writing. Writing can be taught by presenting simple texts to learners which they can copy in their exercise books, on slates or in the air. The teacher then must ensure that the learners shape the letters properly and clearly. The teacher is encouraged to engage learners one-on-one so that they can receive the benefits of individual attention.