The impact of language policy and practice on children's learning:

Evidence from Eastern and Southern Africa

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Contents

List of Acronyms

BTL   Bible Translation and Literacy

DfID   UK Department for International Development

EDC   Education and Development Center (US-based education organisation)

EGRA   Early grade reading assessment

ESAR   Eastern and Southern Africa Region

GPE   Global Partnership for Education

INGO   International Non-Governmental Organisation

L1   First or home language

L2   Second language

MLE   Multilingual education

MLEN   Multilingual Education Network

MoE   Ministry of Education

MoI   Medium of Instruction

MTE   Mother tongue-medium education

NGO   Non-governmental organization

RTI   Research Triangle Institute

SACMEQ   Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality

SIL   SIL International, formerly the Summer Institute of Linguistics

USAID   United States Agency for International Development

WPM   Words per minute

Glossary

Terms related to languages

- International language: a language spoken in multiple countries; in Eastern and Southern Africa, this is typically a European language. The distribution of these languages across the region is related to their introduction by a colonial power. In the Eastern and Southern Africa region the international languages are primarily English, French and Portuguese.

- Local language: a language spoken in one or more ethnolinguistic communities in a country.

- Mother tongue: the language learned by a child in the home. May also be called first language or home language.

- National language: may refer to a language that has been recognized by law as a language of the nation; or alternatively, to a language that is spoken by one or more ethnolinguistic communities in the nation.

- Official language: a language which has been designated by law as a language of the nation, to be used in governance and education systems.

- Orthography: the alphabet and spelling system of a given language.

- Bilingualism: the ability to speak two languages.

- Biliteracy: the ability to read and write in two languages.

- Code-switching: alternating between two or more languages in a conversation.

Terms related to the education context

- Language of instruction / medium of instruction: the language in which curriculum content is taught.

- Language as subject: the presence of a language in the curriculum as a taught subject.

- Pedagogy: the method and practice of teaching.

- Additive multilingualism / additive multilingual education / additive bilingual education: the use of two languages of instruction concurrently.

- Transitional bilingual or multilingual education: the use of one language as medium of instruction in the early grades, transitioning to the use of a second (or third) language in the later grades.

- Subtractive bilingual education: the replacement of the first language of instruction with a second language of instruction, so that the first language no longer features in the curriculum at all.

- Language immersion education: the intentional and exclusive use of a second language as medium of instruction. Where the home language is not well supported in the print environment or education system, this type of education is called submersion.

Acknowledgements

This review of the impact of language policy and practices on children's learning in the 21 countries of Eastern and Southern Africa results from the vision of UNICEF education officers in the region. Commissioned by UNICEF, this review aims to provide a basis for informed decision-making by UNICEF programme officers regarding language and education. The review draws on a wide array of reports, analyses, research studies and policy documents. In assembling this information I have benefited from generous information-sharing by academic and NGO colleagues in the education world, too many to enumerate here. My own experience in many of these countries over the past 21 years has also provided perspective on the data gathered.

I would like to give special acknowledgment to Camille Baudot, Mitsue Uemura and Shiraz Chakera of UNICEF's Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office for their support, direction and thoughtful input. Their vision and passion for quality education in the region has been the driving force behind this study. I would further like to acknowledge contributions from SIL Africa staff members Gary Cowman, Carol Ngugi, Carl Grove and Leila Schroeder. Final reviews of Chapter 2 by UNICEF Country Education Officers in several of the countries were also extremely valuable.

One important feature of this review is its currency. In assembling the information, a great deal of effort was given to finding out the most recent policies, practices, studies and initiatives related to language and education. The language policy arena is highly political and can be very dynamic; radical changes in language of instruction policy can occur almost overnight. Hence, a caveat: what is current as of this writing may be superseded at any time, so staying up to date is important. Nevertheless, the information presented for each country can provide a solid basis for understanding the country's language and education dynamics and planning within those dynamics.

While every effort has been made to provide as complete a review as possible, inevitably some studies and language-education initiatives will have been missed. I take responsibility for any such omissions.

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Nairobi, Kenya
March 2016

Foreword from the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Director

This report – on the impact of language policy and practices on learning – is an important and timely addition to the debate on quality education. Global evidence has been in support of mother tongue-based education as a critical part of high quality education, and the report adds to this body of knowledge.

While the education arguments for the use of mother tongue are robust, decisions on language of instruction in schools are often rooted in a nation's history, culture and environment. In the Eastern and Southern Africa region (ESAR), many parents and policy makers have veered towards early adoption of international languages. In addition, many countries in the region have multiple languages spoken within their borders, which presents logistical and linguistic challenges in using the language the child is best able to speak and understand.

It is against this background and context that UNICEF commissioned this report. The impact of language policy and practice on children's learning: Evidence from Eastern and Southern Africa. The report seeks to gain a deeper understanding on the role language plays in improving the quality of education, and to understand the situation across Eastern and Southern Africa.

The report finds positive links between using the child's home language and learning outcomes. The report highlights that many countries are promoting mother-tongue language policies, though practices in schools frequently diverge from the national language policy and instead use international languages (such as English). This is due to parents' and educators' perceptions on the value of English in terms of accessing jobs and participating in a globalised economy.

However, the report notes that while multilingualism is an important goal, it is not achieved by relegating the mother-tongue language to the home. Instead, the report calls for nurturing the mother tongue through the primary school years. The report suggests advocacy and mobilisation as means to encourage parents to value their home language in the school environment.

The impact of language policy and practice on children's learning argues that improved evidence, networking, south-to-south learning and advocacy are going to be crucial to create a focus on mother-tongue education environments. The report provides a critical evidence base for responding to the changing development context.

By way of conclusion, the report sets a challenge for the region: if learning in the mother-tongue has such formidable implications for learning outcomes, how can the debate amongst parents and policy makers be shifted? And, how do all stakeholders raise the resources so as to invest in mother-tongue language teaching and learning resources?

I sincerely hope that these challenges – as neatly outlined in this report – are those that the regional education community will consider and address.

Leila Gharagozloo-Pakkala
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Executive Summary

This literature review of language policy and education quality in the 21 countries of UNICEF's Eastern and Southern Africa Region provides an in-depth, up-to-date perspective on the realities and impact of language use in the region's formal education environments.

The language environment in the Eastern and Southern Region of Africa is rich and dynamic. Many African languages, including Amharic, Kirundi, Swahili, isiZulu, Kinyarwanda, Chichewa, Luganda, Kikuyu, Malagasy, Oromo, and Somali are spoken as mother tongues by millions of African citizens. In addition, there are many hundreds of smaller and less well-recognized African languages. Layered over are a handful of international languages, introduced to the continent as colonial languages.

The international languages have gained a strong foothold in the national institutions of Eastern and Southern Africa. Originally established by colonial governments for the purpose of training local civil servants, the formal education system has consistently been identified with the use of non-African languages of instruction. The more recent influence of globalization has heightened the role and prestige of international languages (particularly English) in education. These languages are now seen as the gateway to global citizenship, economic progress and enhanced social standing.

In this context, issues of language and education are hotly debated, particularly where primary education is concerned. Policy shifts on language of instruction are common, as government authorities try to find a solution that will be both pedagogically effective and acceptable to education stakeholders.

Given the political and pedagogical challenges of language of instruction choices in classrooms, it is crucial to understand the situation clearly; hence this review with a focus on language of instruction and children's learning outcomes.

The research indicates that using the mother tongue in the classroom enhances classroom participation, decreases attrition, and increases the likelihood of family and community engagement in the child's learning. Research also shows that using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction enhances the child's cognitive learning processes, and that learner-centred learning has to be carried out in a language the child speaks in order to be effective.

Evidence on the financial aspects of language of instruction policies demonstrates that widespread concerns about the high costs of local language medium education are not based on evidence. Additional costs for such education are not primarily due to the introduction of local languages into the curriculum, but rather to the immediate costs of good quality education compared to poor quality education. Studies also show that higher implementation costs in local language use are more than offset by lower student attrition and dropout rates.

1   Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Comoros, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

The country-by-country review of language and education policy and practice, as well as data on language and student learning outcomes in 21 countries of Eastern and Southern Africa[1], indicate that:

- In more than 90 per cent of the countries studied, the national language policy environment supports the use of local languages of instruction in early primary grades. Classroom practice, however, does not generally conform to these pro-local language policies; classrooms use international languages of instruction far more commonly. This lack of alignment between national policy and classroom practice in effect nullifies the policy's intended effects.

- A number of qualitative and quantitative studies on language of instruction practices in the region indicate that using the language spoken by the child significantly enhances learning outcomes compared to using a language of instruction that the child does not speak.

- Language of instruction, while central to academic success, is just one of a number of components of quality education. Effective language of instruction policy and practice must be accompanied by careful attention to other features of quality education such as teacher capacity and deployment, infrastructure and curriculum.

- Using a local language of instruction requires that the language has acquired a certain level of written development and pedagogical suitability. Where educators are considering several languages of instruction, they need to ensure that the writing system of each language is adequately developed to make it an effective medium for learning.

- Reading assessments across the region point to very low overall reading levels. Using a language of instruction that the learners can understand is a central feature of improving these outcomes. Equally important is a strong component of reading pedagogy.

- A number of externally funded reading interventions are being implemented across the region. Many of these interventions use local languages for instruction in early primary grades (usually grades 1 to 3). These interventions typically feature significant evaluation components, although so far it is difficult to draw strong statistical conclusions about their impact. This is either because the studies are still too new to elicit solid conclusions, or because the language of instruction component is too difficult to distinguish from other innovative components of the interventions.

Comparative education data across the region reinforce these country-level findings. Primary school dropout rates reported in the 2014 Human Development Index (HDI) indicate that the teaching and learning strategies currently being used by ESAR countries are not adequate to keep children in school. Given the correlations that have been found between language of instruction and dropout and repetition rates in primary school, it seems possible that pro-international language policies, compounded by poor implementation of "local language-friendly" policies, bear significant responsibility for the high primary school dropout rate recorded by the HDI. Further research specifically on this matter would add a great deal to our understanding of the links between national policy implementation and international education data.

Data from the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring and Educational Quality (SACMEQ) also indicate the importance of local language instruction to strong learning outcomes. Analysis of SACMEQ III data in 2010 showed strong positive correlations between speaking the language of instruction and pupil achievement, especially in reading. SACMEQ data analysis indicates that 'speaking the language of instruction' is one of seven significant pupil-level predictors for both reading and mathematics.[2]

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2   Hungi (2011b: 8) lists the seven indicators: "pupil SES [socio-economic status], pupil sex, pupil age, grade repetition, days absent, homework, and speaking language of instruction".

In the case studies of Ethiopia, South Africa and South Sudan, challenges can be seen in implementing local language policy in multi-language national contexts and in establishing a pedagogically and culturally appropriate role for non-local languages (particularly English) in the education systems.

The evidence in the review supports several recommendations:

1. National and international stakeholders should prioritize advocacy and awareness-raising activities regarding the realities of pedagogy and language. Much research has been done, as evidenced in this language and education review; the findings of this research need to be better disseminated and understood.

2. International education stakeholders in the region should facilitate serious discussion and exchange of experiences regarding language and education across the region. The very real issues of language and national identity need to be thought through, and policy goals need to be shaped around those issues. Regional dialogue could provide encouragement and resources to national decision makers.

3. National and local bodies must give significant attention to the development of written forms of local languages and their suitability for pedagogical use.

4. All institutionally supported initiatives involving learning and development of any kind must aim to use a language of instruction that learners understand. Sustainable development implies effective communication, which in turn implies the use of a language that is well understood by the target audience.

5. National and regional governments, as well as their international funders, should support the implementation of pilot multilingual education programmes that generate evidence valued by parents, communities and policy makers.

6. National and regional governments, and their international funders, must carefully think through the issues of moving from pilot programmes to a national scale initiative. The challenges of scaling up are often quite different from the challenges that have been successfully met in a pilot programme.

Language of instruction, along with other features of quality education such as appropriate curriculum, teacher capacity and effective school leadership, is central to successful learning. Whilst experience shows that effectively integrating appropriate language practices into education and development initiatives is challenging, it is critical if we are to achieve desired learning outcomes. Education stakeholders and institutional partners must think and act collaboratively so that all the crucial features of quality education, including language of instruction, will be successfully addressed.

Introduction

The language environment in the Eastern and Southern Region of Africa is rich and dynamic. Many African languages, including Amharic, Kirundi, Swahili, isiZulu, Kinyarwanda, Chichewa, Luganda, Kikuyu, Malagasy, Oromo, and Somali are spoken as mother tongues by millions of African citizens. Some may also serve as regional and national languages. In addition to these large language communities, are many hundreds of smaller and less well-recognized African languages. Layered over this richly diverse linguistic environment are a handful of international languages, introduced to the continent as colonial languages and now more or less integrated into the language ecology of the continent.

The attitudes of Eastern and Southern Africa's citizens towards their local languages are largely positive. More than 80 per cent of the region's 400+ languages are used regularly in their speech communities and passed on to the children of those communities (Lewis, Simons and Fennig 2014). Though colonial rule resulted in the presence of prestigious international languages in many national systems, those languages have not replaced African mother tongues in the lives of the great majority of citizens of the region.

At the same time, international languages *have* gained a strong foothold in the national institutions of Eastern and Southern Africa, most notably for this review the formal education systems. Originally established by colonial governments for the purpose of training local civil servants, the formal education system has consistently been identified with the use of non-African languages of instruction. The more recent influence of globalization on curriculum, pedagogy and learning outcomes has heightened the role and prestige of international languages (particularly English)

in education. These languages are now seen – accurately or not – as the gateway to global citizenship, economic progress and enhanced social standing.

The impact of this perspective on the value of formal education, as delivered in international languages, has been a significant rise in the number of children attending schools – particularly primary school. Parents strive to provide their children with the maximum number of years of schooling; national government support, such as the provision of free primary education, also aims to increase enrolment. The quality of formal education, however, has not increased to anywhere near the same degree as school enrolment. One of the major reasons for this discrepancy between school attendance and learning outcomes is that the language of instruction is unfit to serve as a medium for learning. Children, especially those in early grades of primary school, are fluent in their mother tongues but not in the international language that is being used overwhelmingly in the classroom.

In this context, issues of language and education are hotly debated, particularly where primary education is concerned. An entire spectrum of opinion exists on appropriate language of instruction policy and practice, with ample and varied evidence being cited to support widely divergent choices. Policy shifts on language of instruction are common, as government authorities try to find a solution that will be both pedagogically effective and acceptable to education stakeholders.

For UNICEF, quality education is of critical importance for enhancing the lives and the futures of the region's children. Given the political and pedagogical challenges of language of instruction choices in classrooms, it is crucial to understand the situation clearly.

To that end, UNICEF has commissioned this review of language policy and education quality in the 21 countries of its Eastern and Southern Africa Region in order to provide an in-depth, up-to-date perspective on the realities of language use in the region's formal education environments and its impact on learning outcomes.

Such a perspective can significantly assist national and international stakeholders in setting policies and strategies to enhance education quality. The 21 countries under study in this review are Angola, Botswana, Burundi, the Comoros, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of findings regarding language and education quality in general, on which the study is built.

Chapter 2 contains a country-by-country review of language policy, education practice, studies on language and education, and language education initiatives. The findings in this chapter were the result of intensive desk research, gathering data from both digital and non-digital sources. The libraries of SIL Africa (Nairobi, Kenya), the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics (Dallas, USA), and the University of Washington (Washington State, USA) provided much of this data; in addition, online reports, studies and correspondence with consultants and programme implementers provided a great deal of up-to-date information.

Chapter 3 presents evidence gathered specifically on language policy and student learning outcomes in the countries of Eastern and Southern Africa. It presents and analyses numerical findings from the Human Development Index, SACMEQ studies, Early Grade Reading Assessments (EGRA), and country-specific quantitative studies.

Chapter 4 consists of case studies of three countries in the region: Ethiopia, South Africa and South Sudan. These case studies present data drawn from similar sources to those in reviewing in Chapter 2; however, additional detail allows more in-depth analysis of the language and education policies and environment in the three countries.

Chapter 5 presents the conclusions and recommendations.

The extensive references included at the end of the study are intended both to indicate the sources of information in the review and to provide a resource for researchers wishing to undertake similar studies in one or more of the countries under review.

The primary limitations of this study are related to the type of research it involved, which consisted primarily of document study. No on-site study was carried out, nor were any interviews of government or non-governmental sources undertaken. For that reason, this study relied on the availability of the relevant information from secondary sources, online or in the library holdings referred to above.

Chapter 1. What research tells us about the links between language policy and education quality

This chapter describes our current knowledge about language of instruction and its impact on the quality of education in Eastern and Southern Africa. The chapter reviews existing research findings on language policy and learning more generally, noting that using the mother tongue in the classroom enhances classroom participation, decreases attrition, and increases the likelihood of family and community engagement in the child's learning. Use of the mother tongue is also found to enhance the child's cognitive learning processes. Further studies have shown that effective learner-centred learning must be carried out in a language the child speaks.

The chapter then examines findings from recent interventions in early grades reading in the region. These interventions have revealed, among other things, that the language of instruction choice is only one of several components of quality education. Furthermore, it has been found that using a local language of instruction requires that the language has attained a certain level of written development and pedagogical suitability.

Overall, the chapter examines the promise and realities of current reading interventions. It finishes with a consideration of the impact of the current language policy environment on language of instruction models, as well as a consideration of questions and realities regarding the financial resources available.

1.1. What we already know about language and learning

Research in Africa and elsewhere has found clear links between language policy and learning related to student engagement in formal education, cognitive processes, and learner-centred pedagogy.

1.1.1. Using the mother tongue in the classroom enhances student participation, decreases attrition, and increases the likelihood of family and community engagement in the child's learning.

Classroom research on language and learning indicates strong links between language of instruction and the participatory, or learner-centred, nature of the classroom (e.g. Batibo, 2014; Kioko et al., 2008; Trudell, 2005). Fewer children drop out of mother tongue classes (Laitin, Ramachandran and Walter, 2015); understanding what is being taught, and what they are expected to do themselves, helps to improve children's motivation to continue attending school. Parental understanding of the curriculum and ability to help the child with his or her homework are also considerably heightened.

1.1.2. Using the mother tongue as medium of instruction enhances the child's cognitive learning.

The positive cognitive effects of using a familiar language of instruction include the ready construction of schemata for learning and the availability of prior knowledge in learning new content (Bloch, 2014; Benson, 2000; Collier and Thomas, 2004). In contrast, using a medium of instruction not understood by the learner significantly impedes learning (e.g. Diarra, 2003; Harris, 2011; Motala, 2013; Trudell and Piper, 2014). In a study of language of instruction choices in Cameroon, Trudell (2005) quotes a Cameroonian primary school teacher on the impact of using a language

of instruction that the child does not speak, which starkly illustrates the core point:

> "Look outside [the window]," the teacher observes "those adults are talking in the mother tongue, and the child is actively participating in the discussion. But if you bring him in here [an English-language meeting], he will act like he doesn't know his right from his left. You can even see it in your own child, when he comes home from a day in English school—he is in shock—you can see it!" This reality is the default primary school experience for most African children. (Trudell, 2005, p. 240)

1.1.3. Effective learner-centred learning requires that learning take place in the language a child speaks

The learner-centred pedagogical model, shaped by Northern scholars such as John Dewey and Carl Rogers and popularized in the twentieth century by educators such as Maria Montessori, has made its way into national education policy on the African continent as well. Vavrus, Thomas and Bartlett (2011) in a review of learner-centred learning in sub-Saharan Africa, argue that learner-centred learning in a language not spoken by the students nor, often, their teachers, is flawed:

> because this approach relies heavily on critical thinking and dialogue, students and teachers need not only adequate space for discussions but also the linguistic skills in the [medium of instruction] to express complex ideas and to ask critical questions. Thus, [learner-centered pedagogy] places significantly higher linguistic demands on teachers and students than teacher-centered approaches. (p. 81)

Brock-Utne (2007, p.512) goes further, noting that learner-centred pedagogy may not actually be possible in the majority of African classrooms, given the linguistic limitations of students and teachers in the international languages of instruction being used.

1.2. What we are learning about language, reading and learning.

Education systems in Eastern and Southern Africa have long attracted significant interest and investment from international education donors. In the past 8 years, this interest has focused sharply on early grades reading achievement in African classrooms, as an indicator of overall learning. As a result of the numerous assessments and interventions linked to this international donor interest, a great deal is being learned about language, reading and learning.

1.2.1. Language of instruction is only one of several components of quality education.

It is becoming clear that, while language of instruction choices play a crucial role in student learning outcomes, language medium of instruction cannot account by itself for success or failure of a primary grade curriculum. Equally important are a range of other features, including:

- teacher-related components such as physical presence in the classroom, and competency in both pedagogy and content;
- curriculum-related components such as the number of subjects to be covered in a given grade, time allocated to the various subjects, and the length of the school day and school year;
- effective school leadership;
- infrastructures conducive for learning that include sufficient classrooms, toilets, desks and chairs;
- pedagogical materials available to the teacher and the learner, and available in multiple grades;
- the physical, psychological and emotional safety of the learning environment;
- socio-economic factors that affect health, nutrition and parental support.

Reading and learning interventions by national and international education implementers are demonstrating that the absence of any of these components inhibits learnings. Language of instruction is thus emerging as a necessary but not sufficient component of successful classroom learning.

1.2.2. Using a local language of instruction requires that the language has attained a certain level of written development and pedagogical suitability

Reading interventions in long-developed international languages rely on largely accurate assumptions about the stability of writing systems, text availability, adequacy of the curriculum, teacher capacity and literacy ability in the language of instruction, as well as the adequacy and appropriateness of available reading methodologies. For most African languages, however, one or more of these assumptions may not hold true. For this reason, the design and implementation of effective programmes must often include the following tasks:

- orthography review (e.g. the Uganda School Health and Reading Program, SHRP);
- vocabulary development in the target languages for teaching unfamiliar content;
- curriculum review at national and local levels (e.g. the Reading for Ethiopia's Achievement Developed - Technical Assistance project, READ-TA);
- materials development in the target language (nearly every local language-medium intervention includes this);
- teacher capacity development for local language-medium pedagogy (e.g. Save the Children's Literacy Boost); and
- the development of linguistically, culturally and pedagogically appropriate reading instructional methods (Trudell and Schroeder, 2007).

Given the significant investment required to carry out these tasks, it is perhaps not surprising that governments and NGOs alike often decide to avoid formalized mother tongue-based pedagogy altogether. This avoidance, however, is tantamount to burying one's head in the sand, since the language and culture barriers to successful nationwide learning achievement do not go away. Still, it has become clear in the last decade that serious engagement in local language-medium learning is a complex and time-consuming effort.

1.2.3. Reading assessment data is useful, but must be interpreted carefully

One prominent feature of the current focus on reading achievement is the use of early grade reading assessment (EGRA) instruments for baseline, mid-point and end line measurements.[3] Originally developed through USAID sponsorship, EGRA instruments are now supported and implemented by a wide range of programme implementers and funders in Eastern and Southern Africa.[4]

The data generated by these assessments, particularly the most common baseline assessments, are indicating some important realities about language and reading. Of greatest importance is the finding that children in African primary school classrooms are not generally learning to read and write as measured by the criteria used in the assessments. These criteria have been developed by reading specialists in the USA and the UK, and are focused primarily on the attainment of specific reading skills.

Another important finding is that many children who are supposed to be learning in their own languages are not performing significantly better on EGRA assessments than children being taught in a non-local language. Several explanations could account for these findings.

3   https://www.eddataglobal.org/reading/. Accessed 11 March, 2016.
4   www.eddataglobal.org/documents/index.cfm/EGRA%20in%20Africa%20-%20Brief%20-%202011-08-19_FINAL_EndDateUpdated-Jun2014.pdf?fuseaction=throwpubandID=323. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

One explanation is that textbooks, library books, posters and signs in the school, as well as teacher instruction and writing on the chalkboard, are nearly always written in an international language. In addition, children are frequently required to use only the international language in classroom interactions instead of their own. The reality of classroom pedagogy in much of Africa is that teachers use international languages as the languages of instruction, whether that practice aligns with national policy or not.

Even in cases where literacy (and possibly numeracy) is taught in the local language, the rest of the curriculum content is generally conveyed through non-local language materials. Where the curriculum allocates space for teaching in the mother tongue, the necessary teacher training and mother tongue materials are generally absent. As a result, any reading skills acquired by the pupil are at least as likely to be in the international language as in the local language. Moreover, the pupil's limited (or non-existent) oral fluency in the international language reduces his or her reading skills to lower level skills such as letter identification and word memorization, rather than to vocabulary building or comprehension.

The lack of explicit reading instruction in African languages provides a second explanation for the inadequate reading performance of children in their mother tongue. The subject of reading pedagogy is not typically found in teacher training institutions, nor do the instructors (who themselves usually have secondary-level teaching experience) often have experience in reading and writing instruction. In fact, the "language" subject class is where children learn to read, if they learn at all. Where reading instruction is in the curriculum, an additional challenge is the practice of teaching reading in African languages in the same way that reading is taught in non-African languages without regard

to the significant linguistic differences between them that affect reading skill acquisition.

A third explanation is that the students assessed may not be receiving good quality education as characterised by the absence of factors noted in section 1.2.1. Where this is the case, using the local language of instruction cannot compensate for poor education quality.

1.3. The promise and realities of current reading interventions.

The country-level language and education review (Chapter 2) includes a large number of rigorously monitored and evaluated interventions across Eastern and Southern Africa, focused on reading and other aspects of primary school learning. The data from these interventions could be ideal for demonstrating links between language policy and student learning, but demonstrating those links is often difficult. Not all of the interventions have focused data gathering efforts on use of the mother tongue versus use of an international language. Indeed, many reading interventions in the past decade have included a number of components language of instruction. In such cases, it is not easy to identify the results that are due specifically to language of instruction choice. Recommendations regarding language choice may be included in project reports, but data specifically linking language to student learning is not readily available.

Several current reading interventions do focus specifically on language of instruction, but for the most part they have not been going long enough to show reliable endpoint data. The outcomes of projects such as Uganda's *SHRP*, Ethiopia's *READ* and Zambia's *Read to Succeed*[5] could be very promising, once they have been going long enough to generate reliable data. The Rwandan *L3 Initiative*

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5   These three projects are described in sections 2.19.5, 2.6.5, and 2.20, 5 respectively.

and the Kenyan *Primary Mathematics and Reading* (*PRIMR*) project[6] are coming close to having robust data on language and learning. Dissemination of the outcomes of all of these projects could be very useful indeed.

1.4. The realities of the policy environment

Many countries of Eastern and Southern Africa have established policy environments that are relatively supportive of using the mother tongue as medium of instruction (refer to Table 3.1). The most common of these policies, known as "early exit transitional" bilingual education, mandates the use of one or more African language in the early primary grades, after which an international language becomes the medium of instruction for the remainder of primary, secondary and higher education. Although this policy does provide space for the use of local languages in the formal school system, it suffers from two very serious deficiencies.

First, research evidence indicates that the "early exit" model is not very effective in providing long-term academic gains. Thomas and Collier's well-known comparative study of various models of bilingual education (Collier and Thomas, 2004) found that the "late exit" model (use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction for up to six to eight years) yielded much higher learning gains than the early exit model of only one to three years. In Africa, several studies have shown that the level of English mastery by Grade 3 students is not adequate to support them for English medium learning in Grade 4.

Second, adequate classroom implementation of even this limited local language of instruction model is uncommon. This is largely due to opposition from local and national education stakeholders, who are convinced of the necessity of international language-medium

education, beginning as early as possible, for their children's long-term academic success. Trudell, Young and Nyaga (2015) examine the range of myths about language and education that underlie this powerful deterrent to effective implementation of even an early-exit transition model.

Two other common models in Eastern and Southern Africa stand at opposite ends of the language and education continuum. One is the "late-exit" transition or "maintenance" model, which maintains local language as medium of instruction through at least the primary years. This model is by far the most common language learning model used in multilingual environments of Europe. The second model is the "submersion" model, in which the international language is used throughout the education system regardless of whether the pupils or teachers have mastered that language. This model is not the official policy in most African countries, but it is the de facto approach used in classrooms across the continent (as noted in Chapter 2 in several country-level reviews).

Several important lessons may be drawn from the policy choices and outcomes seen in Eastern and Southern Africa:

- The impact of language policy on student achievement requires that the policy be well resourced and supported at national and local levels. This is the single most crucial point that can be made where language and education policy are concerned. Local support and national resourcing of local language medium of instruction practices are especially important.
- Given the long-term nature of education outcomes, significant time is needed for a given policy decision to demonstrate impact; a decade is not unreasonably long. In addition, implementation of the various models of multilingual education requires a long-term perspective for accurate impact evaluation. The political lifetime of most

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6   These two projects are described in sections 2.13.5 and 2.7.5 respectively.

government education officials is short by comparison; this means that continuity of policy and policy support is highly vulnerable to political changes.

• Education policy generally includes many different facets, including: teacher recruitment, remuneration and capacity development; education management; and curriculum issues. The interplay of policy decisions with these various aspects of education affects the outcomes of any particular policy feature, such as language of instruction. Thus, it is often difficult to show that a specific language policy decision has led to specific learning outcomes.

1.5. Financial resourcing

Although financial resourcing questions are not significantly addressed in the country-level reviews (Chapter 2), they do play a crucial role in policy choices. Commonly expressed concerns about the cost of materials development, teacher training and infrastructure development for multiple language communities often present the most powerful argument against multilingual policy choices.

This argument can be countered in a number of ways. First and foremost, the resourcing gap between international and African language medium education is not primarily about language choice: it is rather an indication of the gap between *good quality* and *poor quality education*. It is true that the use of local languages for classroom instruction requires development of a range of teaching and learning materials; provision of these materials to classrooms across the nation, including the most rural ones; teacher capacity development and supervision; and possibly curriculum review. However these are elements of *any* good-quality education system. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize their absence from most African primary education systems as an

indication of poor quality education and *not an indictment of language of instruction choices*.

Additionally, Heugh (2006, p. 138) notes that the costs and benefits of various models of education in Africa have not been well studied. In particular, the costs of unsuccessful models, i.e. those that do not produce actual learning, need to be carefully examined. Learning assessments across Africa make it clear that education models based on instruction in languages the learners do not speak qualify as unsuccessful. Bergmann (2002) notes that such a medium of instruction contributes to high dropout rates and grade repetition rates. So perhaps the question is not, "How can we afford local language-based education?", the question is rather, "How can we afford to keep running education systems that are designed to fail, by virtue of the language medium they use?"

With regard to the actual cost difference between local language and international language medium education, Heugh (2006) demonstrates that many costs of quality education are the same across the different language models. The primary differences between African language curricula and international language curricula have less to do with costs than with the language development tasks involved for some African languages: orthography development; development of terminology specific to particular subjects such as mathematics and science; and in some cases translation of textbooks.

Considering all these features, language economics scholar Grin estimates the additional expenditure to be about 4 to 5 per cent, which is usually recovered within five years through lower repetition rates (Grin, 2005, pp. 20-21). This is hardly enough to warrant the concerns so commonly expressed about financial resourcing of local language

medium learning. Ramachandran's study of Ethiopian school data (Ramachandran, 2012) indicates that, while the provision of mother tongue-based instruction increased the percentage of the sample completing six years or more of schooling by 12 per cent, the recurrent education expenditure per student in Ethiopia declined by around 20 per cent.

Grin (2005) argues that cost itself is meaningful only when considered with reference to the educational returns being bought. In the case of mother tongue-based education, decreased repetition and lower dropout rates make the difference; Grin estimates the cost effects of repetition and dropout rates for non-mother tongue education to be $655 per student, and those of mother tongue education to be $585 per student. Similarly, a World Bank study in Mali (World Bank 2005) indicates that, although French-medium primary education costs 8 per cent less per year to resource than mother tongue education, the higher repetition and dropout rates result in a 27 per cent increase over the mother tongue-based bilingual programmes.

Added to these considerations are the positive medium- and long-term national outcomes: higher economic productivity of successful learners, and what Heugh (2006) calls "the

language industry" related to publishing, translation, and tertiary education.

1.6. Conclusion

What we know, and what we are learning, about language of instruction presents a complex mosaic of evidence. The pedagogical and cognitive evidence, from research and practice, is that the appropriateness of using a child's own language as medium of instruction is unassailable. Yet, evidence from the policy arena indicates that the implications of language of instruction choices are complex, as well as politically and socially loaded.

Evidence from curriculum reform efforts indicates that giving African languages space in the formal school system requires a significant commitment of resources, as well as major efforts in advocacy. At the same time, evidence from language economists indicates that the costs of providing space in the school system for African languages are much lower than many have assumed.

These findings are illustrated in the next chapter, a review of language and education policy and practice in the 21 countries of UNICEF's Eastern and Southern Africa Region.

Chapter 2. Language and education policy and practice: a country-level review

This chapter is a country-level review of the 21 countries in UNICEF's Eastern and Southern Region: Angola, Botswana, Burundi, the Comoros, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Each country review consists of an overview of the language policy background, a description of education policy and practice in the country where language of instruction is concerned, and a brief description of any research studies or programme initiatives related to language of instruction. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information present is the most current available as of March 2015.

Angola

2.1 Angola

2.1.1. Background information

Angola was colonized in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries by the Portuguese. Although the country achieved independence in 1975, the history of Portuguese in Angola still dominates the linguistic policy.

Ethnologue (Lewis, Simons and Fennig, 2015)[7], a catalogue of the world's languages, lists Angola as having 38 living languages.

2.1.2. Current language policy

The current language policy in Angola, as laid out in the Constitution of 2010, states that Portuguese is the official language (Const. of the Rep. of Angola, Article 19). It also states that "the state shall value and promote the study, teaching and use of other Angolan languages, in addition to the main international languages of communication" (Article 19). A fundamental task of the Angolan state is to "protect, value and dignify Angolan languages of African origin, as part of the cultural heritage, and to promote their development, as living languages which reflect national identity" (Article 21). This policy aligns with the 2001 policy as reported by Augusto (2012, p.3): "…the Angolan parliament passed the Law number 13/01 that allowed the introduction of indigenous languages into the formal educational system as a medium of instruction."

Portuguese, however, remains the language of instruction in school, and its effect is described by Diarra:

> "The generally indifferent results of teaching in Portuguese are due in very large measure to either of the following: an inadequate command of the language by teachers and pupils, or confusion between Portuguese and the national languages from the phonetic level to that of syntax and semantics. This confusion tends to slow down the rate of learning and noticeably affect the quality of teaching."
> (Diarra, 2003, pp. 340-341)

An additional language dynamic in Angola is the increased interest in English, which challenges the dominance of Portuguese in some contexts. Mooko (2009, p. 170) notes that "English is gradually usurping the privileged position that Portuguese used to have in Angola due to the role of language in achieving economic opportunity that has emerged in Angola." Mooko attributes this partly to the pressure of the widespread use of English in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), of which Angola is a founding member.

2.1.3. Education policy and practice

According to Nsiangengo, Diasala and Wolhuter (2014, p. 20), the primary curriculum subjects include Portuguese and a national language; the authors comment that "which national language is included is determined by the region and the dominant language of that part of the country." They further note that "the inclusion of a national language is an innovation in the curriculum and is still in the experimental stage." As of late 2014, information showing national language as a curriculum subject indicates no hours per day prescribed for it.

2.1.4. Study

The Directorate of General Education of the Angolan Ministry of Education is carrying out a study of the education needs of mobile and migrating populations in the country, including relevant aspects of ethnicity and language fluency of these populations. This study is supported by UNICEF.

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7   Ethnologue, a product of SIL International, is a catalogue of the world's languages (http://www.ethnologue.com/). The count of languages in each country is based on the most current information available; it covers all languages spoken in a given country, whether indigenous or not.

2.1.5. Language education initiatives

Textbooks in 7 Angolan languages

Pearson Education, an international education publishing and assessment service based in the UK, announced in 2008 a project to develop and introduce textbooks in seven Angolan language plus Portuguese.[8] The project was to be carried out in conjunction with the Angolan government and the Molteno Institute for Language and Literacy. Molteno's annual report for 2011 indicated that their books were being sold in Angola at that time.

The textbooks were produced by Longman, part of Maskew Miller Longman, a South Africa-based educational publisher of which Pearson Education holds a 50 per cent stake. The 2008 announcement noted that: "the books are now being trialled in about 120 classrooms, and are expected to be rolled out to more than 1 million children beginning in 2009, in a program that embraces the indigenous languages of Cokwe, Kikongo, Kimbundu, Ngangela, Olunyaneka, Oshikwanyama and Umbundu." The announcement also notes that: "[t]he colorful books include exercises in the alphabet, simple mathematics problems, colors and shapes, and written exercises for vocabulary and grammar."[9] Pearson stated that the programme would be assessed in 2011; the outcomes of that assessment have not yet been made public.
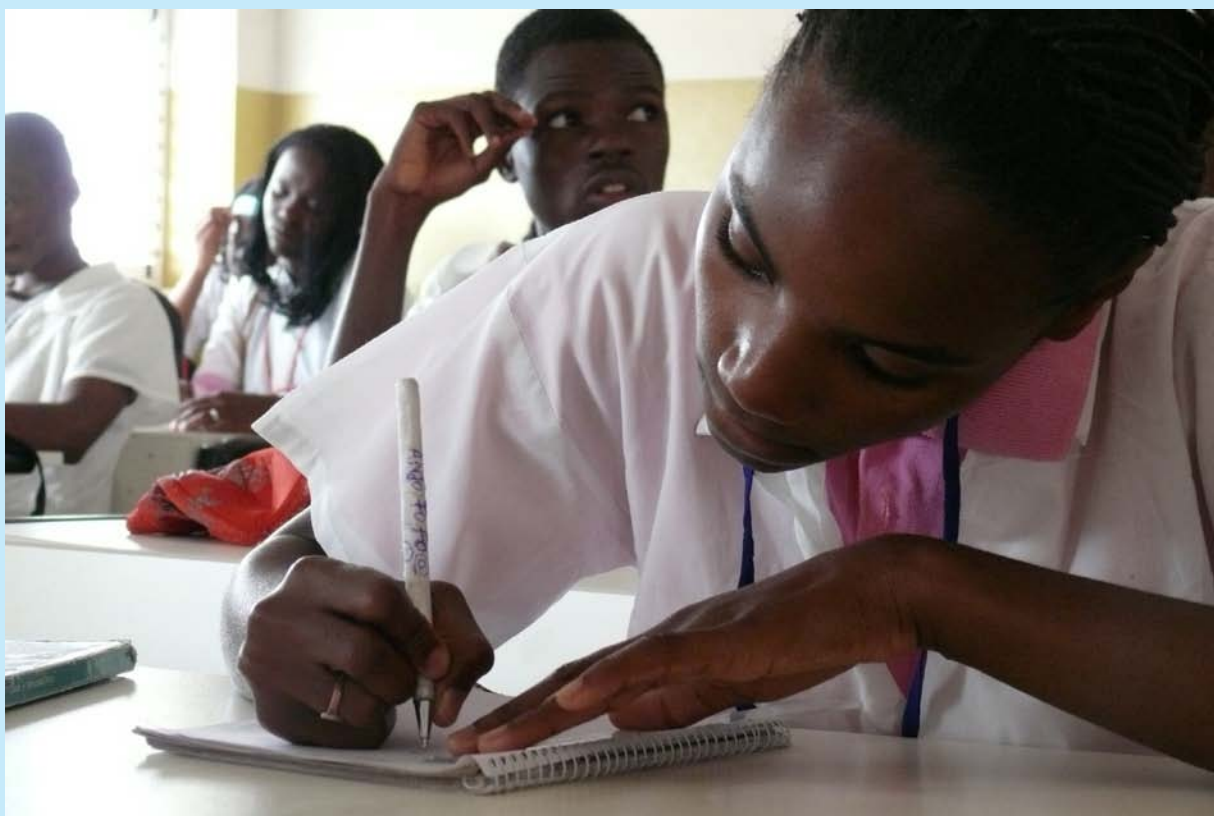
8   http://www.prweb.com/releases/2008/11/prweb1653604.htm. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

9   As footnote 8.

Angola

Save the Children's "*Rewrite the Future*"

In 2005, the INGO Save the Children launched an education campaign called *Rewrite the Future*, focusing on 20 conflict affected states including Angola. The programme focused on logistical and technical support for teachers and supervisors in three provinces of Angola. The programme's final evaluation in 2011 (Save the Children, 2011) indicated a marked improvement in the teaching observed in supported classes. Instruction and assessment in the project schools were in Portuguese. The report estimates that for 40 per cent of those tested, Portuguese was not their mother tongue. The assessment detected no difference in test scores for this group, probably because of the overall low level of learning for a variety of other reasons. The 2009 midterm report for Angola noted that training in teaching methods that support bilingualism may be more effective than training only in Portuguese language and that "in the early grades, teaching of basic reading skills can be done in a local language before introducing Portuguese language" (Save the Children, 2009, p. 25).

Botswana

2.2. Botswana

2.2.1. Background information

Botswana gained independence from Britain in 1966. English remains the official language of the country. Nyati-Ramahobo (2004) indicates the lack of a clear policy at the time of Botswana's independence, although it was understood that English would be the medium of instruction. Because teachers in Botswana did not possess adequate English skills the use of Setswana,[10] as the main language of Botswana, was accepted in the lower grades.

The use of languages other than English in school was banned at independence, although in some areas their informal use continued. Because some officials insisted that English was essential, more resources were directed toward building English language capacity (ibid., p. 43). Alluding to the reasons for rejecting language diversity, Nyati-Ramohobo, notes that "the language planning process in Botswana is influenced by an orientation which views language diversity as a problem, a reversal or negation of democratic gains, a threat to unity, social harmony and to development" (2004, p. 44). Furthermore, Nyati-Ramahobo argues that "the government prefers the use of English to any other language in the country … [even though] Setswana, according to some scholars is spoken by about 80 per cent of the population as a first language" (2004, p. 31).

Ethnologue lists 29 languages for Botswana.

2.2.2. Current language policy

Setswana is the medium of instruction in Grades 1 to 4, while English is taught as a subject in those grades. English then becomes the medium of instruction in Grade 5 and extends through the tertiary level, while Setswana is taught as a subject. This policy applies to all government schools. Private schools, however, use English as the medium of instruction from Grade 1 onward, but they have a flexible policy on the number of years they teach Setswana as a subject (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2004, p. 45-46). The policy provides no recognition of other languages in the formal education system. However, Nyati-Ramahobo (2000, p. 274) contends that Botswana's language policy is not actually written in one place, noting that "it is understood, inferred and observed."

2.2.3. Education policy and practice

Two sets of language relationships play out in Botswana's education system. The first is the historical tension between Setswana, spoken in eight ethnic Tswana communities and the languages of non-Tswana communities; this tension is evidenced by the choice of Setswana as a sanctioned language of schooling (Smieja, 2003). Smieja argues that "this has had serious negative impact on the education of non-Setswana speakers for many years and disadvantaged them for a long time" (p. 99). Tabulawa and Pansiri (2013) add that "ethnic minority [i.e. non-Tswana] groups have no linguistic rights" (p. 33).

The second set of language relationships is reflected in the increasingly visible role given to English in formal education compared to Setswana over last few decades. Today, both the lower and upper primary and junior secondary curriculum include Setswana and English (Tabulawa and Pansiri, 2013).

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10   Many of the languages of Southern and Eastern Africa are members of the Bantu language family. These languages are characterized by the use of a prefix such as ki-, chi-, ci-, xi-, lu- and se-, which denotes that they are languages (e.g.: Setswana is "the language of the Tswana people"). These prefixes are variably written; sometimes they as well as the actual language name are capitalized (SeTswana), sometimes only the prefix is capitalized (Setswana). On occasion, and particularly in the Ethnologue where country languages are listed alphabetically, the prefix is omitted in favour of just the language name (Tswana). Spelling in this review reflects the spellings used in the sources, and so varies among the alternatives described above.

Botswana

Describing the interaction between these two sets of language relationships, Kamwendo, Mooko and Moumakwa (2009, p. 221) note that "with English established as the official language, and Setswana as the national language, the exclusion of the other indigenous languages continues." This is not all good news for Setswana, however; "although Setswana occupies a privileged position, this does not imply by any means that the language is safe from the domineering effects of English, which by all standards has asserted itself as the main global language." Batibo takes this view even further, arguing that "as Batswana [people of Botswana] become active members of this [global] village and therefore become prey to the dictates of the key players, they will progressively lose their linguistic and cultural identity" (Batibo, 2004, p. 59).

2.2.4. Studies

Commeyras and Ketsitlile (2013) describe a review of literature on reading in Botswana that was carried out in 2007 with support from the International Reading Association. The authors first note that "it is important to keep in mind that English is the second or third language for most students, and Setswana is the second language for a significant minority of students" (pp. 214-5). They then describe two relevant research initiatives. One, by Nyati-Ramahobo (1987), found that students for whom Setswana was a second language consistently scored lower on primary leaving examinations than did those for whom Setswana was a first language. The other was a linguistic research project by Lekgoko and Winskel (2008), on the challenges faced by students in becoming biliterate in Setswana and English, given that the very different sound systems of the two languages map onto the same set of written symbols.

Analysing these findings, Commeyras and Ketsitlile conclude that "learning to read in English is different and more difficult than learning to read in Setswana" (p. 215). They

also argue that "early interventions are needed to make sure that students coming to school with a first language that is not Setswana or English be given specialized instruction to keep them from falling behind in Grade one." (p. 219)

Brock-Utne and Alidou (2011, p.199) also mention a study in which Prophet and Dow (1994) found that students in the first year of secondary school (Form 1), when taught science concepts in Setswana, had a significantly better understanding of concepts than their peers who were taught in English.

2.2.5. Language education initiatives

Breakthrough to Setswana

In the early 1980s, the *Breakthrough to Setswana* programme for lower primary school children was developed in South Africa by the Molteno Project, at Rhodes University's Institute for the Study of English in Africa. The programme was adapted from the British *Breakthrough to Literacy* program of the 1970s. *Breakthrough to Setswana* was begun in 1983 funded by the Ministry of Education. In 1995 a programme evaluation was carried out, at the request of the Ministry of Education and with funding from the British Council. By this time, it had extended to more than 800 schools.

The evaluation, documented by Peacock and Morakaladi (1995), was ambivalent about the impact of the programme, although it recognized that the sample of schools evaluated was small. A 2007 study of how reading is taught in Botswanan schools (Biakolo, 2007) also mentioned the Breakthrough programme and was somewhat critical of the way the programme had been implemented. The study also suggested that reading should be taught as a subject of its own, rather than as part of the language curriculum.

Burundi

2.3. Burundi

2.3.1. Background information

Burundi is geographically small but densely populated, with a population over 10 million. Burundi has been independent from Belgium since 1962.

Ethnologue lists three languages in Burundi: French, Kirundi, and Swahili.

2.3.2. Current language policy

The 2005 Constitution of Burundi, Section 1, Article 5, states that the national language of Burundi is Kirundi; the official languages are Kirundi and "all other languages determined by the law". However, the original version of all legislative texts must be in Kirundi.[11]

From 1973, a 'Kirundisation' programme was implemented throughout the country, except

11   http://www.accpuf.org/images/pdf/cm/burundi/constitution-du-burundi-180305.pdf. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

in some private urban schools. Contrary to the original plan, however, the Kirundisation programme has been confined to the first four years of primary school with French serving as the medium of instruction from Grade 5. Rwantabagu contends that ending the programme at Grade 4 was related to both the lack of terminology for teaching content subjects in higher grades, and also the lack of commitment on the part of policy-makers to

using Kirundi as medium of instruction more extensively (Rwantabagu 2011, p. 465).

Rwantabagu also argues that Burundian teachers and national elites continue to believe that using African languages in the education system will lower educational standards and isolate the country internationally (2011, p. 466).

Burundi

2.3.3. Education policy and practice

The fact that Burundi has one indigenous language (Rwantabagu 2009), widely spoken in the country, should make language of instruction choices less complicated, but this has not proven to be the case.

As of 1993, scholars argued that Burundi was essentially a monolingual Kirundi-speaking nation, francophone in name only (Ndayipfukamiye, 1993). Nonetheless, the curriculum in Burundi today mandates the use of Kirundi and French as languages of instruction in the primary grades; in the higher primary grades, French takes precedence over Kirundi (Rwantabagu, 2014). This privileging of French is problematic, both pedagogically and culturally. Rwantabagu (2014) observes that some Burundians believe that Kirundi, as the language of cultural identity, should be the primary medium of instruction, at least in the early primary grades; for others, French should be prioritized as '"the language of academic and professional promotion" (p. 38). The current situation is that national exams include Kirundi; the primary teachers' college curriculum includes French, Kirundi and English.

In addition, Burundi's membership in the East African Community has led to the introduction of English and Swahili as early as Grade 1, even though these two languages are spoken by less than 5 per cent of the Burundian population and are not supported in the teacher training system (Mazunya and Habonimana, 2010). Considering the tremendous learning load for the young pupil presented by the use of four languages (Kirundi, French, English and Swahili) from Grade 1, these language choices seem to be more related to political considerations than pedagogical ones.

2.3.4. Studies

A recent study of the language of instruction situation in Burundi is one of a series of studies across francophone Africa: *Les langues de scolarisation dans l'enseignement fondamental en Afrique subsaharienne francophone* (School languages in primary teaching in francophone Sub-Saharan Africa; LASCOLAF). The LASCOLAF study by Burundi, carried out by Mazunya and Habonimana (2010), is an in-depth, qualitative description of the language-in-education situation in the country. It makes a range of recommendations regarding revision of language policy, curriculum and teacher professionalization; it also recommends the formation of a language research centre to help inform language-in-education decisions.

2.3.5. Language education Initiatives

A three-year, joint initiative of World Vision and Save the Children is delivering the *Literacy Boost* programme in two regions of the country.[12] The development of Kirundi reading materials is part of the project.

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12   http://www.wvi.org/literacy-boost. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

Primary school children in Comoros

Comoros

2.4. Comoros

2.4.1. Background information

The Union of the Comoros is a small archipelago island nation of less than 900,000 people, located at the northern end of the Mozambique Channel. Several of the islands are independent, but one, Mayotte, remains under French administration.

Ethnologue lists six languages for Comoros: French, Arabic, three Comorian languages and Malagasy.

2.4.2. Current language policy

The 2001 Constitution of Comoros (Constitution of the Union of the Comoros, Title 1, Art. 1[13]) lists Shikomor (commonly called "Comorian") as the official language, and French and Arabic as the national languages. Although the official language is Shikomor, education is carried out in French and Arabic.

In some quarters, it is believed that Shikomor is not actually a language, but rather a political tool used to create a perception of unity.[14] Walker (2007) notes that the Constitution supports the view that Shikomor is the language of the nation; he also argues that this notion is actually misleading: "In the Comoros, not only is there no accepted orthography, but both Latin and Arabic scripts are in use… There is no consolidation of national identity, as opposed to sociocultural unity, in the language." (Walker, 2007, p. 586)

2.4.3. Education policy and practice

Comorian is spoken by more than 95 per cent of the population and is classified as an official language along with French and Arabic (Laval, 2009). Its use remains primarily oral, largely because of the lack of development of a stable written form of the language. Laval notes that Comorian can be found in pre-school classrooms, but from early primary, French is the language of instruction (Baker 2009, p. 218). Arabic and English are taught in later grades (Laval, 2009).

Primary school children in Comoros

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13   https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Comoros_2009.pdf. Accessed 11 March, 2016.
14   Paul Lewis, personal communication. 31 October, 2014.

Eritrea

2.5. Eritrea

2.5.1. Background information

Eritrea became an independent nation in 1993. Various language policies were implemented in the country between 1941 and 1993. At one point Amharic, the language of the political elite, was made the official language; Tigrinya, the most-spoken language of Eritrea, was banned and Tigrinya books were burned. In 1997, however, when the Eritrean Constitution was created, all languages were guaranteed equal status with no special status for any particular language (Constitution of Eritrea, Chapter 1, Article 4[15]).

Ethnologue lists 15 languages for Eritrea, nine of which are indigenous and currently used.

2.5.2. Current language policy

As of 1991, Eritrean national language policy mandates that all nine indigenous languages, with a total of three scripts, are to be used as languages of instruction in the first five years of primary school. The Eritrean language used in a given school is based on the dominant language of the area. As of 2008, seven languages have been introduced in the primary school curriculum: Tigre, Afar, Beja, Bilin, Saho, Kunama and Nera (Sava and Tosco, 2008, p. 117). English is the medium of instruction in post-primary education, and Arabic is taught as a subject at both primary and secondary levels.

Use of the mother tongue in the education system has generated heated debate. Many parents, particularly those in the western lowlands communities, express a strong desire for their children to learn through the medium of Arabic, while in urban settings, the demand is strong for English medium instruction. Despite this debate, the Ministry of Education continues to argue for use of the mother tongue in the primary grades. The government's argument is that basic education in the mother tongue is a fundamental democratic right, and is of vital importance in harnessing the development of the child (Bereketeab, 2010, p.174).

2.5.3. Education policy and practice

Eritrean languages are the media of instruction in primary schools, as described above. Schools using one of the dominant Eritrean languages, Tigrinya or Arabic, are also operating in various areas. According to the national curriculum, English is taught as a subject starting from second grade and is the language of instruction from the sixth year of primary school onward. (Asfaha, Beckman, Kurvers and Kroon, 2009, pp. 352-3).

A recent review of education in Eritrea (Rena, 2014) noted that the important goals of Eritrea's educational policy are to "provide basic education in each of Eritrea's mother tongues as well as to produce a society that is equipped with the necessary skills to function with a culture of self-reliance in the modern economy." The review further recognizes that the "education infrastructure is currently inadequate to meet these needs" (p. 294).

2.5.4. Studies

Two studies on language and reading in Eritrea have elucidated the mother tongue-English dynamic. Asfaha et al (2009) carried out a quantitative study of the relationship between second language (L2, English) reading proficiency and variables such as first language (L1) reading, L2 language proficiency and L1 script in a multiple language and script. The subjects of the study were speakers of five Eritrean languages, whose primary education was in their mother tongue. The study found that oral proficiency in English and the level of reading comprehension in the mother tongue were the two most significant predictors of English reading comprehension (p. 363).

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15   http://www.eritrean-embassy.se/government-agencies/eritrea-constitution/. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

In 2002, Walter and Davis carried out an extensive national reading survey in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (Walter and Davis, 2005). The survey indicated that children were learning to read under the current mother tongue model, despite some significant limitations in curriculum materials, supplementary reading materials and teacher training (p. 357). Attrition rates in these schools were lower than those in many other sub-Saharan countries. However, the study also found that pupils were not adequately prepared to move successfully from mother tongue medium of instruction to English in Grade 6 (p. 362). The causes for this included poor support for English in the lower grades, and meagre support for English language learning outside the classroom. Asfaha et al note that this study "prompted a major revision of the education system with new textbooks and a more learner-centred pedagogy at the heart of the changes" (2009, pp. 352-3).

Ethiopia

2.6. Ethiopia

2.6.1. Background information

Apart from a brief period of occupation, when Italy occupied Ethiopia from 1936 until Ethiopia's sovereignty was recognized in 1941, Ethiopia did not experience the same colonial history as the rest of the region. This enabled Ethiopia to take a different approach to its language policy from other countries in Africa. Ambatchew (2010, pp. 199-200) explains the historical context of Ethiopia's language-in-education policy, noting that the traditional system of education in the nineteenth century was in the Ge'ez and Amharic languages. From 1908, however, modern schools began teaching French and Arabic.

Ambatchew notes that "during the Italian colonial occupation (1936-1941), vernaculars were used as media of instruction with the aim of disuniting the country". Following the Italian occupation, he notes "the need to reunify the country led Emperor Haile-Selassie to change the medium of instruction to Amharic in government schools in the 1940s." The socialist government of 1974-1991 encouraged the use of some local languages for literacy, but not so much as languages of instruction in formal education.

Ethnologue lists 89 languages for Ethiopia.

2.6.2. Current language policy

The path chosen by Ethiopia's current government with regard to language policy was, and remains, progressive. According to the Constitution of 1994, Amharic is the official language of the country, however, the Constitution also directs that "all Ethiopian languages shall enjoy equal state recognition, and that each member state of the Federation shall determine its own respective official language or languages" (Nekatibeb, 2007, p. 51).

Ethiopia's 1994 Education and Training Policy further states that primary education is to be given in nationality languages (FDRE, 1994, p. 23). According to Alemu and Abebayehu (2011, p. 403), the underlying assumption of the policy is that the nationality language is the mother tongue of all children who live in the area where that language is spoken.

Ambatchew notes that "[t]he [1991] government allowed instruction in different languages before even adopting the official language policy in 1994, which allows for every language in the country to become a medium of instruction" (Ambatchew, 2010, p. 200). Bogale (2009)[16] comments that "this policy means that Ethiopian language education policy falls broadly within the parameters of 'best policy' in terms of multilingual developing countries." He notes however that "as is the case in many other countries, implementation is not always aligned with actual policy" (Bogale, 2009, pp. 1089-1090).

2.6.3. Education policy and practice

Since 1994, Ethiopian education has been implemented under this ambitious mother tongue language policy, the goals of which are to improve literacy rates and academic achievement, as well as to enhance appreciation of local languages and cultures (Wolff, 2011, p. 97). More than 30 languages are being used as languages of instruction or taught as a subject in primary schools (Derash, 2013). Several of these languages are used in training primary teachers and three of them are taught as subjects beyond primary school (Anteneh and Ado, 2006). English is taught as a subject from Grade 1 and Amharic is taught as a subject from either Grade 3 or Grade 5, depending on the region (Heugh, Bogale, Benson and Gebre Yohannes, 2007, p. 5). This supportive mother tongue policy is widely considered by multilingual education experts to be the most progressive national policy environment in Africa.

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16 http://portal.svt.ntnu.no/sites/ices16/Proceedings/Volume%204/Berhanu%20Bogale%20-%20Language%20Determination%20in%20 Ethiopia.pdf. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

Ambatchew (2010) takes issue with the glowing reputation of Ethiopia's language-in-education policy, claiming that "it is one of the most advanced language policies on paper, but with questionable practices on the ground" (p. 201). He observes that, "for all the progressive policy in the country, many of the political elite continue to send their children to English or French medium schools" (p. 204). Ambatchew claims that some families intentionally move from mother tongue areas to cities where classes are taught in Amharic (p. 206).

Addressing some of the reasons behind this mismatch between policy and implementation, Cohen (2007, p. 64) describes the current argument that, since the various languages being used for primary grades instruction are not all equal in their adequacy for use in education, the current practice is inherently unfair and perpetuates educational inequality. Cohen also describes an additional concern that this policy may be ethnically divisive and create regional nationalisms.

2.6.4. Studies

A study by development economist Rajesh Ramachandran (2012) assessed the effect of the 1994 language policy change on educational outcomes. The study examined data from the Demographic and Health Survey from 2011, a nationally representative sample from the nine regions and two city administrative areas of Ethiopia. The analysis of this data shows that mother tongue instruction has had a positive effect at all levels of schooling, leading to a 12 per cent increase in the number of students completing six years or more of schooling.

Heugh et al (2007) carried out an extensive study of language-in-education policy and practice in Ethiopia, commissioned by the Ministry of Education. The study concludes that "the MoE policy of eight years of mother tongue-medium schooling is one of the best on the continent and promotes sound educational practice" (p.7).

The authors also note that a great deal of public pressure is being put on regional education bureaux to use English as the medium of instruction in primary schooling; this is a challenge because "teachers throughout the system have extremely limited competence in the English language, and extremely limited exposure to English outside the classroom" (p. 6). The authors recommend that this heavy emphasis on English be moderated to allow greater resourcing for other languages.

In 2010, USAID's *EQUIP2* project published a working paper on the relationship between early grade reading and school effectiveness in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nepal (USAID, 2010). At that time, Ethiopia was noted for providing language textbooks for Grades 1 to 3 more widely than other countries, although students were observed using these books a very small percentage of the time. The paper noted that "very few students read more than 40 [words per minute] and the largest percentage (36 percent) could not read at all."

Teshome (2007) reports on a quantitative study of the relationship between learning through the mother tongue and academic achievement in the Grade 8 subjects of biology, physics, chemistry, mathematics and English. The scores of students who studied in their mother tongue were up to 11 per cent higher than the scores of those who studied these subjects in a language that was not their mother tongue.

2.6.5. Language education initiatives

Reading for Ethiopia's Achievement Developed (READ)

Beginning in 2012, a project called Reading for Ethiopia's Achievement Developed (READ) was begun by USAID and the Ethiopian Ministry of Education, with technical assistance from partners including RTI, SIL/SIL LEAD, Save the Children and Florida State University. The project was based on an early grade

Ethiopia

reading assessment (EGRA) in 2010, which indicated that 40 per cent of the Grades 2 and 3 children tested were unable to read at all (Derash, 2013). The goal of this large, five-year programme is to improve the reading and writing skills of 15 million children from Grades 1 to 8, in seven of the most widely spoken languages in Ethiopia.

Following two years of curriculum revision and materials development, the programme was officially launched in October 2014. The USAID press release noted that "this year's introduction of the new curriculum and reading materials [for] Grades 1 to 4, complemented by teacher training, resulted from a massive two-year effort involving federal and regional officials, educators, linguists, and illustrators, teacher training colleges and pilot schools. A similar effort is now underway for Grades 5-8."[17]

SIL Ethiopia

Since 2008, SIL Ethiopia has been carrying out a language development and multilingual education project in six languages of the Bench-Maji Zone of southwest Ethiopia (Baale, Bench, Diizin, Me'en, Sheko, and Suri) in collaboration with the zonal government. The project is developing the six languages in the Zone for use in primary school.

In the Benishangul Gumuz region, SIL is assisting the regional government to develop multilingual education in three languages: Shinasha, Gumuz and Bertha. This collaborative project began in 2007 with linguistic research and orthography development. SIL also develops materials for mother tongue as a subject and all other subjects, as well as training teachers. Currently, there are 20 pilot schools in which children of the area learn in their own languages (Derash, 2013).

Literacy Boost

Save the Children implemented Literacy Boost projects[18] in both the Dendi woreda (district) and the Tigray region of Ethiopia, the former in 2010-2012 and the latter in 2011-2014. The *Literacy* Boost programme included teacher training, community reading activities, and age-appropriate local language materials (Gebreanenia, Sorissa, Takele, Yenew and Guajardo, 2014). An end line evaluation of children's reading ability in the Tigray projectwas carried out entirely in Tigrigna, the pupils' mother tongue (Gebreanenia et al, 2014). An additional implementation of Literacy Boost is being carried out in the Oromia region, as part of a three-year partnership between World Vision and Save the Children.[19]

The MLE Network of Ethiopia

This network was launched in 2012; its founding members include the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Addis Ababa University, Wollayetta Sodo University, the Ethiopian Multilingual and Multicultural Professionals Association, Mizan Teppi University, USAID Ethiopia, the Southern Regional Education Bureau, the Southern Bureau of Culture and Tourism, and SIL Ethiopia. The network is intended to be open to any organization working on education in the country (Trudell, 2014, p. 9).

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17   http://www.usaid.gov/ethiopia/press-releases/usaid-and-ministry-education-launch-national-mother-tongue. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

18   http://www.savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGIpI4E/b.7084483/k.8F5A/Literacy_Boost.htm. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

19   http://www.wvi.org/literacy-boost. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

Kenya

2.7. Kenya

2.7.1. Background information

After several decades as a British colony, Kenya gained its independence in 1963. English remains the dominant language in Kenyan politics and commerce. Kembo-Sure and Ogechi (2009, p. 151) note that the colonial history of Kenya established English "as the most revered, powerful and 'prestigious' language," while the mother tongues were to be used "for mundane communicative needs" in the private sphere. Kembo-Sure and Ogechi argue that the "independent language policy in education firmly entrenched the old colonial pattern to the extent that the mother tongue is used as a medium of instruction and taught as a subject for only three years of an individual's school career (ironically shorter than the four years the colonists gave it)."

Ethnologue lists 68 languages for Kenya.

2.7.2. Current language policy

National language policy mandates use of the language of the catchment area as the medium of instruction in Grades 1 to 3 (Nyatuka, 2014); in practice, however, English is used extensively as the medium of instruction even in Grade 1 classrooms (Trudell and Piper, 2014; Bunyi, 2013; Muthwii, 2002). English and Swahili are supposed to be taught in these schools as subjects; but as Ruto observes, "[m]ost formal schools flout this [policy] and start with English as the medium or mix three languages" (Ruto, 2004, p. 126).

Discussing this pro-English classroom practice, Trudell (2007) observes that "post-independence governments' education choices have mirrored their own agendas of national unity and stability, including the maintained use of European colonial languages as languages of instruction" (p. 554). Trudell argues that for these countries, including Kenya, the national education agendas are motivated by economic progress and social advantage.

Speakers of Kenya's non-dominant languages also have strong reasons to value English. Access to formal education is particularly important to members of culturally marginalized communities, who must master dominant forms of cultural practice - including the language - if they are to gain access to mainstream political and economic institutions. Since language is a major component of such access, fluency in the colonial language is highly valued (Trudell, 2007).

As a result, even national policy that supports local language use as a medium of instruction is often appropriated in ways that nullify the intended pedagogical and cultural impact of the policy. The economic and logistical challenges to implementing such policies are relatively minor compared to the huge challenge posed by a widespread language ideology that rules out African language use in the classroom in favour of an international language, which the students rarely speak (Trudell and Piper, 2014, p. 10).

2.7.3. Education policy and practice

The mismatch between pro-mother tongue education policy and pro-international language classroom practice, so common across Africa, is particularly well documented in Kenya. Dubeck, Jukes and Okello (2012, p. 51) explain it this way:

> "Although the language of instruction policy appears to be clear, practical implementation is less straightforward. A lack of instructional materials in the mother tongue, and a concern that students who do not begin instruction in English upon school entry will be disadvantaged when they take exit exams, combine to increase the use of English in the early primary grades."

The sociolinguistic context, however, in which 75 per cent of the population have some varying degree of Swahili fluency and only 15 per cent speak English fluently (Bunyi 2008), demonstrates clearly that these practices do not produce successful learning among the majority of Kenyan children.

2.7.4. Studies

In their study of language use in primary classrooms, Kembo-Sure and Ogechi (2009) document the failure of the prevailing English-focused ideology to facilitate learning in science and mathematics. Even in schools where the local language was supposedly the medium of instruction through Grade 3, English was used heavily in these in the early grades. The authors argue that the transition from mother tongue medium to English medium is premature; it denies children the opportunity to develop cognitive and intellectual skills in their first language, which they can later transfer to English.

Dubeck et al (2012) carried out a qualitative study of literacy instruction in 24 lower primary classrooms in coastal Kenya. The languages of instruction were Swahili and English, even though neither of these languages adequately served the pupils in communicating (Dubeck et al, 2012, pp. 61-62). Even though teachers were aware of the national policy promoting the mother tongue, local languages were not recognized as languages of instruction; this was partly because of the linguistic heterogeneity in some of the classrooms, and partly because the teachers themselves often did not speak the local language. A lack of materials in the mother tongue was another hindrance to using those languages.

Between the two sanctioned languages of instruction, Swahili and English, English was the preferred medium of instruction, although teachers reported that their students generally read better and participated more in Swahili than in English (ibid., p. 63).

Graham and Van Ginkel (2014) carried out a quantitative study on the extent to which the words per minute (WPM) reading benchmark is appropriate in languages other than English, the language in which the benchmark was originally developed. WPM and comprehension testing of 300 children from two Kenyan language communities, Sabaot and Pokomo, as well as English-speaking children in Britain and Dutch-speaking children in the Netherlands, indicated that similar comprehension scores occurred among diverse WPM rates. Graham and Van Ginkel argue that the WPM benchmark is not a reliable comparative measure of reading development, since linguistic and orthographic features can differ considerably and are likely to influence the reading acquisition process.

2.7.5. Language education initiatives

Bible Translation and Literacy (BTL)

The Kenyan NGO, Bible Translation and Literacy Kenya (BTL), has been involved in the implementation of pilot mother tongue-medium education (MTE) projects in various language communities of Kenya; these include Sabaot (Jones, 2013; Jones and Barkhuizen, 2011), Tharaka (Nyaga, 2005; Schroeder, 2004), and Pokomo (Graham, 2010) as well as Giryama, Digo, Duruma and others. These pilot programmes are carried out in collaboration with the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development and local Ministry of Education offices. In designing and implementing these programmes, BTL's focus is on developing and testing effective reading and writing instructional materials, training teachers, and providing proof of concept for the effectiveness of MTE as a means of raising academic achievement among Kenya's numerically smaller language communities.

Primary Mathematics and Reading (PRIMR) Initiative

PRIMR was carried out by RTI in partnership with Kenya's Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), funded by USAID and DFID (Piper, Zuilkowski and Mugenda, 2014). The programme's primary component focused on reading in English and Swahili, as well as mathematics, in Grade 1 and 2 classrooms of 400+ schools. PRIMR involved the development and implementation of reading and writing instructional materials in

Kenya

English and Swahili, interventions including teacher support, the use of technology in the classroom and the quantitative assessment of their effectiveness. An additional component of PRIMR focused on the Bukusu and Kamba language communities, with materials development in those languages and building teacher capacity to use those materials for teaching reading and writing in local schools.

Tusome Early Grade Reading Activity

Following on from the PRIMR initiative, the USAID-funded Tusome Early Grade Reading Activity project began in 2015. The four-year project, carried out by RTI in partnership with Kenya's Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), aims to improve early grade reading outcomes in English and kiSwahili, in classrooms across the nation.[20]

MLE Network

The MLE Network of Kenya (MLEN) was initiated in 2008; its goal is to influence classroom practice in language of instruction through advocacy and research. The Network traces its beginnings to a research seminar on language and education in 2006, hosted by BTL Kenya and SIL Africa and funded partly by the Commonwealth Education Fund. Two years later, the network was formally established. Its membership today includes representatives of national government education bodies, international and national NGOs, intergovernmental organizations and universities (Trudell, 2014, p. 7).

Other mother tongue-based projects in Kenya

Mother tongue-based pilot projects are operating in various other language communities of Kenya. They include:

- a supplementary materials development initiative in the Kamba-speaking area. This is part of a Literacy Boost programme carried out among partners, World Vision, Save the Children and SIL;

- two projects among the Maasai of southern Kenya: a classroom-based reading instruction carried out by Women Educational Researchers of Kenya, and a supplementary materials development project by CODE and the National Book Development Council of Kenya;

- a now-ended reading project in the Bukusu language, carried out by of CODE and the National Book Development Council of Kenya;

- a bilingual education project in the Borana language of Marsabit Central district, carried out by Concern Worldwide and SIL Africa.

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20 https://www.rti.org/page.cfm?obj=883001B0-E495-4EDD-9C5A1DD7892410D8. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

Lesotho

2.8. Lesotho

2.8.1. Background information

The evolution of Lesotho as a nation was influenced by internal politics as well as conflicts between Dutch and British colonists. Lesotho gained independence from Britain in 1966.

Ethnologue lists five languages for Lesotho.

2.8.2. Current language policy

Kamwangamalu (2013) states that Lesotho is essentially monolingual in Sotho (or SeSotho), although English and Sotho are both official languages (Constitution of Lesotho, Chapter 1, Section 3), and are both used in schools. English is widely seen as the language of prestige and economic opportunity. Kamwangamalu observes that parents in Lesotho do not want Sesotho used as the medium of instruction even in lower primary education, because Sesotho is not associated with economic value in the local linguistic marketplace: "English is associated with employment opportunities;… it is the language of government and administration and international communication; it is the language of power and status and the language of the elite" (Kamwangamalu, 2013, pp. 161-162).

2.8.3. Education policy and practice

Given that Lesotho is described as a "monolingual nation" and that more than 99 per cent of its inhabitants are SeSotho speakers (Lekhotho, 2013), it is not surprising that SeSotho features in the education system as the medium of instruction for the first three years of primary school and as an examinable subject through secondary school. What is surprising, from a pedagogical standpoint, is that the medium of instruction switches to English in Grade 4 - despite the fact that approximately 75 per cent of the population of Lesotho do not speak English (Lewis, Simons and Fennig, 2014). In fact, as Kamwangamalu notes, parents object to the use of SeSotho even in the lower grades because they do not see it as having any economic value added for the learners (Kamwangamalu 2013, p. 161).

Lesotho's strategic plan for education for 2005-2015 (Ministry of Education and Training, 2005) contains helpful indications of the state's position on language and education. The plan mentions a baseline assessment of Grade 3 and Grade 6 students in 2003; the Grade 6 levels of achievement for SeSotho and English were 58 per cent and 45 per cent respectively. The plan also mentions children from "minority" language communities, indicated that "the Ministry shall produce and procure materials for children of minorities (e.g. Xhosa, Ndebele, Baphuthi, etc.) to enable them better access to existing knowledge using their main language of communication."

Madagascar

2.9. Madagascar

2.9.1. Background information

Malagasy was the language of instruction in most Madagascan schools prior to the French colonization in 1897; after that point, all schools that did not use French for instruction were shut down (see, for example, Boswell, 2008, p. 73, and Dahl, 2011, p. 52[21]). Madagascar gained independence from the French in 1960.

Ethnologue lists 18 languages for Madagascar.

2.9.2. Current language policy

Malagasy and French are the official languages of Madagascar; Malagasy is the national language with some variety of the language spoken by 77 per cent of the citizens (Lewis et al, 2014; Article 6 of the Draft Constitution, September 2010[22]). As of 2008, the Government of Madagascar reviewed its languages policy and "Malagasy will be from now on the means of instruction for primary education while French as a second language will be reinforced" (World Bank, 2008). This policy revision was prompted by the inability of many graduates of the primary school system to function in a system that utilized French as the medium of instruction. In 2009, however, political upheaval in the country brought this policy discussion to a halt (see below); since then, little progress has been made towards its implementation

2.9.3. Education policy and practice

According to Antal and Ndrianjafy (2013), a primary school curriculum revision designed in 2007 called for clustering lessons around themes including Malagasy, English and French. The use of Malagasy as a language of instruction would be extended from the first three grades to the first five grades; French

would be taught as a subject from Grade 1, and English would be introduced in Grade 4.

Madagascar's education sector suffered great setbacks following the unconstitutional government takeover in March 2009. This put many reforms on hold, including those in the education sector. Malagasy remains the language of instruction in the early primary grades; French is the medium of instruction thereafter, and the secondary leaving exam is in French.

The political situation in Madagascar led to international sanctions of various kinds (Antal and Ndrianjafy, 2013, p. 92). However, a grant from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) for the period 2009 to 2013 aimed to help minimize the impact of the political and economic crisis. GPE notes that the grant "kept partners mobilized and coordinated at a time when support to other sectors became fragmented, and it secured core funding when the economic consequences of the crisis reduced education funding significantly."[23] In 2013, the GPE allocated another large education grant to Madagascar, and other education partners are also involved, most notably UNICEF, which is playing a significant role in maintaining international funding for the education sector and ensuring that this funding goes directly to schools and teachers.[24]

2.9.4. Study

Teshome (2007, p. 54) mentions a study on language and learning, reported by Komarek (1997). Malagasy language textbooks and teachers' manuals for reading and writing instruction were introduced in twenty experimental schools. The next year, pupils showed enhanced learning achievement by 15 per cent over pupils in twenty control schools.

21   http://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/id/136832/OD_Linguistic_policy.pdf. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

22   https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Madagascar_2010.pdf. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

23   https://www.globalpartnership.org/country/madagascar. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

24   http://www.unicef.org/madagascar/5559_6489.html. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

Malawi

2.10. Malawi

2.10.1. Background information

Malawi was colonized by the British in 1891 and gained independence in 1964. Three Malawian languages have since gained prominence: Chinyanja, Ciyao, and Citumbuka (Kayambazinthu, (2004, page 401). Kayambazinthu notes that Chinyanja was heavily promoted by the first president of Malawi, Dr. Hastings Banda (pp. 402, 403). In 1968, the annual Convention of the ruling Malawi Congress Party recommended that Chinyanja be adopted as a national language, that its name be changed to Chichewa, and that all other Malawian languages be used in private life only.

The Parliament accepted these recommendations, making Chichewa and English the official languages of Malawi. Shortly thereafter, the Government announced that Chichewa would be taught "in all elementary schools as well as in teacher-training colleges" (Kayambazinthu, 2004, p. 403). In addition, English was made a "mandatory subject and a prerequisite for obtaining any certificate or for educational and general purposes up to the certificate level" (Kayambazinthu, 2004, p. 403).

Ethnologue lists 16 languages for Malawi.

2.10.2. Current language policy

A significant policy change came in March 1996, when a directive on education policy introduced a "three plus or minus" language formula. This involved using the mother tongue as medium of instruction in Standards 1, 2, 3 and 4 [the first four years of primary school] in all schools. English and Chichewa would continue to be offered as subjects in the national primary curriculum, and English would be the medium of instruction from Standard 5 (Kayambazinthu, 2004, p.122). Kamwendo (2008, p. 354) notes that the Ministry of Education took a lukewarm approach towards the new language policy. Realizing that it was not an easy walk towards implementing the language policy directive, the government took a back seat approach, which resulted in many lamentable delays in the approval of the new language policy" (p. 354). The pilot phase of the new language policy eventually began in 2004.

2.10.3. Education policy and practice

Despite the 1996 Ministry of Education directive that local languages were to be used as languages of instruction in Grades 1 to 4, Chichewa is currently the only Malawian language used in schools (Williams 2007; Mtenje 2012; Kamwendo 2013). Mtenje (2012, p. 98) believes that "there is almost no indication of [the directive] being implemented in the foreseeable future." Kamwendo (2012, p. 104) argues that Malawi's heavy dependence on donor education support is partly responsible for the failure to support the use of Malawian languages rather than English. In addition, Mtenje (2012, p. 96) points to the inadequacy of written Malawian languages, noting that only Chichewa, Citumbuka and Ciyao have standardized orthographies and published materials.

Until recently, Chichewa served as the language of instruction through Grade 4, with English taught as a subject in those grades. In Grade 5, the roles of the two languages were reversed; from Grade 5 and through secondary school, English was both medium of instruction and a subject, with Chichewa taught only as a subject. Even this limited degree of Chichewa use in primary schools was vulnerable, however. Kamwendo (2012) points out that "strong calls for earlier use of English in this role partly explain why Malawi's mother tongue-instruction policy declaration of 1996… remains unimplemented up to this day" (p. 103). And Kamwendo et al (2009, p. 221) note that private schools have tended to use English as the medium of instruction from Grade 1.

In March 2014, the Minister of Education announced that, starting in September, all pupils from Grade 1 would be taught in the medium of English, in all subjects except Chichewa.[25] This announcement drew both support and dismay from various sectors of civil society and education. The subsequent National Reading Strategy (NRS)[26] clarified the situation somewhat. It proposes a focus on only three content areas in Grades 1 and 2: English, Chichewa and mathematics. It further proposes reading standards that will address the teaching of Chichewa and English as a second language in Grades 1 to 4, through reading, writing speaking and listening. The strategy makes no reference to Malawian languages other than Chichewa.

2.10.4. Studies

Williams (2007) describes a study he carried out in 1995 and 1999, evaluating an extensive reading support programme in Malawi. The programme involved the provision of boxes of English-language books to Grade 4 and 5 classrooms in every Malawian primary school, along with teacher training in how to use the books in class. The project was implemented by the Ministry of Education and funded by DfID. Williams describes the initiative as having very limited success: "results unexpectedly showed a statistically significant decrease in mean [English language reading] scores" between the two years of testing (2007, p. 59).

2.10.5. Language education initiatives

The Malawi Teacher Professional Development Systems (MTPDS)

This was a three-year project (2009 to 2013) carried out by Creative Associates

International, RTI and Seward Inc. with funding from USAID. The initiative focused on the development of basic reading and mathematics skills in Grades 1 to 3 by assisting the Ministry of Education to update textbooks. An early grade reading assessment was also adapted to the Chichewa language in order to conduct a nationally representative survey of reading skills.

Subsequently, a reading intervention and early grade reading assessment (EGRA) were carried out by the three NGOs[27]. The reading intervention was rolled out in 2011 and 2012, eventually reaching more than 200,000 Grade 1 pupils in seven districts of Malawi (Pouezevara, Costello and Banda 2013, p. 1). Chichewa was the language of instruction used in the intervention.

The final MTPDS project report notes: "results showed that while overall performance remains low, large absolute and relative gains in reading performance were achieved in the intervention schools that were not achieved in control schools" (p. 1). Regarding the use of Chichewa as the medium of instruction, the report suggested that "children, regardless of school type, may have had limited ability to process Chichewa language, even orally" (p. 14). The study found that 17 per cent of students in the sample did not speak Chichewa in the home; as Grade 1 pupils, they would not have had time to learn much of the language before being tested.

Malawi Early Grade Reading Activity[28]

This is a follow-on project from the MTPDS, specifically aiming to improve the reading performance of Malawian learners in Standards 1 to 3. The project is running from 2013-2016;

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25   http://www.nyasatimes.com/2014/03/05/malawi-std-1-pupils-to-start-learning-in-english-all-subjects/. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

26   Drafted in August 2014; forthcoming. The strategy was developed by the NRS Task Force over the course of several months, and was co-chaired by the director of the Department of Inspection and Advisory Services and a representative of USAID. NGOs represented on the task force included RTI, Save the Children and World Vision; the German and British bilateral aid agencies were also represented.

27   http://www.rti.org/page.cfm?obj=25C38E86-5056-B172-B8F881E7A7E73988. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

28   http://photos.state.gov/libraries/malawi/788/pdf_files/EGRA_One_Pager_Final_clear.pdf. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

Malawi

it is being implemented by RTI with funding from USAID, and covers 11 districts. Baseline reading assessment for the project was carried out in Chichewa, and also in English in three districts.

Tikwere Interactive Radio Instruction English Language Programme

Tikwere was a nationwide radio instruction intervention implemented by EDC and the Malawi College of Distance Education in 2007 to 2012 (USAID/EDC, 2012)[29]. Interactive radio lessons were developed for Grades 1 to 3. The radio programmes were broadcast in Chichewa, except for the English lessons. The mid-term report noted that students observed in class seemed more actively engaged in the Chichewa and mathematics lessons than in the English lessons (USAID/Malawi, 2009)[30]. However the use of Chichewa was also seen to be problematic for teachers in non-Chichewa language areas, as they had to translate the lessons into those languages for the pupils to understand them.

Save the Children's Literacy Boost

In 2009 and 2010, Save the Children implemented Literacy Boost in the Zomba district of southern Malawi, using primarily the Chichewa language. Its two-year progress report (Dowd and Mabeti, 2011)[31] includes a recommendation for support for "English oral language development as well as reading skills across the board" (p.16). From 2011, a three-year collaboration between World Vision and Save the Children aimed to extend Literacy Boost into four additional community areas.[32]

TiANA project

This project, begun in 2013 by Save the Children with a grant from the All Children Reading Grand Challenge fund, aims to strengthen children's reading ability through both community and teacher-focused strategies. Carried out in Zomba district, the project is described by Save the Children as "an improved version of Literacy Boost."[33]

Primary School Support Program: A School Fees Pilot

This three-year programme was implemented between 2006 and 2008 in the Dowa district of central Malawi by American Institutes for Research (AIR), and funded by USAID. It included a range of reading promotional activities (USAID Malawi, 2009b)[34].

29 http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pdacw069.pdf. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

30 http://www.meducationalliance.org/sites/default/files/tikwere_evaluation-final_report-nov_13_2009.pdf. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

31 http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/sites/default/files/documents/6908.pdf. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

32 http://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/LB_Partnership_Brief_30.04.2013_Final.pdf and http://www.wvi.org/education-and-life-skills/publication/literacy-boost-partnership-program. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

33 http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/library/save-children-basic-education-report-tiana-baseline-report-ta-mlumbe-zomba. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

34 http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACN036.pdf. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

Mozambique

2.11. Mozambique

2.11.1. Background information

Mozambique was under Portuguese rule from the sixteenth century until 1975, when it gained independence. Mozambique is thus one of the few countries in Africa in which Portuguese is an official language. Lopes (2004) points out that "Portuguese is the exclusive medium of instruction from first grade onwards, as well as a subject in primary and secondary education", even though at the time of independence from Portugal in 1975, only 7 per cent of Mozambicans spoke Portuguese, and 93 per cent were illiterate" (Chimbutane and Benson, 2012, p. 9).

Ethnologue lists 43 languages for Mozambique.

2.11.2. Current language policy

Until very recently, language policy demonstrated very little change since 1975. Lopes (2004) observes that the tenets of Mozambique's official language policy are expressed in Article 5 of the 1990 revised version of the Constitution of the Republic by reinforcing Portuguese language as the official language, but valuing national languages and promoting their development and encouraging growing usage as vehicular languages and in the education of citizens.

This was the first time ever that the official language issue was addressed in the Mozambique Constitution (ibid., p. 458).

Chimbutane and Benson (2012) point out a new trend generated by this constitional change toward expanded use of languages other than Portuguese in education.

> "The 1990 Constitution and a 1992 National Education decree both mentioned, for the first time, the possibility of using African languages in education. Although neither was binding, they could be considered 'enabling' (per Alexander,

1992) in that they lent legitimacy for both intellectuals and ordinary citizens to debate language issues. As a result, experiments were developed in bilingual adult literacy, as well as primary education, and the roots of change took hold." (Chimbutane and Benson, 2012, p. 10)

The authors note, however, that this has been less a firm, binding government policy than a provision of space for allowing the education system to begin to use languages other than Portuguese. As noted below, the dominant practice today is still to use Portuguese as the medium of instruction.

At the same time, positive evaluations of the current pilot bilingual program, described below have generated significant policy change. According to the *Instituto Internacional da Lengua Portuguesa*, the Mozambican Ministry of Education has announced plans to nationalize the use of 16 Mozambican languages alongside Portuguese, in primary schools across the nation by 2017 (see below).[35]

2.11.3. Education policy and practice

As noted by both Chimbutane (2011) and Henriksen (2010, p. 6), a dual education policy of Portuguese and a national language is operating in in Mozambique. In the great majority of the country's 8000+ primary schools, Portuguese is the language of instruction. This is the only language policy mentioned in the national *Education Strategy Plan* for 2012-2016 (Ministry of Education 2012) or in the World Bank's 2012 report on education reform in Mozambique (Fox, Santibañez, Nguyen and André 2012).

Two pilot bilingual education programmes have been operating since 1993: the first was a 5-year (1993-1997) bilingual education experiment in two languages of Mozambique, called *Projecto de Escolarização Bilingue em Moçambique* (Bilingual Schooling Project

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35   https://iilp.wordpress.com/2015/03/18/ensino-primario-mocambicano-sera-ministrado-nas-16-linguas-nativas-a-partir-de-2017/. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

in Mozambique, PEBIMO). The PEBIMO programme was evaluated, with positive results (Benson, 2000).

A second bilingual education pilot initiative was then begun in 2003. This programme was initiated by the Government of Mozambique and implemented primarily by the *Instituto Nacional do Desenvolvimento da Educação* (National Institute for Educational Development, INDE), Eduardo Mondlane University, and two Mozambican NGOs: *Progresso*[36] and *Unidade de Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica* (Basic Education Development Unit, UDEBA) (Chimbutane and Benson, 2012, p. 18). By 2013, the programme was operating in 370 schools in 10 provinces, using 16 Mozambican languages (Capra International, 2013); as of 2015, 551 schools and 98,000 students were part of the programme.

Chimbutane (2011) maintains that, unlike the situation in other African countries, there is popular support for bilingual education in Mozambique, particularly in rural areas:

> "There is also considerable political will within the current government, although the [low] level of attention devoted to the bilingual program (e.g. lack of resources in African languages) may lead one to conclude otherwise."
> (ibid., p. 68)

In fact, Chimbutane argues that this 16-language programme "places Mozambique as one of the countries with the most audacious language-in-education policies in Africa" (2011, p. 54).

Henriksen (2010) agrees that the bilingual education programme is seen as a great achievement in the history of education in Mozambique to promote the value of national languages, reduce dropout and repetition rates and improve academic success. Henriksen

believes that "the policy decision by the Ministry of Education to mainstream this experimental program by 2017 responds to the positive outcomes realized in the programme" (p22). However, Henriksen notes this is not a universally held opinion and that other stakeholders would prefer a focus on the Portuguese language.

2.11.4. Studies

Benson (2000) describes an evaluation of the five-year (1993-1997) *Projecto de Escolarização Bilingue em Moçambique* (Bilingual Schooling Project in Mozambique, PEBIMO) referred to above. PEBIMO was funded by the Government of Mozambique, UNESCO and the World Bank; it was implemented in the Cinyanja speaking community in the north western province of Tete, and in the Xichangana-speaking community in the south-central province of Gaza.[37]

Qualitative and quantitative evaluations of the project took place in the last two years of its operation. Reporting on the results, Benson said that:

> "Students benefited greatly from use of the mother tongue in terms of classroom participation, self-confidence, bilingualism, and biliteracy. Inadequacies in the model, problems with experimental design and control, and logistical concerns complicate the interpretation of research results; however, the descriptive data in particular provide strong evidence that bilingual schooling may significantly improve educational quality in Mozambique."
> (Benson, 2000 p.149)

At the end of the experiment, "two school directors reported that families in PEBIMO communities had taken in children from relatives or friends in anticipation of their being able to attend [future] bilingual classrooms" (ibid., p. 161).

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36   http://www.codecan.org/progresso. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

37   Both languages chosen are cross-border languages; Cinyanja is called Chichewa in Malawi, and Xichangana is called Xitsonga in South Africa. These choices allowed the Mozambican researchers to benefit from work done in the other countries.

Mozambique

An evaluation of the current pilot bilingual education programme was carried out by Capra International (2013), commissioned by the Mozambican Ministry of Education and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Quantitative and qualitative data were gathered and analysed. The most effective aspects of the programme (termed "moderately effective") included the support of NGOs and civil society organizations, the use of the first language as medium of instruction, transitioning from the first to the second language as medium of instruction, and in-service teacher training and placement. The least effective aspects, according to the evaluation, were the use of the first language as a subject from Grade 4, and the pre-service teacher training.

2.11.5. Language education initiatives

Aprender a Leer (ApaL)

This early-grade reading programme is being implemented in Zambezia and Nampula provinces by World Education International, with funding from USAID.[38] Begun in 2012, the four-year programme aims to improve reading outcomes for students in grades 2 and 3. Though the programme has largely been implemented in Portuguese, modifications in 2015 introduced an additional focus on reading in Mozambican languages of the provinces.

Literacy Boost

Save the Children carried out a Literacy Boost project in the Gaza province of southern Mozambique, from 2008-2010.[39] The language used in the project was Portuguese.

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38   http://www.worlded.org/WEIInternet/international/project/display.cfm?ctid=naandcid=naandtid=40andid=12301. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

39   http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/sites/default/files/documents/6864.pdf. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

Namibia

2.12. Namibia

2.12.1. Background information

Namibia was colonized by Germany from 1884 until 1915, when South Africa took over administration of the colony and remained in control until 1988. Brock-Utne and Hopson (2005, p. 99) note that "[d]espite the less than 5 per cent of the population (by conservative estimates) of nearly 1.5 million people for whom English was the first language at the time of independence, English was still chosen as the official language of independent Namibia, and mother tongues were designated as media of education and instruction at the lower primary level." Brock-Utne and Hopson argue that the goal of the policy was to replace the colonial language, Afrikaans, with English as the "the language of liberation". The teaching of English was made a priority throughout the 1990s (2005, p. 104).

Ethnologue lists 30 languages for Namibia.

2.12.2. Current language policy

The current language policy from 2003 closely follows the policy of 1992; indigenous Namibian languages may be used as the media of instruction up to Grade 4, when English becomes the medium of instruction. Tötemeyer notes that efforts to allow mother tongue-medium instruction beyond Grade 4 have failed: "During the drafting of the National Curriculum for Basic Education in 2008, the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) again tried to convince the Ministry to extend mother tongue instruction up to Grade 7 but without success" (Tötemeyer, 2010, p. 14).

2.12.3. Education policy and practice

The 2003 language policy (Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture, 2003, p. 4) states that the language of instruction in Grades 1 to 3 should be the predominant local language. It further states that "if parents or the school wish to use English as the medium of instruction in the Lower Primary phase,

permission must be obtained from the Minister of Basic Education, Sport and Culture with well-grounded, convincing motivation." As of 2008, 243 schools in Namibia had received ministerial approval to do this (Tötemeyer, 2010, p. 55).

Transition to English as the language of instruction is to occur in Grade 4, while the mother tongue is taught as a subject throughout primary and secondary school years. National examinations, except for the mother tongue subject exam, are in English.

Ten Namibian languages plus English, German and Afrikaans qualify as languages of instruction in the early primary grades. The language policy also notes that "in a school where there are a substantial number of learners (20 or more) from different language groups, the school must make arrangements to provide instruction in the different languages" (Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture, 2003, p. 5). Batibo (2014) observes that a national education policy review in June 2013 concluded that "all the indigenous languages are being promoted and used in education" (p. 19). Batibo further notes that 16 out of 26 languages in the country have been adequately documented and have teaching and learning materials for use in primary school.

The prominent role of English in upper primary and secondary classrooms is contested, however, on the grounds that the children do not speak it well enough. Frydman (2011) argues that "the implementation of indigenous languages as media of instruction for Namibian schools would bring an overwhelmingly positive change for education in Namibia" (p. 186). Likando and Wolhuter (2013: 161), discussing the "formidable challenges" that face the Namibian education system, mention "the problem of the language of learning and teaching not being the same as the first language of the teachers and learners alike."

Tötemeyer also expresses strong criticism of the way English is being used as a medium of instruction in ways that flout the 2003 policy.

> "Some principals still believe that they have the right to decide which African/indigenous/local languages shall be taught or not taught in their schools, or even to decide that no African language shall be taught. This assumed freedom to discriminate against some or all African languages, even when they are being spoken in the immediate vicinity, is not stipulated anywhere" (Tötemeyer, 2010, p. 10).

In December 2014, the Namibia Institute of Public Administration and Management and the University of Namibia launched the *Indigenous Language Initiative*.[40] The initiative is described as "a platform for the recognition of community language varieties", and it includes the development of a multilingual Namibian dictionary and translation helps.

2.12.4. Studies

Harris (2011) carried out a study of the role of language choice in the various educational challenges in Namibia. The study was sponsored by a national NGO, Urban Trust Namibia.[41] The research used qualitative methods among education stakeholders to discover links between attitudes towards the home language and student learning outcomes. The research indicated that a high proportion of learners are confused by the second language (English) in which they are taught. They want to succeed at school generally, and in English in particular, but the problems of language hinder their ability to understand their subjects well enough (p. 7). Harris also notes that "educationalists are divided as to the correctness of the language policy, with those in the regions seeing the language policy as failing learners."

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40   http://allafrica.com/stories/201412050838.html. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

41   http://www.osisa.org/law/namibia/urban-trust-namibia. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

Rwanda

2.13. Rwanda

2.13.1. Background information

Rwanda gained independence from Belgium in 1962. At that time, Kinyarwanda was designated the language of instruction in Grades 1-3, with French as the language of instruction from Grade 4 onwards. In 1978, a general reform of 'Rwandazation' was launched; at that time, the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) extended primary education to cover the first eight years of schooling, with Kinyarwanda as the medium of instruction for all eight years (Pearson, 2014, p, 41). In 1991, after a nationwide exam revealed poor overall French language ability among students, MINEDUC announced in 1991 a shift back to the previous system.

After the Rwandan genocide of 1994, large numbers of Rwandans began returning from exile in the surrounding Anglophone countries. In response, in 1996 MINEDUC announced a new education reform which designated Kinyarwanda as the medium of instruction from grades 1 to 3, with English joining French as medium of instruction for grades 4 to 6.

Article 5 of the current 2003 Constitution of Rwanda (Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda, Art. 5[42]) lists Kinyarwanda as the national language and Kinyarwanda, English and French as the official languages of Rwanda.

Ethnologue lists three languages for Rwanda: Kinyarwanda, French and English.

2.13.2. Current language policy

A 2008 strategy document from the Rwandan Ministry of Education signalled another change in language emphasis, moving more decisively from French to English. The document states: "English language shall be a medium of instruction. [It] shall be taught as a second language while French is taught as an optional language at all levels except in lower primary (P.1, P.2 and P.3) where the medium of instruction shall be Kinyarwanda" (Ministry of Education, 2008, p.11).

2.13.3 Education policy and practice

After several years of radical language policy shifts (Samuelson and Freedman, 2010; World Bank, 2011), Rwanda now has two official languages of instruction throughout the educational system: Kinyarwanda in the lower primary years, and English from upper primary through university (Nzabalirwa, 2014, p. 309). French, spoken by a significant number of Rwandans, is one of the official languages and is taught as a subject through university. According to a 2011 World Bank report, "the Primary 6 National Examination tests students in mathematics, science, social studies, English and Kinyarwanda" (World Bank, 2011, p. 99). Teacher education is now in English (IPAR, 2014, p. 4).

2.13.4. Studies

Several recent studies were carried out in relation to a Save the Children Literacy Boost project. A baseline assessment of children's reading skills was carried out in the Gicumbi district in northern Rwanda (Friedlander, Gasana and Goldenberg, 2014). An assessment of teachers and classrooms was also carried out; Malik, Gasana, Raab, Cha and Goldenberg (2014) found more textbooks in Kinyarwanda in the classrooms studied than either English or French textbooks.

In 2011, the first Learning Assessment in Rwandan Schools (LARS) was conducted by UNESCO, UNICEF, and Data Angel Policy Research. LARS assessed children's literacy and numeracy skills at Grade 3. The Rwanda Education Board (REB) has since integrated LARS into the REB assessment system, annually assessing children in Grades 2 and 5.[43]

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42   https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Rwanda_2010.pdf. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

43   http://www.reb.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/news/newsletter/Issue_004_Final.pdf. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

2.13.5. Language education initiatives

Literacy, Language and Learning Initiative (L3)

Begun in 2011, the *Literacy, Language and Learning Initiative* (L3) is a 5-year initiative to improve Rwandan students' reading and mathematics skills. The project is implemented by a partnership led by the Rwanda Education Board (REB), and is funded by USAID.[44] The Education Development Center (EDC) is providing technical assistance to the project (EDC, 2014). The L3 initiative is assisting the Ministry of Education to implement a national-scale early literacy and mathematics programme, using Kinyarwanda as medium of instruction in the first three years and transitioning to English as a medium of instruction in Grade 4. The project is focused on developing instructional materials and reading materials in Kinyarwanda and English, and teacher capacity building. It also includes an interactive audio component.

Literacy Boost

The Literacy Boost programme is being carried out by Save the Children and World Vision, in two districts of Rwanda (see studies above).

School-Based Mentoring Programme

In 2012 the Rwanda Education Board (REB) introduced the *School-based Mentor Programme*, to support teachers in Rwandan schools with their use of English in the classroom and their teaching methods.[45] The programme currently has approximately 1,000 active mentors, and is supported by the British Council.

44   http://www.reb.rw/index.php?id=79andL=4andtx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=111andcHash=971ad99470af1e26b17068c5c8804b98. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

45   https://www.britishcouncil.rw/programmes/education/supporting-teachers-english-through-mentoring-stem. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

Rwanda

Rwandan Children's Book Initiative

Save the Children's Rwandan Children's Book Initiative (RCBI) is being implemented in close collaboration with the REB, to improve literacy by stimulating both the supply and demand for Kinyarwanda children's books and ensuring that books are used effectively in the classroom.[46]

Rwanda English in Action Programme

Between 2009 and 2011, the Ministry of Education and the British Council implemented the Rwanda English in Action Programme (REAP). The initiative, funded by DfID, focused on improving the quality of English teaching in the formal education system through a variety of strategies.[47] The international NGO Wellspring and the British VSO provided support for REAP as well.

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46   http://www.reb.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/news/newsletter/Issue_004_Final.pdf. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

47   http://www.britishcouncil.org/partner/track-record/rwanda-english-action-programme. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

Somalia

2.14. Somalia

2.14.1. Background information

Separate areas of what is now Somalia were colonized by the British and the Italians. The territory colonized by Britain gained independence in 1960, and the territory colonized by the Italians followed soon after. The two colonies then united to form what is today the Federal Republic of Somalia; its official languages are Somali and Arabic. The Republic of Somaliland, a self-declared state since 1991, has been internationally recognized as an autonomous region of Somalia. It is located in northwestern Somalia; its official languages are Somali, Arabic and English. Puntland, a region of northeastern Somalia, also declared itself an autonomous state in 1998; its official languages are Somali and Arabic.

Ethnologue lists 13 languages for Somalia.

2.14.2. Current language policy

The current language policies in Somaliland, Puntland and South Central Somalia differ, although all three aim at using Somali as the medium of instruction in primary grades.

The Directorate for Education of the South Central Zone of Somalia has stated plans to develop a language and literacy policy as part of its Education Sector Strategic Plan for 2013-2016,[48] responding to "fears that the Somali language could disappear as a medium of instruction" (Somali Federal Republic, 2013, p. 9).

In Puntland, the language policy as expressed in the Puntland Education Sector Plan 2012-2016[49] is based on two beliefs about language:

"The first is that language is a fundamental factor in the interplay between education, culture and participation in society. The second is that languages in education influence language status and language structures" (Ministry of Education, Puntland, 2012, section 12.1).

The objective of the Puntland language policy is to develop "trilingual individuals who are fully literate in Somali, Arabic and English" (ibid, section 12.1).

In Somaliland, language policy has been a subject of debate; strong support exists for the use of Somali in primary grade classrooms, but the importance of English in later education is also being recognized (Republic of Somaliland, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2012)[50].

Assessing these language policy choices, Cassanelli and Abdikadir (2007) note that "the acquisition of basic literacy in Somali is a desirable goal for a country with such a rich linguistic heritage, and the use of Somali for teaching and learning in the early primary grades is the best way to reach the widest possible audience." The authors also note that the reality today is that many Somali children first learn to read and write in Arabic in Quranic schools. Combining Somali-language instruction with reading and writing instruction in Arabic is challenging for both students and teachers; nevertheless, the authors believe that it will give Somali children a "marked advantage in both the national and international language arenas" (p. 118).

2.14.3. Education policy and practice

In the South Central Zone of Somalia, Somali or Arabic tend to be the languages of instruction, with Arabic being used particularly at the secondary level. Many of the schools in this zone are managed by non-government agencies and international NGOs (Brophy, 2014, p. 334).

48   http://www.globalpartnership.org/content/interim-education-sector-strategic-plan-20132014-20152016-somalia-south-central-zone. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

49   http://www.globalpartnership.org/content/puntland-education-sector-strategic-plan-2012-2016. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

50   http://www.globalpartnership.org/content/somaliland-education-sector-strategic-plan-2012-2016. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

In Somaliland and Puntland, Somali is the medium of instruction in the majority of schools; this is a unique language policy in Africa, in which an indigenous language serves as the language of instruction (Wolff, 2011, p. 74).

According to the 2012-2016 Education Sector Plan for Somaliland, the objectives of primary education in Somaliland include "equipping girls and boys with the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in Somali, the national language; and laying the foundation for basic skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking of Arabic and English, as bases for further learning" (Republic of Somaliland, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2012, p. 33). Somali is the medium of instruction in primary grades, while English is the medium of instruction from secondary school onward.

The language position of the Puntland Education Sector Plan 2012-2016 is similar. Somali is the medium of instruction in primary school; English is taught as a subject from Grade 5 English is the sole medium of instruction for secondary and tertiary education (Ministry of Education, Puntland, 2012).

Puntland's Education Sector Plan aims at a maintenance approach to bilingual education, based on a firm foundation of Somali language support:

> "All policy and practice by the Ministry of Education, will uphold the status of Somali language as the first language of the Puntland people, and it will also uphold its usefulness for social, academic and

economic advancement. Somali and English will be used as the media of instruction in an arrangement that allows language and thinking skills to be developed in both languages while ensuring Somali language maintenance" (ibid., section 12.3).

Many private schools in Puntland and Somaliland, however, are taught in Arabic and use curricula and textbooks from nearby Arab countries. This multi-language instructional environment has brought challenges to the harmonization of the curriculum as well as to examinations. Teachers' levels of English are also low (Brophy, 2014, p. 335).

2.14.4. Language education initiatives

Go-2-School Initiative

The Go-2-School Initiative[51] is a programme of the Somali government, supported by UNICEF. The initiative includes the development of teaching and learning materials as well as innovative teaching and learning strategies.

Somali Interactive Radio Instruction Program

In 2006 and 2007, EDC implemented the Somali Interactive Radio Instruction Program a USAID-funded radio-based learning intervention that aimed to increase access to quality education opportunities and to improve teaching at the lower primary level. The programme targeted schools in Puntland, Somaliland and South Central Somalia, focusing in particular on mathematics and Somali literacy.[52] The tools of this programme are still used as a resource in an education programme for pastoralist children that is supported by UNICEF and Save the Children.

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51   http://www.unicef.org/somalia/SOM_resources_gotoschool.pdf. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

52   http://www.inclusive-development.org/cbmtools/part3/studies/EnhancedqualitylearningprojectinSomalilandandPuntland.pdf. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

South Africa

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2.15 South Africa

2.15.1. Background information

Following centuries of occupation by the Dutch, French, and British, South Africa became a republic in 1961. English and Afrikaans were designated the official languages…

One of the more damaging pieces of language policy under colonial rule, the Bantu Education Act of 1953 reinforced apartheid through the education system by segregating educational facilities by race, Schools reserved for the country's white children were of Western standards, while schools designated for the other ethnic communities of South Africa were of much lower quality. The act was in force until being repealed in 1979.

In 1994 South Africa held its first universal elections, amid a national movement that ended apartheid and ushered in an era of growing inclusiveness. This inclusiveness is reflected in the establishment of 11 languages as official languages.

Kamwangamalu (2004) notes that "the change from apartheid to democracy brought about the official recognition that South Africa is a multilingual rather than the bilingual country it had been assumed to be in the apartheid era. This recognition has translated into a new, multilingual language policy" (p. 407).

Ethnologue lists 31 languages for South Africa.

2.15.2. Current language policy

When the apartheid era ended, South Africa implemented one of the most inclusive language policies on the African continent. Kamwangamalu (2004) says that the new language policy spelled out in the 1996 Constitution, "accords official status to 11 languages: Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu…. All official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and be treated equitably" (p. 245).

This policy is rooted in the desire to overcome past policies of marginalization and discrimination, including the Bantu Education Act (Heugh, 2012). Kamwangamalu points out that the Constitution is explicit in "recognizing the historical diminished use and status of the indigenous languages of our people" (2004, p. 246) and places an obligation on the state to "take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages" (2004, p. 246). Kamwangamalu notes that the language-in-education policy aims to promote additive multilingualism, develop all of the official languages, and decrease the disadvantages resulting from the mismatch between languages spoken in the home and languages used in school.

2.15.3. Education policy and practice

According to the current Language in Education Policy (LiEP, Government of South Africa 1997), "the right to choose the language of learning and teaching is vested in the individual" (p.1), though the choice must be made among the 11 official languages. The policy further states:

> "The learner must choose the language of teaching upon application for admission to a particular school. Where a school uses the language chosen by the learner, and where there is a place available in the relevant grade, the school must admit the learner" (p. 3).

If students in a given grade, such as 40 students in Grades 1 to 6, or 35 students in Grades 7 to 12 request a particular language of instruction, the school should provide it (p.3).

This language policy statement provides policy space for extensive mother tongue-based learning; however it also leaves space for parents and teachers to choose English as medium of instruction rather than any of the mother tongues. Manyike (2013) notes that the "general practice in black schools is the use of the L1 in Grades 1 to 3 with English introduced as the additional language in Grade

1 or 2. Grade 4 marks a transition to English as the [language of teaching and learning] for the entire primary curriculum" (p. 188). Heugh argues that this practice actually means that, for the 78 per cent of students with African home languages, the switch to English after three years is a switch to a foreign language-medium instruction. For English-speaking children, though, the policy allows them to use their mother tongue throughout their education (Heugh, 2011, p. 53).

Taylor and Coetzee, however, analysing data from the Department of Basic Education's Annual Surveys of Schools from 2007 to 2011, found that 79.8 per cent of children were in schools that experienced no change in [language of instruction] policy during the period. However, 5.9 per cent of children were in schools that switched to English as the language of instruction and 14.3 per cent of children were in schools that switched from English to an African language during the period (Taylor and Coetzee 2013, p.11).

Kruger (2009, pp. 36-7) attributes the practice of choosing English to parents' lack of trust in an African language as medium of instruction, the influence of globalization, and a persistent post-apartheid hesitation to use local languages in education. Alexander (2003) believes that this enthusiasm for English is rooted in the "simplistic and inarticulate belief that if only all the people of the country could rapidly acquire a knowledge of the English language, all communication problems and, therefore, inter-group tensions, will disappear" (Alexander, 2003, p. 16).

Motala (2013) concurs that this gap between policy intent and implementation has a damaging impact on student learning. He notes that "inadequate mastery of the language of learning and teaching is a major factor in the abysmally low levels of learner achievement; yet many parents prefer (with their children's concurrence) to have their children taught in the second language of English by teachers who are themselves second language speakers of English" (p. 200).

Across the nation, the issue remains contentious.[53] The Government of South Africa has recently taken steps to counter the choice of English only in the classroom, by means of a policy amendment requiring the learning and use of some African language in the classroom. The choice of African language will be informed by the local context.[54]

One exception in this generally challenging picture is the work of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED). With technical assistance from the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA; see below), in 2007 the WCED developed a Language Transformation Plan.[55] The plan promotes six years of mother tongue-based bilingual education and aims at learners gaining basic conversational fluency in the mother tongue (Xhosa), English and Afrikaans (Bloch, Guzula and Nkence, 2010, p. 89).

2.15.4. Studies

A significant study of language and learning, called *Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa* (LOITASA), was carried out from 2002 to 2011 with funding from the Norwegian University Fund. In South Africa, the research was carried out through the University of the Western Cape and the University of Oslo; it compared learning in isiXhosa-medium classrooms with learning

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53 http://www.mediaclubsouthafrica.com/youth-and-education/43-culture/culturenews/3555-south-africa-s-mother-tongue-education-problem. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

54 Email communication from Saadhna Panday, UNICEF South Africa, 19 May 2015.

55 http://wced.pgwc.gov.za/circulars/circulars07/e4_b.pdf Accessed 11 March, 2016.

South Africa

in English medium classrooms. Additional components of LOITASA involved staff development and teacher capacity building. LOITASA has been extensively documented.[56]

Manyike (2013) carried out a quantitative study of the effects of the national language-in-education policy on the first and secondary language proficiency of Grade 7 learners in township schools in Gauteng Province.

The study assessed the reading and writing performance of Xitsonga-speaking learners in Xitsonga and English. This is the most recent in a series of studies on the subject by Manyike and colleagues.

Taylor and Coetzee (Taylor and Coetzee 2013) examined longitudinal data on school characteristics, including language of instruction by grade, and student test score

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56   http://www.loitasa.org/publications.html and http://www.uv.uio.no/iped/english/research/projects/bbrock-loitasa/. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

data for the population of South African primary schools. One of the findings of this study was that mother tongue instruction in the early grades significantly improves English acquisition as measured in Grades 4 to 6.

A three-year study carried out in the 1980s, called *The Threshold Project* (MacDonald 1990), examined the nature of the language and learning difficulties experienced by

Sepedi-speaking Grade 5 children when they transitioned from their mother tongue to English.

2.15.5. Language education initiatives

PRAESA

The Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA)[57] is an independent research and development unit affiliated with the University of Cape Town. Established by Neville Alexander in 1992, PRAESA's work has included language planning and policy formulation, in-service teacher education, research, initiating and supporting reading clubs, and materials development (Trudell, Dowd, Piper and Bloch, 2012, p. 16). In 2012, PRAESA began a new phase characterized by a focus on biliteracy development; the organization began a national reading-for-enjoyment campaign called Nal'ibali,[58] in partnership with Times Media, and supported by the DG Murray Trust.

Magic Classroom Collective

Through support from UNICEF, via the *Schools for Africa partnership*, the Nelson Mandela Institute of Rural Education (NMI) has been carrying out research and support for bilingual learning since 2008 through an initiative called the *Magic Classroom Collective*.[59] The initiative aims at supporting teachers to apply mother tongue-based bilingual approaches to literacy and numeracy development and to provide tested tools to strengthen the child's home language learning and English acquisition.[60] The programme is currently operating in 17 schools, in three isiXhosa-speaking communities of Eastern Cape.

57 http://www.praesa.org.za/ Accessed 11 March, 2016.

58 http://nalibali.org/ Accessed 11 March, 2016.

59 http://www.mandelainstitute.org.za/beforeafter.php Accessed 11 March, 2016.

60 Personal communication, Mitsue Uemura, UNICEF ESARO. 1 December, 2014.

South Africa

Molteno Institute

The Molteno Institute for Language and Literacy[61] carries out African-language reading materials development in South Africa as well as a number of other African countries, in collaboration with a range of partners. The Molteno Institute was founded in 1974. It is based at Rhodes University and funded by a grant from the Molteno Brothers Trust. Today, Molteno produces materials in many South African languages through its program *Breakthrough to Literacy*; it also offers a *Bridge to English* programme.

In 2012, the Molteno Institute developed a technology-based early literacy programme, called *Bridges to the Future*, in partnership with the International Literacy Institute at the University of Pennsylvania and Trydian Interactive and funded by the *All Children Reading Grand Challenge*. The Bridges to the *Future Initiative* is an interactive approach to literacy learning available in four languages: Sepedi, Tshivenda, Xitsonga and English.

Room to Read

Room to Read's *Reading and Writing Instruction* (RWI) programme has been carried out since 2012, in 50 schools of Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces. RWI is a two-year, school-based intervention that aims to strengthen the teaching and learning of reading and writing in the early primary grades where Sepedi is the language of instruction. The programme includes baseline and endline assessments of reading competencies (Cooper, Rigole and Jukes, 2014).

Integrated Education Program

The Integrated Education Program (IEP) ran from 2004-2009, led by RTI and funded by USAID.[62] One component of the IEP was the use of EGRA for baseline and endline assessments of reading skills, carried out in English, IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga.

Near the end of IEP, a literacy intervention called Systematic Method for Reading Success (SMRS) was implemented as a short-term boost to reading achievement. The SMRS is designed for use in local languages and with teachers who have not been trained to teach reading. The 3-month implementation of SMRS took place in early 2009, in three provinces and using the isiZulu, Sepedi, and Setswana languages. The implementers were very surprised to find that in all three provinces, the classrooms were not sufficiently monolingual for the SMRS to work optimally. Both teachers and learners spoke languages other than those local to the provinces.

Six-Year Biliteracy Project (SYBP)

From 1998-2003, *a Six-Year Biliteracy Project* (SYBP; Alexander, 2006) was carried out in Cape Town. The SYBP aimed to raise the status of isiXhosa in the classroom and to demonstrate that reading and writing can be acquired simultaneously in two languages under appropriate conditions. The project demonstrated that political will, strong teacher training and parental involvement are all crucial to success.

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61   www.molteno.co.za. Accessed 11 March, 2016.
62   https://www.eddataglobal.org/reading/index.cfm/FINAL%20IEP%20SMRS%20Success%20in%20South%20Africa%20-%2020091002%20-%20A4.pdf?fuseaction=throwpubandID=196. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

South Sudan

2.16. South Sudan

2.16.1. Background information

Following a series of internal conflicts, South Sudan gained independence in 2011 from the Republic of Sudan. The referendum on independence from Sudan passed with more than 98 per cent of the South Sudanese vote. Upon achieving independence, South Sudan selected English as its official language, in part to separate itself from Arabic, which was seen as the language of oppression.

Ethnologue lists 71 languages for South Sudan.

2.16.2. Current language policy

English is the official language of South Sudan. Nevertheless, policy changes continue to emerge; South Sudan's General Education Strategy Paper (GESP) 2012-2017 and its accompanying Action Plan developed by the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI) and its development partners, provides a framework for the development of the education sector over the next five years (Hammond, 2013, p. 9). The strategy paper commits to using mother tongue-medium instruction in primary Grades 1 to 3, but it is unclear how the initiatives will be supported and coordinated. Moreover, the Government of South Sudan has released a policy decision on the provision of continued learning in Arabic in pre-existing schools for returning migrants and refugees in Grades 4 to 8 and in secondary school (MoGEI policy paper).

2.16.3. Education policy and practice

The distribution of English, Arabic and local languages as languages of instruction is very much in flux in South Sudan. As of 2006, English replaced Arabic as the official medium of instruction; however the Ministry of Education has stated its intent to include local languages as media of instruction in early grades, with a move to English as the language of instruction in the later primary years (Yai,

2012, p. 173). The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2005 and the country's Transitional Constitution also recommend this approach (Yoasa, 2012, p. 177).

The focus on English as a medium of instruction has posed significant learning challenges, particularly for South Sudanese citizens who have migrated from Sudan (Breidlid, 2010, p. 570). Du Toit (2014, p.364) notes that Juba Arabic (also called Southern Arabic) is "still the preferred lingua franca for most South Sudanese." Du Toit notes that this situation is changing over time:

> As of 2010, English was the dominant medium of instruction, with about 61% of schools using it from P1-P3 and more than 85% of schools in P4-P8. About 33% of schools were using the MT as the medium of instruction up to P3 level (Du Toit, 2014, p. 358).

Despite these changes, student and teacher fluency in English is still limited. A recent World Bank report notes that overall performance of students in a 2010 assessment of primarily urban schools was "weak in both mathematics and [English] language" (World Bank, 2012, p. 67). This very limited fluency in English is one of the drivers of the Ministry of Education's plans to use local languages rather than English in early primary school.

2.16.4. Language education initiatives

SIL South Sudan

SIL Sudan (later SIL South Sudan) has been involved in mother tongue-based education in Sudanese languages for nearly 40 years. SIL and the Institute for Regional Languages (IRL) established a partnership in 1978 to carry out a "joint literacy project" targeting children in Sudanese language communities. SIL's role was materials development, author training and teacher training; with USAID funding assistance, SIL produced more than 180 titles in 10 years, in 17 languages, including Arabic and English (IRL and SIL 1987). Throughout the civil unrest in Sudan and southern Sudan,

SIL continued to provide limited assistance to local-language literacy projects. SIL South Sudan is now engaged with the Department of National Languages of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology; its current projects include materials development and teacher training in seven languages, assistance to several other projects in the area of local language materials, and participation in regional and national policy dialogue.

Across

The NGO Across is implementing a mother tongue reading project for children in two language communities, under the *All Children Reading Grand Challenge*. The project combines mother tongue literacy materials, recorded lessons, digital audio players and teacher capacity building in Bari- and Dinka-speaking communities. SIL South Sudan provided the written literacy materials. Across has also established the *Sudan Literature Centre*, which focuses on the development of literature in more than 20 Sudanese languages in addition to Arabic and English. The literature produced at the centre includes dictionaries, folk stories and church-focused materials.[63]

Little Libraries

UNESCO South Sudan is implementing a project called *Little Libraries* (bags with pockets full of books) in local languages and English, to support education activities in displacement camps. Some of the local language books were provided by SIL South Sudan.

Room to Learn

Winrock International and FHI360 are establishing the *Room to Learn* (RtL) South Sudan project, funded by USAID; the project intends to use a community-based approach to rapidly reach out-of-school children with an emphasis on early grade literacy, gender equity, conflict mitigation, and marginalized populations.[65] The project plans to carry out local-language literacy in at least four languages of South Sudan.

South Sudan Interactive Radio Instruction

EDC carried out the *South Sudan Interactive Radio Instruction* (SSIRI) project between 2004 and 2012, with funding from USAID. The central feature of the SSIRI was the *Learning Village*, a series of 480 half-hour programmes targeting primary school grades 1 to 4 with 120 lessons per grade. Based on government syllabi, the programmes include instruction in English, local language literacy, mathematics, and life skills such as HIV/AIDS and landmine risk awareness. The radio programmes are broadcast in English and require that the classroom teacher translate some of the instructions into the local language of the benefiting community (Leigh and Epstein, 2012, p. 8).

IBIS

The Danish education NGO IBIS carried out accelerated learning programmes in two regions of South Sudan from 2007-2012.[66] More recently, IBIS has been engaged in local language reading programmes, including the production of basic reading books in cooperation with SIL South Sudan.

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63   http://www.across-sudan.org. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

64   http://www.unesco.org/new/en/juba/thematic-areas-of-action/education-for-the-21st-century/education-in-emergency/. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

65   http://www.gurtong.net/ECM/ERoom%20To%20Learn%20(RtL)%20South%20Sudan%20is%20a%20project%20ofditorial/tabid/124/ctl/ArticleView/mid/519/articleId/15648/PSA-from-Winrock-Internatonal-Room-to-Learn-South-Sudan.aspx. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

66   http://ibissouthsudan.org/our-work/accelerated-learning-programme/. Accessed 11 March, 2016.
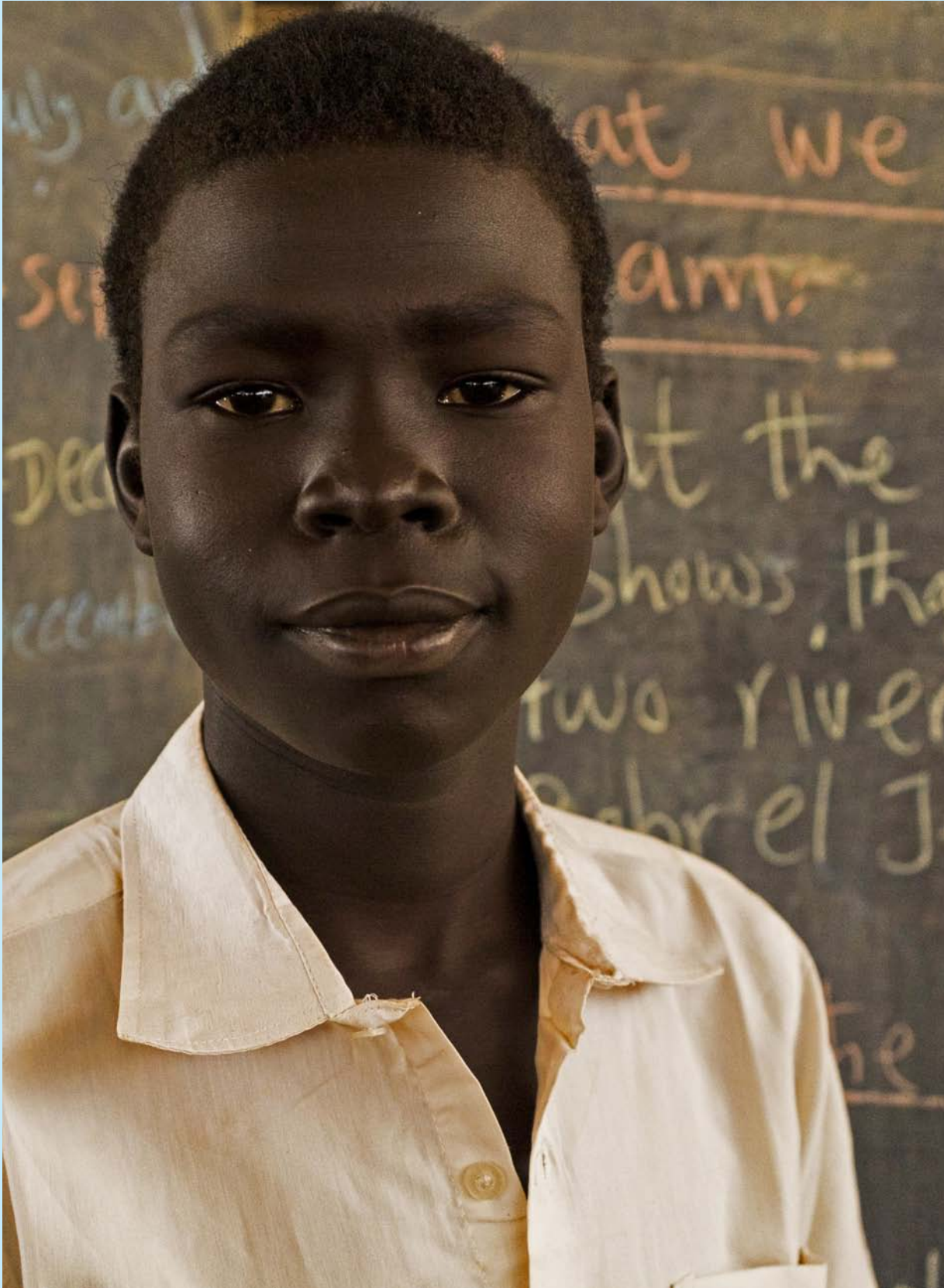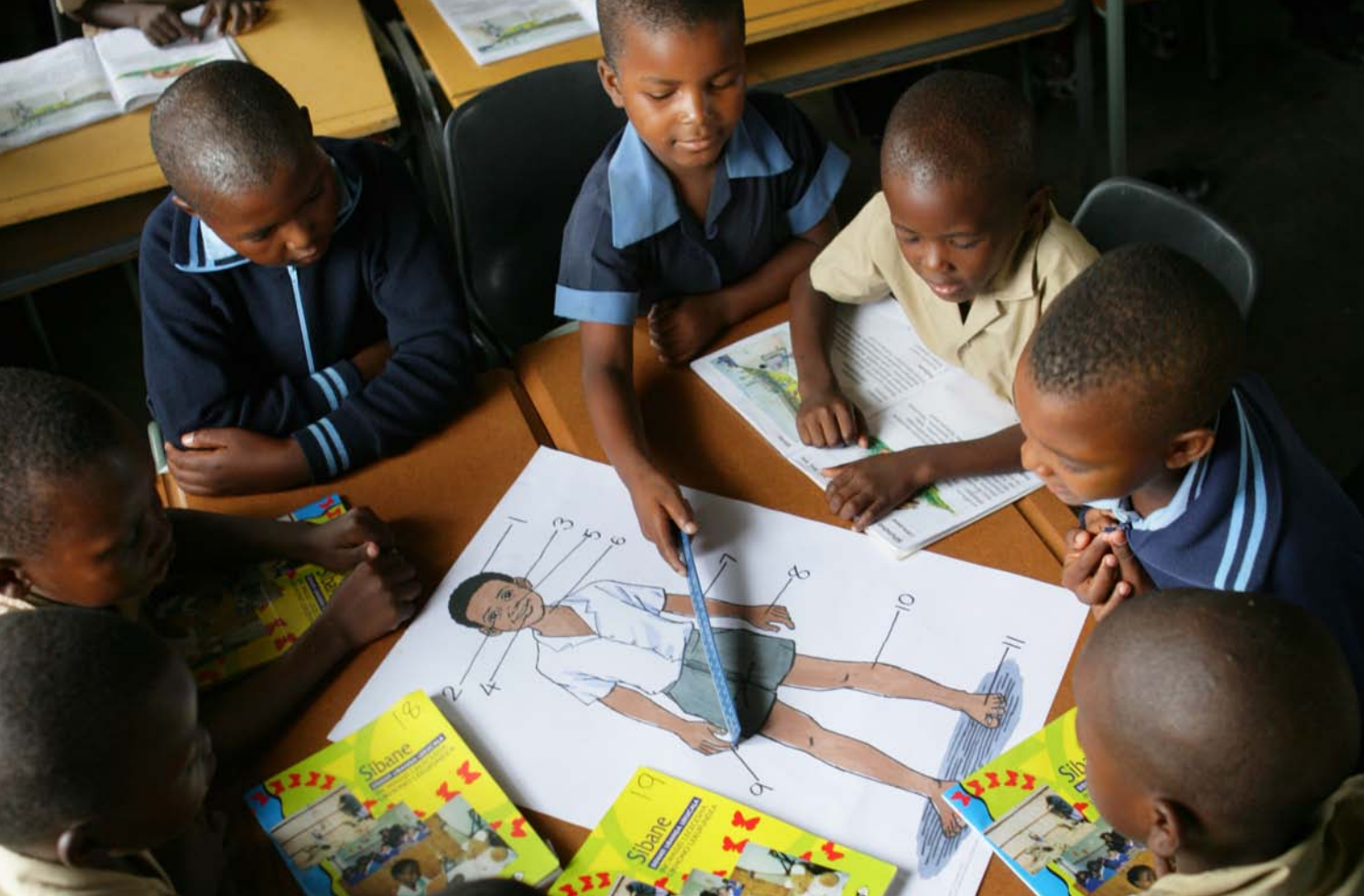
Swaziland

2.17. Swaziland

2.17.1. Background information

The Kingdom of Swaziland, was a protectorate of South Africa from 1894, becoming a British protectorate in 1903. Swaziland regained independence in 1964. SiSwati and English are the country's official languages.

Ethnologue lists five languages for Swaziland.

2.17.2. Current language policy

The Swaziland Education Sector and Training Policy articulates the current language-in-education policy of Swaziland:

> "SiSwati and English are both regarded as official languages in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland... The Policy directive is that the mother tongue SiSwati shall be used officially as a medium of instruction for the first four grades of school, after which English shall be the medium of instruction. . . . This does not mean that teaching and learning materials in English shall be translated into siSwati, however; what it means is that teachers in the first four grades of school have the liberty and freedom to use siSwati as a medium of instruction where learners have difficulties in understanding what is taught." (Ministry of Education and Training, Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland, 2011)

The idea is that, where it is determined that children understand English adequately, English will be used in the early primary grades as well as beginning in Grade 4. The policy also endorses the use of both English and siSwati in the classroom where needed, during the first four grades.

2.17.3. Educational policy and practice

Mazibuko (2013, p. 211) notes that Siswati is the language of instruction for the first three years of primary school, transitioning to English as the medium of instruction afterwards.

Considering that Swaziland has approximately 1.4 million citizens, of whom roughly 75 per cent speak siSwati and fewer than 10 per cent speak English (Lewis et al 2014), the meagre support for siSwati described above - and the lack of public protest about it - is puzzling. USAID's 2012 education profile for Swaziland (USAID, 2012)[67] makes no reference to language of instruction, an indication that the more extensive use of Swazi languages in the classroom is not seen as an issue. A 2005 description of community libraries in Swaziland[68] similarly does not mention the language of the books, but implies that it is English.

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67   http://www.epdc.org/sites/default/files/documents/Swaziland_coreusaid.pdf. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

68   http://www.irinnews.org/report/56124/swaziland-community-libraries-prove-the-power-of-access-to-knowledge. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

Tanzania

2.18. Tanzania, United Republic of

2.18.1. Background information

The United Republic of Tanzania was formed when Tanganyika and the Zanzibar Archipelago merged to form one nation in 1964. Prior to that, the two countries had been colonized by Portugal, Germany, and Britain. Tanganyika achieved independence in 1961, and Zanzibar in 1963, shortly before the two merged to form present-day Tanzania.

Early in the history of the nation, kiSwahili was designated as an official language of Tanzania by President Julius Nyerere as part of his *Ujamaa* social policy. Currently, English and kiSwahili are the official languages of the country. KiSwahili is used in government, and as the medium of instruction in primary school; English is the language of diplomacy and also the medium of instruction in secondary and post-secondary education.

Ethnologue lists 125 languages for Tanzania.

2.18.2. Current language policy

The use of kiSwahili and English as languages of instruction in the education system has been a point of much debate over the years. Roy-Campbell and Qorro (1997) describe the surprisingly central role of English in education:

> "With Kiswahili as the essential language of government and the language of primary schools, the majority of the Tanzanian population has very little use for English. Yet English, used by 5 per cent of the population, continues to be retained as the most important vehicle of instruction in formal educational institutions." (p. 4)

Vuzo (2014) also questions the effectiveness of this policy, arguing that there is "overwhelming evidence that effective teaching and learning is not taking place" (p. 4).

In February 2015, the Government of Tanzania launched a new education system that abolishes national examinations for primary school leavers and extends the basic education system in Swahili to include four years of secondary school.[69] This means that Swahili has become the official medium of instruction from primary school to tertiary level education.

2.18.3. Education policy and practice

Two sets of language issues characterize education in Tanzania today: the tension between use of kiSwahili and English is one of them. As noted above, the policy in Tanzania is to use kiSwahili as the language of instruction in primary grades and English in higher grades.

Controversy continues nationwide, however, over which of the two languages is appropriate and at what grade levels (Mohamed and Banda, 2008). The belief that the entire system should move to English clashes with equally strong commitment to the spread of kiSwahili in secondary school. The issue is debated among the population, in the media, and in government as well, and international, national and local factors come into prominent play (Trudell, 2012, p. 11). Anangisye and Fussy (2014, p. 382) note the existence of primary schools that use English as a language of instruction for all subjects except kiSwahili lessons. The February 2015 announcement of kiSwahili medium education through primary and secondary grades is the most recent move in this debate.

The second set of language issues relates to the role of the many indigenous languages in Tanzania. Recognition is slowly growing that certain segments of the population are poorly-served by the current language-in-education policy and practices. Up to 15 per cent of the population do not speak either kiSwahili or English (Rubagumya, 2007) and the percentage of non-speakers of these two languages is much higher among primary-aged children in non-urban communities.

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69   http://www.thecitizen.co.tz/News/national/Bye-Std-VII-exams--English--Karibu-Kiswahili-in-studies/-/1840392/2623428/-/2krj4x/-/index.html. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

Tanzania has long been committed as a nation to kiSwahili as the national language, notwithstanding the fact that more than 120 languages are spoken in the country (Mosha 2012: 11). Yet language communities where kiSwahili is not fluently spoken, and certainly not by small children, remain marginalized in the backwater of political, economic and educational progress.

This second language debate in Tanzania receives relatively little attention from policy makers. However researcher Åsa Wedin describes the impact of the language policy on Tanzanians who speak neither English nor kiSwahili: "The policy of today appears effective in building an elite enclosure of English speakers and a lower middle class of Swahili speakers and marginalizing the rest of the population. It also effectively devalues local languages" (Wedin, 2005, p. 571).

2.18.4. Studies

A significant study of language and learning, called *Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa* (LOITASA),[70] was undertaken from 2002-2011, with funding from the Norwegian University Fund. In Tanzania, the research was carried out through the University of Dar es Salaam and the University of Oslo; its focus was a comparison of learning in Swahili medium classrooms and English medium classrooms. Additional components of LOITASA involved staff development and teacher capacity building. LOITASA has been extensively documented.[71]

Mwinsheikhe (2002) carried out a study of the extent to which Kiswahili is used by both students and teachers in the teaching of science in Tanzanian secondary schools, where English is officially the language of instruction. The majority of the teachers interviewed in the study acknowledged the existence of a

language problem in the teaching and learning of science at the secondary level, and admitted that they used Kiswahili regularly to ensure that the students understood the material.

In a collaboration between several universities including the University of Dar es Salaam, the DfID-funded research consortium *Edqual* carried out a *Language and Literacy* research project in Ghana and Tanzania from 2005-2010.[72] The study in Tanzania compared learning outcomes in "L2" (English) and "L1" (kiSwahili). At the *Edqual Tanzania* dissemination event in 2010, researchers commented to this author that, despite the assumptions made in the project, it is acknowledged in the country that kiSwahili is not actually the L1 for many Tanzanian primary school children.

Wedin (2005) reports on a three-year study she undertook in north western Tanzania, in the Runyambo-speaking community of Karagwe. Wedin observes that language ideologies in schools favour the small minority of children raised in an environment where kiSwahili is spoken, such as urban middle-class contexts, while schooling for the great majority implies drastic changes in language use.

> "The stigmatization of Runyambo becomes more evident when we see teachers' overestimation of their own use of Swahili and of pupils' proficiency in Swahili… However, pupils who, at least in the lower classes, do not master Swahili, do not have access to a language to express themselves at all." (Wedin, 2005, p.579)

Wedin argues that the classroom practices in this community constitute a denial of the children's right to use their own language for learning. Official curricula in Tanzania presume pupils' knowledge of kiSwahili as a first language. "Although nearly all pupils in primary schools in Karagwe have Swahili as a

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70   http://www.loitasa.org/. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

71   http://www.loitasa.org/publications.html; http://www.uv.uio.no/iped/english/research/projects/bbrock-loitasa/. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

72   http://www.edqual.org/research/language-literacy.html. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

Tanzania

second language, teachers have no guidance in how to teach Swahili as a second language to children, except for the explicit rule of 'Swahili only' in school, which implicitly concerns only pupils in Karagwe" (p. 582).

2.18.5. Language education initiatives

Early Grade Reading

Creative Associates and the Tanzanian and Zanzibari Ministries of Education and Vocational Training are engaged in a five-year, USAID-supported project (2009 to 2014) to improve early grade reading outcomes in Swahili, in Zanzibar and Mtwara.[73] The USAID programme fact sheet notes that a national-level early grade reading assessment carried out in 2013 found that only 8 per cent of Grade 2 pupils were able to read with grade-level comprehension (USAID Tanzania, 2009).

Reading and Writing Instruction

Implementation of the *Reading and Writing Instruction* programme by Room to Read in Tanzania began in 2012, in partnership with Aga Khan University's Institute for Educational Development (East Africa).[74] The programme focuses on teacher capacity building and the establishment of school libraries.

Children's Book Project for Tanzania (CBP)

This charity was founded in 1991, with the goal of "developing a strong reading culture and societal appreciation and support for literacy" in Tanzania. Supported by the Canadian NGO, CODE International,[75] CBP provides reading materials and carries out teacher capacity building.

READ International

The British NGO READ International, begun in 2004, provides libraries and English-language books to Tanzanian secondary schools. As of 2014, READ International has donated 1.3 million books and created 56 libraries in secondary schools.[76]

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73 http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1860/Education%20Fact%20Sheet%20Aug%2018%202014%20edits.pdf. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

74 http://www.roomtoread.org/tanzania. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

75 http://www.codecan.org/. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

76 http://readinternational.org.uk/. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

Uganda

2.19. Uganda

2.19.1. Background information

After nearly 85 years under British rule, Uganda gained independence in 1962. At that time kiSwahili and English were designated the official languages; this choice was heavily influenced by the politics of the time, since kiSwahili is spoken by only a very small percentage of the population.

In 1989, the Education Review Commission of the Ministry of Education recommended that the mother tongue be the language of instruction for the first four years of primary school, with English taught as a subject (Kyeyune, 2003, p. 174). The curriculum reform that enacted this recommendation was established in 2007 (Altinyelken, 2010, p. 151).

Ethnologue lists 41 languages for Uganda.

2.19.2. Current language policy

The education system in Uganda is gradually undergoing implementation of the 2007 curriculum reform, mandating the use of local languages in Grades 1 to 3. English is the language of instruction from Grade 4 onwards (Uganda National Examinations Board, 2012, p. 2) Wolff (2011) describes the justification for this policy: "The rationale behind the new policy was primarily to use local languages in order 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" (p. 99).

2.19.3. Education policy and practice

Piper and Miksic (2011) describe three features of the 2007 curriculum. First, it focused heavily on a few subject areas, determining that early primary children should learn a few subjects in an integrated fashion. Reading and literacy became much more central under this new curriculum, with two classes per day for most children, and up to 90 minutes of literacy instruction per day. Second, the thematic curriculum was aligned with the mother tongue policy, with strict instructions for teachers to use the mother tongue across subjects for Grades 1 to 3. Third, materials were developed to support the thematic curriculum approach. The authors also note, however, that "these materials were only slowly distributed to the school level and were not developed in all of the mother tongues that teachers were using" (p. 6).

A report by the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) in 2012 (2012) noted that Grade 3 pupils' performance in numeracy was higher than that in English language literacy; the report speculates that the numeracy being taught in the mother tongue "possibly enables pupils to understand the concepts better." It recommends that classroom teachers teach English using appropriate methods of teaching it as a second language (p. 76).

2.19.4. Studies

Kaahwa (2011) published an analysis of the role of culture, including language, in teaching and learning mathematics in rural Ugandan schools. The author argues that "the use of a second language as a medium of instruction introduces learning difficulties in mathematics. This is especially the case in rural areas of Uganda, where English, a second language to all learners, is the medium of instruction at all levels" (p. 54).

Tembe and Norton (2008) report on a study of multilingual language and literacy conducted in eastern Uganda from 2005 to 2006. The study examined the extent to which the new local language policy was supported by both rural and urban community stakeholders. The study, according to Tembe and Norton, found that "in both communities, although participants were generally aware of the new local language policy, they were ambivalent about its implementation in their school. They recognized the importance of local languages

in promoting identity and cultural maintenance, but a higher priority was their children's upward mobility and the desire to be part of wider and more international communities" (p.33). The study also found that English was far more strongly supported as a second language than either Luganda (a mother tongue language) or kiSwahili.

Research by Sprenger-Tasch (2003, p. 357) indicated that 80% of the Ugandans interviewed preferred that the mother tongue be used, either alone or along with other languages, as medium of instruction in lower primary grades; English was the second most preferred language. For upper primary, however, the preference of those interviewed was strongly for English (96%), followed by mother tongue (28%).

2.19.5. Language education initiatives

School Health and Reading Program (SHRP)

The USAID-funded *Uganda School Health and Reading Program* (SHRP)[77] is a 5-year initiative implemented by RTI, SIL/SIL LEAD and World Education, in cooperation with the Ugandan Ministry of Education. Commencing in 2012, the programme is carrying out orthography review, developing reading pedagogical materials in 12 Ugandan languages, as well as English, and engaging in extensive teacher training and supervision support.

77   http://www.usaid.gov/uganda/press-releases/trained-teachers-and-over-400000-pupil-books-increase. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

Uganda

Northern Uganda Literacy Program.

Mango Tree,[78] a Ugandan education resources company established in 2004, began the *Lang'o Literacy Project* in 2009. This is a pilot multilingual education project in the Lang'o language community of northern Uganda. The project has included orthography development with the Lang'o language community, extensive materials development, writer training and classroom implementation. The project has since been renamed the *Northern Uganda Literacy Program*, and operates in the Kumam language community as well.

Uganda Multilingual Education Network (MLEN)

This activist network, based in Kampala, began in 2009 when a group of NGO leaders and educationalists met to discuss challenges related to the use of the home language in formal education. Network members include representatives from Save the Children, Mango Tree Educational Enterprises, UNESCO, UNICEF, the Uganda National Curriculum Development Centre, Kyambogo University, Makerere University's Institute of Languages, Uwezo Uganda, Straight Talk Uganda, The Forum for Education NGOs in Uganda, and the Dutch development organization, SNV (Trudell 2014, p. 8).

MobiLiteracy Uganda

This project is a two-year initiative sponsored through the *All Children Reading Grand Challenge*.[79] The project uses mobile phones to deliver daily SMS messages with age-appropriate literacy activities and related parent education to rural Ugandan parents and their Grade 1 children. The implementing partners are Urban Planet Media and Entertainment, RTI, and the Kasissi Project, which supports struggling rural schools in and around Kibale National Park, Uganda.

Literacy Boost

Save the Children began a Literacy Boost programme in 2011, in two districts of northern Uganda,[80] using the language of the area, Acholi. A midline evaluation carried out in 2012 noted that students who performed well in the more advanced literacy skills tended to be those who were borrowing books from the Literacy Boost Book Bank, and whose family members were involved in the child's learning to read.

Breakthrough to Literacy (BTL)

Letshabo (2002) reports on a pilot *Breakthrough to Literacy* project for teaching literacy in local languages, carried out from 2001 by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) in partnership with UNICEF, the Institute of Teacher Education Kyambogo (now Kyambogo University), and the National Curriculum Development Centre. The Molteno Institute was responsible for developing materials, implementing the programme and training teachers, while the materials were published by Maskew Miller Longman Publishers of South Africa.

Basic Education in Urban Poverty Areas BEUPA

In the late 1990s, the Ministry of Education and Sports and the German aid agency (GIZ) funded the Basic Education in Urban Poverty Areas (BEUPA) project[81] (Ouane and Glanz 2010). The project targeted adolescents with a basic education curriculum in the local language and vocational skills training.

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78   http://www.mangotreeuganda.org/. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

79   http://www.rti.org/page.cfm?obj=39BFD6D0-5056-B100-0CC4429A093082DE. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

80   http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/sites/default/files/documents/6861.pdf. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

81   http://www.youth-employment-inventory.org/inventory/view/344/. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

Zambia

2.20. Zambia

2.20.1. Background information

Zambia's pre-independence education was characterized by an emphasis on local language medium education (Manchisi, 2004, p. 10). However when Zambia gained independence from Britain in 1964 it declared English as the country's only official language. The government policy permitted seven Zambian languages to be used as well: "in addition to the choice of English as the official language, the government also designated seven Zambian languages, namely Bemba, Kaonde, Lunda, Luvale, Lozi, Nyanja and Tonga as regional lingua francas to be used alongside English as school subjects, for functional literacy and public education" (Nkolola-Wakumelo, 2012, p. 129).

However in practice, the medium of instruction became English (Masaiti and Chiti, 2014, p. 444). English was the language of textbooks, although teachers were allowed to use one of the seven regional languages for oral explanations (Linehan, 2005, p. 8). Linehan (2005) notes that "the thirty-year period between 1965 and 1995 saw a number of moves to reverse this 'straight-for-English' approach. In two major reviews of educational policy, in 1977 and again in 1991, the case was made for vernacular languages and their role in ensuring quality in education was made" (p. 2).

In 1995, following the work of a National Reading Commission, it was decided to distinguish the language of initial literacy instruction from the language of overall instruction, with Zambian languages filling the first role and English filling the second. In addition, local languages were to be taught as a subject into the curriculum from Grade 1. As recently as 2011, English was being confirmed as the primary language of instruction (Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education [MoESDVTEE], 2013, p. 2).

Ethnologue lists 46 languages for Zambia.

2.20.2. Current language policy

The current language policy takes a much firmer stand on the use of Zambian languages in education. The January 2013 National Guide for language of instruction practice, published by the Zambian Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education (MoESVTEE, 2013), mandates that Zambian languages replace English as medium of instruction in Grades 1 to 4, in all primary schools in the nation. The Ministry declared that "[f]amiliar languages will be used for teaching initial literacy and content subjects in the early education (pre-school) and lower primary school (Grades 1 to 4)… The new policy shall be implemented in January 2014, in all the primary schools, public and private" (MoESVTEE, 2013, p. 3). The term "familiar language" as used in the policy is not referring to the seven regional languages, but rather to the local language of the community.

This dramatic policy change is based on the advocacy of Zambian linguists for many years, who argued that the use of English as medium of instruction was not serving the nation well (e.g. Sampa, 2005; Muyebaa, 2009; Mwila, 2011; Tambulakani and Bus, 2011).

2.20.3. Education policy and practice

The 2013 local language-medium policy statement is expressed strongly. The *National Guide* document states that one of the key factors contributing to a poor reading level in the past was the use of wrong language of instruction in Zambia, i.e. English. The *National Guide* also finds fault with the accepted use of zonal languages. "For all these past years the seven [zonal] languages have been synonymous with Zambian languages used in education. However, with evidence that some school catchment areas have been found to be disadvantaged because their familiar language or language of play is not any of these seven, it has become imperative that other dialects be brought on board" (MoESVTEE, 2013, p. 4).

The process by which this is to happen is delineated as well. Each local community is to agree on which Zambian language will be used as medium of instruction in the first four grades. At Grade 5, one of the seven regional languages becomes the language of instruction. English is to be taught as a subject from Grade 2 or 3. Regarding the likelihood of English being chosen by the community as its "local language", the *National Guide* notes that, "though in Zambia we have never yet had a community in which English language is the familiar language of learners or the community language of such a one, this is likely to be claimed by some segment of our nation" (p. 4).

According to the Times of Zambia, the policy framework was developed in 2012 by means of "a consultative and participatory process"; and the pilot phase was to run from January to April 2013 in three districts of each of the 10 provinces (Chusa, 2013).

Also in 2013, the Zambian Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) published a National Literacy Framework that gives a central place to Zambian language-medium of instruction. In the preface to the framework, the Zambian Curriculum Development Centre states:

> "The intention is to provide an effective additive bilingual programme where literacy skills acquired in local languages support the acquisition of literacy in English while at the same time sustaining and strengthening literacy in local languages" (CDC, 2013, p. v).

The framework also signals an intentional change from the reading methodology that had underpinned Zambia's Primary Reading Program (PRP) since 1998 (Sampa, 2005); the PRP was based on the New Breakthrough to Literacy methodology, which employed a whole-language approach to reading instruction. This methodology is being explicitly replaced by "reading instruction based on explicit lessons in key competence areas: synthetic phonics and daily instruction that offers learners opportunities to practice reading, writing, speaking and listening in the local language" (CDC, 2013, p. v).

The *National Literacy Framework* bases these radical methodological changes on the unsatisfactory learning-assessment data gathered in the last eight years[82]. The framework attributes these poor results to "half-hearted attempts at developing primary language skills and literacy." (CDC, 2013, p. 4). In explaining the turn to a greater use of local Zambian languages, the Framework states that:

> "Learning in one's first language is 'essential for the initial teaching of reading.' Children arrive on the first day of school with thousands of oral vocabulary words and tacit knowledge of the sound system of their mother tongue, but are unable to use and build upon these linguistic skills because they are instructed in a foreign language. Dismissing this prior knowledge, and trying to teach children to read in a language they are not accustomed to hearing or speaking, makes the teaching of reading difficult, especially in under-resourced schools in developing countries (ibid., p. 5).

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82 The National Literacy Framework, 2013, notes: "The Grade 5 National Assessment Survey for 2006 and 2008 reflected learning achievements below 40 per cent in both English and Zambian Languages (35.3 per cent and 39.4 per cent respectively) and this percentage has been stagnating since 1999. The Grade 5 National Assessment Survey and the EGRA survey, both from 2010 have shown poor reading and writing abilities among learners. The South African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ III) of 2010 noted that among Grade 6 learners tested in reading, only 27.4 per cent were able to read at a basic competency level" (CDC, 2013, p.4)

Zambia

2.20.4. Studies

As noted above, a number of studies over the years have demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the English dominant medium of instruction policies and practices in Zambia. A 2011 study by Tambulukani and Bus (2011) tested the degree of fit between students' home language and the language of instruction, on the reading skills of those students. The study found that "a better fit between children's most familiar Zambian language and the Zambian language in which basic reading skills are practiced leads to better reading skills in the Zambian language (p. 154). The authors conclude that the existing language policy at the time "falls short of expectations" (p. 157).

Matafwali (2010) examined the link between proficiency in language of instruction and reading performance in Zambian schoolchildren. The study found that language fluency and alphabetic skills are separate predictors of reading. It was also found that Grade 2 pupils in the study performed no better than Grade 1 pupils; this was attributed to the move from Zambian language-medium instruction to English medium in Grade 2.

Williams' reading research in the 1990s (Williams, 1998; Gordon 2014) demonstrated that reading levels among the Zambian students assessed were poor in both English and the local language; indeed, most students were reading at two levels below their appropriate grade. Williams notes that "not only are Zambian languages (i.e. one of the 'official' seven) not used as media of instruction, they are also neglected even as subjects in primary school teaching" (Williams, 1998, p. 51).

A case study on Zambian community schools, part of the USAID-funded *Equip2* project, noted that these schools were receiving radio-based instruction in literacy and numeracy in both English and the local languages, "following the official curriculum in those subjects." (EQUIP2, 2006, p. 12)[83]

2.20.5. Language education initiatives

Reading and Writing Instruction (RWI)

Room to Read's *Reading and Writing Instruction* (RWI) programme (Rigole, Cooper and Jukes, 2014) is a school-based intervention that aims to strengthen the teaching and learning of reading and writing in the early primary grades. The programme works in conjunction with the existing language curriculum and includes detailed lesson plans, classroom materials, and comprehensive teacher professional development. In Zambia, Room to Read's Grade 1 *Comprehensive Literacy Instruction Program* (CLIP), with support from UNICEF, was launched at 25 schools in Petauke District during the 2013 school year and expanded to follow the same cohort into Grade 2 in 2014.

Rigole et al. (2014) note that "language differences may also influence differences in instruction and learning outcomes. While Chinyanja is a familiar language and the language of instruction in both Kafue and Petauke Districts, teacher and pupils' home languages do vary" (p. 125).

Time to Learn[84]

This five-year project, implemented by the Education Development Center (EDC) and other partners and funded by USAID, aims to improve the reading performance of community school students by the project end-date of 2017. Among other activities, the project includes development of new Grade 1 reading textbooks and the delivery of library boxes to community schools. In a preliminary report of early grade reading assessment for the project,

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83   http://www.equip123.net/docs/e2-ZambiaCaseStudy.pdf. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

84   http://idd.edc.org/projects/zambia-time-learn. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

Pollard and Gardsbane (2013) found that learners performed poorly in basic reading skills in local languages as "a number of schools report that they teach reading in English, not the local language, even in early grades" (p. 4).

Read to Succeed[85]

This project, funded by USAID and implemented by Creative Associates and the Zambian government, aims to improve student performance in the public school system with a specific focus on early grade reading. Policy support and teacher training feature strongly in the project; with the support of the project, the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education developed the National Literacy Framework of 2013 (above) as well as teaching and learning materials that support a phonics-based approach to reading instruction.

Mobile Gateway Zambia

This is a Praekelt Foundation and RTI International project that uses mobile telephone technology to support USAID's Read to Succeed initiative.[85]

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85   http://www.creativeassociatesinternational.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Zambia_RTS.pdf. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

86   http://blog.praekeltfoundation.org/post/52930778479/mobile-technology-set-to-impact-zambian-education. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

Zimbabwe

2.21. Zimbabwe

2.21.1. Background information

After more than 40 years of British rule as Southern Rhodesia, the minority white government of the colony declared independence as Rhodesia. Following 15 more years of guerrilla warfare, the state of Zimbabwe was established in 1980. At that time, Zimbabwe declared 16 official languages with a particular focus on Shona, Ndebele, and English. An estimated 75 per cent of the Zimbabwean population speaks Shona, and another 17 per cent speak Ndebele.

Ethnologue lists 21 languages for Zimbabwe.

2.21.2. Current language policy

Under the 1987 Education Act, language policy in Zimbabwe favours three languages for use in education: Shona, Ndebele, and English, as follows:

"1. Subject to the provisions of this section [of the Act], the main languages of Zimbabwe, namely Shona, Ndebele and English, shall be taught in all primary schools from the first grade as follows:

a. Shona and English in all areas where the mother tongue of the majority of the residents is Shona; or

b. Ndebele and English in all areas where the mother tongue of the majority of the residents is Ndebele.

2. Prior to Grade 4, either of the languages … may be used as the medium of instruction, depending upon which language is more commonly spoken and better understood by the pupils.

3. From Grade 4, English shall be the medium of instruction provided that Shona or Ndebele shall be taught as subjects on an equal-time-allocation basis as the English language.

4. In areas where minority languages exist, the Minister may authorize the teaching of such languages in primary schools in addition to those specified in subsections (1), (2) and (3)." (Ndhlovu, 2008, p. 70)

The lack of clarity of this policy leads Nkomo (2008, p. 356) to comment that "language in education practices in independent Zimbabwe are not significantly different from those of the colonial era."

The Education Act has been amended three times; Gotosa, Rwodzi and Mhlanga (2013, p. 92) note that "the proposed policy as amended in 1987, 1999 and 2006 to use English only, to use the mother tongue up to grade 3, and to use the mother tongue up to grade 7 respectively has never received full implementation and cannot at the moment be implemented" (p.92). However not all authors even agree on the dates of these amendments, which speaks to the implementation challenges that apparently accompanied them.

Chivhanga and Chimhenga (2013) assert that, policy notwithstanding, English is the predominant language of instruction:

> "Zimbabwe has three national languages, Shona, Ndebele and English but virtually all children are educated through the medium of English and are expected to study their mother tongue as a subject. English is being promoted as a supra ethnic language of national integration. The low status accorded to the African languages adversely affects their use in the education system" (p. 59).

2.21.3. Education policy and practice

According to the 1987 Education Act, Zimbabwean languages other than Shona or Ndebele may be used in early primary classrooms. Muchenje, Goronga and Bondai (2013, pp. 501-502) note that the Act, states that indigenous minority languages such as Tonga, Venda, Kalanga and Shangaan are to be taught and used as languages of instruction up to Grade 3 in the areas where they are commonly spoken and understood; from Grade 4, pupils revert to either Shona or Ndebele, depending on the region of the country. Nevertheless, Muchenje et al argue that in practice, the Act is actually bad for indigenous language speakers.

In addition, the policy has not been implemented adequately. Gotosa et al (2013), note that, 26 years after the promulgation of the Education Act, teaching and writing in content subjects are still being done in English: "there are hardly any content and mathematics books written in indigenous languages for use up to grade three" (p. 90).

Gudhlanga and Makaudze (2012, p. 52) view the policy to be neo-colonial, given the central place of English: "this is a replica of the colonial language policies that valued a foreign language. That is why an Ordinary Level Certificate is still invalid without English but valid even without an indigenous language."

The Government's Education Medium Term Plan 2011-2015 (Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture, n.d.) lists marginalized language communities as one area of action in "Strategic Priority Six: Focus resources on those with greatest need" (p. 24). The plan notes that "all local languages should be examined at various levels and as much as possible be utilized as media of instruction. Teaching [and] learning materials need to be developed so that the languages are examined at all levels up to 'O' level and even beyond" (ibid., p. 24).

The plan specifically calls for development of curricula and examinations for six "prioritized languages" (p. 27), although the six are not specified in the document.

2.21.4. Studies

Muchenje et al (2013) describe a study on the perceptions of pupils from Nyanja/Chewa-speaking background of the status of their mother tongue in the education system (p. 500). The study reveals that the Zimbabwean language used in the classrooms is Shona rather than the language spoken by the community, which participants "labelled unfortunate."

Gondo and Gondo (2012) examine the teacher-training model used for teaching in Shona and Ndebele, the two languages taught as subjects throughout the education system. The authors find the models to be weak and call for reform of indigenous teacher training.

Shizha (2012) reports on a qualitative study examining the effect of teaching science to rural primary school students using English. The study also investigated the opinions and attitudes of primary school teachers toward teaching science using an indigenous language (specifically, Shona). The findings "revealed institutional and attitudinal barriers to using chiShona as a language of instruction in science teaching and learning" (Shizha, 2012). It was also found that where Shona was the medium of instruction, a "lack of learning materials, education language policies, attitudes of teachers and administrators were found to be barriers" (p. 785).

Ndamba (2008) carried out a qualitative study of children's and parents' language of instruction preferences in view of the Zimbabwean language policy which, in theory, requires instruction from Grades 1 to 3 to be in the mother tongue. The study found that "pupils and parents preferred English as the language of instruction at infant level, despite challenges faced in accessing the curriculum through the use of the second language." The study suggests that there is need for attitude change and "a serious campaign for all stakeholders to appreciate the role played by the mother tongue in the early years of schooling" (Ndamba, 2008, p. 171).

2.21.5. Language education initiatives

African Languages Research Institute (ARLI)
ALRI, an interdisciplinary research unit based at the University of Zimbabwe, was established in 2000. Chabata (2007) describes ALRI as "dedicated to the development of all indigenous languages spoken in Zimbabwe. Its

Zimbabwe

goals are to research, document and develop the Zimbabwean indigenous languages in order to promote and expand their use in all spheres of life" (p. 281).

Zimbabwe Indigenous Languages Promotion Association (ZILPA)

Nyika (2008, p. 461) describes the establishment of a Zimbabwean language activist group in 2001. The Zimbabwe Indigenous Languages Promotion Association (ZILPA) was formed by representatives of six Zimbabwean language groups (Tonga, Kalanga, Venda, Shangani, Nambya and Sotho) to campaign for the revitalisation of their languages.

ZILPA's main goal was to pressure the Government to amend the Education Act of 1987 so that the minority languages could be taught in schools throughout the system, like Shona and Ndebele. Nyika (2008) notes that ZILPA was instrumental in the amending the Education Act to allow for the teaching of six minority languages throughout the primary school system.

Chapter 3. Language policy and its impact on student learning outcomes: The evidence in Eastern and Southern Africa

Although mother tongue medium instruction has yielded significant psychological, social and cultural benefits for both students and communities, the ultimate value of pro-African language policies is most likely to be measured by their effect on student learning outcomes. This chapter examines that relationship.

First, information on the language policy environment of each country in the region is presented in a tabular form, giving an overall view of the trends in language policy in the region. The table demonstrates that the great majority of countries in the region have formulated policies that favour the use of local languages at least through grade 3 or 4 of primary school. However, evidence from chapter 2 of this study indicates a significant mismatch between these stated policies and actual classroom practice across the region.

Human Development Index (HDI) data on the primary school dropout rates of the countries in the region is then examined. The data indicates that the average dropout rate in countries of the ESAR region (49.8 per cent) is higher than that of sub-Saharan Africa as a whole (37.7 per cent), and also higher than the average dropout rate for low-income countries worldwide (42.7 per cent). This fact is related to evidence that language-of-instruction choices are related to both dropout and repetition rates in primary school.

The chapter next examines data on the learning achievement of Grade 6 pupils described by *Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality* (SACMEQ) assessments from 1995-2014 (there is considerable overlap between SACMEQ member countries and UNICEF's ESAR countries). The data shows that an average of 27 per cent of Grade 6-age children in EASR/SACMEQ countries are either not

enrolled or are functionally illiterate. In addition, a language-specific analysis of SACMEQ data carried out in 2011 indicates a strong positive correlation between pupil achievement and using a language of instruction that the pupil speaks.

Early grade reading assessment (EGRA) data for the region is also examined; as of mid-2015, EGRA assessments have been carried out in at least 15 ESAR countries. The use of local languages of instruction is seen to be associated with better testing outcomes compared to the use of foreign languages of instruction. However, the data also suggests that programmatic and socioeconomic factors also have a significant impact on in learning achievement as measured by EGRA.

Finally, the chapter notes several studies described in chapter 2, specifically linking language policy and practice to actual student learning outcomes. In every case, the findings indicate that using a language that is better known to the learner results in enhanced learning, compared to use of a language that is less well known to the learner.

Overall, the evidence studied in this chapter indicates that using the student's own language as medium of instruction has significant cognitive and academic benefits. In addition, implementation of language policy has at least as much impact on student learning outcomes as does the policy itself. However language policy, even when well implemented, cannot by itself turn poor learning environments into good ones. Improved student learning outcomes come about when pro-mother tongue language policy, well implemented, accompanies a range of other educational and development initiatives.

3.1. Language policy environments

The current national language policy environments of the ESAR countries under review are listed in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1. Current national language policies of ESAR countries

International language medium from Grade 1
Angola (Portuguese; policy permits indigenous languages also) **Comoros** (French and Arabic) **Mozambique I** (Portuguese)

African language medium through Grade 3, transition in Grade 4
Kenya ("languages of the catchment area" to English) **Lesotho** (SeSotho to English) **Madagascar** (Malagasy to French) **Mozambique II** (indigenous languages to Portuguese) **Namibia** (indigenous languages to English) **Rwanda** (Kinyarwanda to English) **South Sudan** (indigenous languages to English) **Uganda** (indigenous languages to English) **Zimbabwe** (indigenous languages to English)

African language medium through Grade 4, transition in Grade 5
Botswana (Setswana to English) **Burundi** (Kirundi to French) **Swaziland** (Siswati to English) **Zambia** (indigenous languages to English)

Other
Malawi (Chichewa and English from Grade 1?) **Eritrea** (9 languages, through Grade 5) **Ethiopia** (many languages; transition to English at Grades 5, 7, or 9 depending upon the region) **Somaliland, Puntland, South central Somalia** (Somali through primary grades) **South Africa** (11 languages; primary and secondary grades as desired) **Tanzania** (Kiswahili through grade 11)

In assessing this range of policies, it is important to bear in mind that significant mismatches often exist between nationally formulated language policy and actual classroom language practices. This mismatch is described in a number of the country-level reviews, and it always results in greater use of the international language rather than the African language. Hence, the local language-friendly policies described in Table 3.1 may well be ignored; the use of an international language as the principal language of instruction is commonplace in African primary classrooms, even as early as grade 1 (or even pre-school).

In this environment of widely varying language policies and practices that often ignore national policy, what can be said regarding links between language policy and student learning outcomes in the classrooms of Eastern and Southern Africa?

3.2. The Human Development Index: Dropout rates

One education indicator of the Human Development Index (HDI) that is relevant to student learning is the primary school dropout rate data provided by participating governments. The HDI defines this as "the percentage of students from a given cohort that have enrolled in primary school but drop out before reaching the last grade of primary education" (UNDP, 2014, p. 195). This figure does not include those children who do not actually enrol in school. Although dropout rates are not actually learning outcomes as such, they are closely linked and are often used as a proxy.

According to the 2014 HDI report, the countries of the Eastern and Southern Africa region can be compared as in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2. HDI estimates of average primary school dropout rate for various countries worldwide

Group of countries	Average primary school dropout rate
Countries of Eastern and Southern Africa Region (Not reporting: South Africa, Kenya, Zimbabwe, the Comoros, South Sudan and Somalia)	49.8%
Sub-Saharan Africa region	37.7%
Low human development countries worldwide (HDI classification)	42.7%
Medium human development countries worldwide (HDI classification)	18.3%

From the dropout rates shown above, it appears that the teaching and learning strategies of ESAR countries in primary education are not adequate to keep children in school. Evidence of a strong correlation between language of instruction choices and both dropout and repetition rates in primary school (World Bank 2005; Grin 2005; Laitin et al 2015) leads to the question of whether language policy implementation practices are at least partially responsible for the high primary school dropout rates recorded by the 2014 HDI. Further research on the relationship between language policy implementation and international education data could go far towards answering this question.

3.3. SACMEQ data: Learning achievement of Grade 6 pupils

The *Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality* (SACMEQ) is a critical source of education information. With 13 African nations of the UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa region participating (Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zanzibar and Zimbabwe)[87], SACMEQ countries substantially overlap with UNICEF's ESAR countries. The SACMEQ projects[88] consist of school surveys of reading and mathematics achievement among Grade 6 students in the participating countries.

Stellenbosch University scholar Nic Spaull has done some helpful analysis of SACMEQ data, including a 10-country overview in 2007.[89] From this analysis, the percentage of Grade 6-age children "not enrolled" plus those who are "enrolled but functionally illiterate" (by which Spaull [2012] means that "they cannot read a short and simple text and extract meaning" [p. 2]), is listed in Table 3.3. below.

Table 3.3. Percentage of Grade 6-age children either not enrolled or functionally illiterate in 10 ESAR/SACMEQ countries (from Spaull, 2012)

Kenya	13%
Lesotho	30%
Malawi	45%
Namibia	20%
South Africa	29%
Swaziland	12%
Tanzania	18%
Uganda	29%
Zambia	51%
Zimbabwe	25%
Average	**27%**

87   SACMEQ countries also include Mauritius and Seychelles, which are not in UNICEF's ESAR group of countries.

88   The SACMEQ surveys have been: SACMEQ I in 1995-1999, SACMEQ II in 2000-2004, SACMEQ III in 2006-2011, and SACMEQ IV, in 2012-2014.

89   http://resep.sun.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Spaull-2012-SACMEQ-at-a-Glance-10-countries.pdf. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

Again, this table is a broad indication that the learning strategies in most of these countries are not working well; it brings to mind Heugh's views on the high cost of unsuccessful models of education, specifically those in which strong implementation of language policy is missing - discussed in detail in Chapter 1 (Heugh, 2006, p. 138).

Hungi (2011a; 2011b) reports on a more language-specific analysis of SACMEQ data. The author notes that 2010 analyses of SACMEQ II data showed "strong positive correlations between speaking the language of instruction and pupil achievement, especially in reading, across all SACMEQ countries" (2011a, p, 7). In analysing SACMEQ III data, Hungi notes that 'speaking the language of instruction' was one of seven pupil-level predictors that emerged as significant across most of the 15 school systems, for both reading and mathematics (2011b, p. 8)[90]. Specifically, "pupils who spoke the language of instruction at home more often were estimated to achieve better than pupils who rarely or never spoke the language of instruction at home in the 15 school systems."

3.4. EGRA data: Testing reading ability

Over the past several years, early grade reading assessments (EGRA) have been carried out in a number of ESAR countries. Testing reading ability is seen as a relatively straightforward

way to measure more general learning outcomes. The EGRA methodology involves school-based assessment of individual student reading skills, including recognition of letter-sound correspondence, letter-syllable-word recognition, oral reading fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension. The test is typically given to students at the end of Grade 2 or the beginning of Grade 3. Generally, the language used for the testing is the language of instruction in the classroom.

EGRA has become a standard assessment tool (particularly for baseline assessments) in a range of reading interventions in ESAR countries, particularly those funded by USAID. As of mid-2015, EGRA assessments have been carried out in Angola, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, as well as a number of other countries around the world.

In general, EGRA results from Africa are showing that "most students have not yet acquired a basic level of reading proficiency by the end of Grade 2 (or beginning of Grade 3) to allow them to transition from learning to read to reading to learn in later grades" (USAID, 2013)[91]. One of the most dramatic findings of EGRA in Africa is the number of students tested who were unable to read at all. This metric can be seen in Table 3.4 below, applied to three countries.

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90   Hungi (2011b: 8) lists the seven indicators: "pupil SES, pupil sex, pupil age, grade repetition, days absent, homework, and speaking language of instruction."

91   https://www.rti.org/brochures/eddata_ii_egra_africa.pdf. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

Table 3.4. Percentage of non-readers in EGRA assessments in Zambia, Uganda and Ethiopia, by country and language of testing (from USAID, 2013)

Country	Language of testing	Percent that were non-readers
Zambia	English	91%
Uganda	English (in Lang'o region)	88%
	Lang'o (in Lang'o region)	82%
	English (in central region)	53%
	Luganda (in central region)	51%
Ethiopia	Amharic (Addis Ababa)	10%
	Hararigna (Harari region)	18%
	Sidamo (SNNP region)	69%
	Amharic (Benishangul Gumuz region)	34%
	Somali (Somali region)	27%
	Oromo (Oromia region)	41%
	Amharic (Amhara region)	28%
	Tigrigna (Tigray region)	30%

The data in Table 3.4 provide useful insights into the complexities of language choice and classroom instruction. To be sure, home languages are associated with better testing outcomes at the end of Grade 2 than are foreign languages. For example, where both African and English languages were assessed in Uganda, fewer African language-medium students scored as non-readers compared to English medium students. In Ethiopia, where Amharic was the home language of the students (Addis Ababa; the Amhara region), fewer students scored as non-readers than where Amharic was not the home language (Benishangul Gumuz region).

The data from both Uganda and Ethiopia also demonstrate an additional and very important factor in reading success, that is, the degree of geographic isolation and economic marginalization of the students' communities. In Uganda, reading achievement is far higher in the central region (including the capital, Kampala) than in the northern region where Lang'o is one of the languages spoken. Similarly, in Ethiopia, the data also show a striking difference between the strongest mother tongue learners in the capital city, Addis and the weakest learners in the more rural Southern Nations Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR), where poverty and infant mortality rates are high and the literacy rate among women is 22.4 per cent.

In addition, the wide range of non-reader scores across the Ethiopian regions, where the students' mother tongue is the medium of instruction, indicates that programmatic issues as well as socioeconomic factors play a significant role in learning achievement.

3.5. Country-specific studies

As has been documented in the country-level review (Chapter 2), a wide variety of studies on language and reading have been done in the last decade. A great number of the studies carried out provide convincing data on language attitudes, policy implementation, and classroom practices. Several of these studies have also focused on linking language policy and practice to actual student learning outcomes. In every case, the findings indicate that using a language that is better known to the learner results in enhanced learning, compared to use of a language that is less well known to the learner. Some examples of this research follow.

3.5.1. The Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa (LOITASA) project

The Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa (LOITASA) project was an extended study of the impact of language of instruction on primary classrooms. The studies, which ran from 2002-2011 in South Africa and Tanzania, compared learning outcomes in English medium classrooms with those in isiXhosa and kiSwahili medium classrooms respectively. The studies focused on teaching styles, teacher-learner interaction and the degree of understanding evidenced among the students; they found significantly better learning outcomes when isiXhosa (South African students' mother tongue) and kiSwahili (either the mother tongue or a familiar language to Tanzanian students) were used than when English was used. The study outcomes are thoroughly documented in a series of monographs and papers.[92]

3.5.2. Two quantitative studies of language of instruction in Zambia

Matafwali (2010) examined the impact of proficiency in language of instruction on the reading performance of school children. The study found that language fluency and alphabetic skills are independent predictors of reading. It also found that Grade 2 pupils in the study performed no better than Grade 1 pupils, a result attributed to the early transition from Zambian language-medium instruction to English in Grade 2. Williams' reading research in the 1990s found that reading levels of the students assessed were poor in both English and the local language (Williams 1998).

3.5.3. South Africa Longitudinal study

In South Africa, Taylor and Coetzee (Taylor and Coetzee 2013) examined longitudinal data on school characteristics including language of instruction by grade, and student test score data for the population of South African primary schools. The findings indicated that mother tongue instruction in the early grades significantly improves English acquisition as measured in Grades 4 to 6.

3.5.4. Evaluation of Mozambique bilingual education programme

In Mozambique, Benson (2000) carried out an evaluative study of the experimental bilingual education programme called PEBIMO, which ran from 1993-1997. The programme consisted of mother tongue-medium primary education in Grades 1 to 3 in two Mozambican languages, Cinyanja and Xitsonga. Evaluation from the final two years of the experiment, using both quantitative and qualitative means, demonstrated greater classroom participation of the students who learned in their mother tongue, as well as greater self-confidence, bilingualism and literacy skills in both languages.

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92   http://www.loitasa.org. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

3.5.5. Evaluation of the effect of the 1994 language policy change in Ethiopia

In a unique study on the impact of a language policy change, development economist Rajesh Ramachandran (2012) assessed the effect of the 1994 language policy change in Ethiopia on educational outcomes. The study examined data from the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) from 2011, a nationally representative sample from the nine regions and two city administrative areas of Ethiopia. The analysis of this data shows that mother tongue-based instruction has had a positive effect at all levels of schooling, and has increased the percentage of the sample completing six years or more of schooling by 12 per cent. In addition, Ramachandran found that in the years between 1995/96 and 2001/02, the recurrent education expenditure per student in Ethiopia declined by around 20 per cent.

The evidence provided in these studies serves to foster pro-African language policies, to provide proof-of-concept that mother tongue-medium instruction can facilitate good student learning, and to contest language policies and practices in which international languages dominate the primary classroom.

3.6. Conclusions

The data examined in this chapter strongly suggest the following three conclusions:

- Evidence from studies indicates significant cognitive and academic benefits of using the student's own language as medium of instruction.
- Language policy implementation has at least as much impact on student learning outcomes as does the policy itself. The current failure to more fully implement pro-mother tongue language policies is a significant factor behind the low levels of student achievement found in ESAR countries.
- Language policy, even when well implemented, cannot by itself turn poor learning environments into good ones. Improved student learning outcomes come about when pro-mother tongue language policy, well implemented, accompanies a range of other educational and development initiatives.

Chapter 4. Case studies of Ethiopia, South Africa and South Sudan

Whilst each of the countries reviewed in Chapter 2 make for fascinating study, three ESAR countries in particular have been chosen for more in-depth case study: Ethiopia, South Africa and South Sudan. These countries were jointly chosen by the author and UNICEF ESARO. In each of them language policy has had a substantial role in the national political history.

Ethiopia has seen extensive and implementation of a regionally shaped, pro-mother tongue language policy over the past 20 years or more. Significant political will on the part of the national government has consistently supported implementation of this policy across the country. South Africa provides a powerful example of the role of language policy in national political dynamics, both during and after the apartheid era. The ongoing national debate about language, curriculum and nationhood continues to shape, and be shaped by, research and practice. South Sudan, a country still in its formative years, is struggling with complex questions of language and identity. Language choice is seen as one of the key features of its national identity, and yet the realities of pedagogy and curriculum in a multi-language context are proving difficult to deal with. Of course such complexities of language policy and practice may be seen in other countries of the region as well, but the issues are clearly visible in these three.

Each country case study includes: a description of the historical context of the language policy, as well as its current status; an examination of country-level evidence on the links between language policy and learning outcomes; and a description of the language issues and challenges that face the country today.

Themes emerging from these three case studies include the following:

1. The ways in which language policy choices enact the values and the political agenda of the state. These choices are never solely about learning outcomes; they also reflect national identity as seen by the political and economic elite.

2. The prominence that the English language is gaining across the region, even in countries that have limited or no Anglophone colonial history. This speaks to the power of social and economic globalization today, and of English as its linguistic manifestation.

3. The complexity of language policy choices and implementation in countries of extensive linguistic diversity. In such environments, concerns for national unity, linguistic rights and political stability can weigh far more heavily than concerns for principles of effective learning.

4.1. Ethiopia

4.1.1. Background and current status

The impact of shifting national politics on language policy is particularly strong in Ethiopia. The languages used in education over the past 200 years have included Ge'ez, Amharic, French, English and Arabic (Ambatchew 2010). Ambatchew also notes that during the Italian colonial occupation from 1936 to 1941, local language policy was used to fragment the country. When Emperor Haile-Selassie came to power in the 1940s, he determined to use Amharic to unite it. Hence, the medium of instruction in government schools became Amharic. The socialist government that came to power thirty years later, in 1974, continued the Amharic dominant policy, though it did acknowledge the language rights of other ethnic groups.

With the coming to power of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia in 1991, language policy became one of the symbols of the overturning of ethnic Amharic rule. The new Constitution stated that every "nationality" or ethnic group had the right to use its own language in primary school. Alemu and Abebayehu note that:

> "Ethiopia's 1994 Education and Training Policy states that 'primary education be given in nationality languages' (FDRE, 1994, p. 23). The underlying assumption of the policy (as stated in the policy document) is that the nationality language is the 'mother-tongue' of all children that live in the area where the specific nationality language is spoken." (Alemu and Abebayehu, 2011, p. 403)

Since that time, primary education has followed this mother tongue language policy that aims to improve literacy rates and academic achievement, and also to enhance appreciation of local languages and cultures (Wolff, 2011, p. 97). The nine regional governments (which are themselves based on ethnic territory) determine when the transition from local language medium to English will take place, whether in Grade 5, Grade 7 or Grade 9 (Bogale, 2009, pp. 108-9). The regional governments also decide in which grade Amharic will be introduced as a subject: either Grade 3 or Grade 5 (Heugh, Bogale, Benson and Gebre Yohannes, 2007, p.

5). Ambatchew (2010, p. 201) contends that following the 2005 elections, "some regional states changed the medium of instruction from local languages to English at the second cycle of primary education."

More than 30 Ethiopian languages are currently in use as languages of instruction or taught as a subject in primary schools (Zeme, 2013). Several languages are used in training primary teachers, and three are taught as subjects beyond primary school (Anteneh and Ado, 2006). This strongly supportive mother tongue policy is widely considered by multilingual education experts to be the most progressive national policy environment in Africa. An extensive study by Heugh et al (2007) concludes that the Ministry of Education policy of eight years of mother tongue medium schooling promotes sound educational practice and is one of the best on the continent:

> "The decentralised system favors adoption of appropriate models and practices, and there are significant human and linguistic resources in the regions that can be built upon to support mother tongue as MOI throughout primary schooling and teacher training" (Heugh et al, 2007, p. 7).

As is often the case, however, policy implementation has proven to be more difficult to carry out than to formulate. Cohen (2007, p. 64) notes that not all the languages being used for primary grade instruction are successful in the classroom. Ambatchew observes that many of the political elite continue to send their children to English or French medium schools (2010, p. 204). And, of course, the politics underlying language choice remain, with attitudes in favour of or opposed to local language medium instruction often following more ethnic-political agendas than principles of good pedagogy (Cohen, 2007).

When it comes to education quality, current indicators certainly give reason for the government to be concerned. The 2014 Human Development Index lists Ethiopia's primary school dropout rate at 63.4% (UNDP, 2014; see chapter 3 above). In addition, early grade reading assessments carried out in 2010 in 6 languages of Ethiopia indicate that an average of 32% of children at the end of grade 2 were unable to read one word (Table 3.4).

Ethiopia

A working paper published in 2010, under USAID's EQUIP2 project, examined the relationship between early grade reading and school effectiveness in Ethiopia and three other countries (USAID 2010). Ethiopia was noted for providing language arts textbooks for Grades 1 to 3 more widely than other countries did; however, students were observed using these books a very small percentage of the time. The books that were available lacked reading passages and stories, making it difficult for students to use them to learn to read. In addition, it was found that the instructional time available was not well used, with a loss of up to 30 to 40 days per year of class time.

Meeting these challenges to quality education will require improvement of systems and infrastructures such as textbook provision, teacher capacity building and others. This can and should be done without sacrificing the current commitment to mother tongue teaching and learning.

4.1.2. Evidence linking language to learning outcomes

Finding evidence that clearly links language choice to learning outcomes can be difficult, since so many other factors come into play. Research in contexts where the variables tested are limited to language choice indicates that, all other things being equal, children should learn in a language they speak. This kind of research is not common in the Ethiopian context, but a few studies do address the issue.

Mother tongue medium learning in Grade 8

One such study, reported by Teshome (2007), looks at the relationship between mother tongue medium learning and academic achievement in the Grade 8 subjects of biology, physics, chemistry, mathematics and English. The findings indicate that the test scores of students who studied these subjects in their mother tongue were up to 11 per cent higher than the scores of those who studied in a language that was not their mother tongue. Teshome's study confirms the pedagogical effectiveness of learning in the mother tongue in Ethiopia; it suggests that the policy of

providing primary education in the mother tongue is appropriate and that it should be maintained. The study's confirmation that learning in the mother tongue is one of the most decisive factors in student achievement indicates the need for concerted effort to fully implement the language policy.

The impact of language policy change

A study by development economist Rajesh Ramachandran (2012) assessed the effect of the 1994 language policy support for mother tongue learning throughout the country. The study examined data from the 2011 Demographic and Health Survey, a nationally representative sample from the nine regions and two city administrative areas of Ethiopia. The data analysis shows that mother tongue-based instruction has had a positive effect at all levels of schooling, and has increased the percentage of the sample completing six years or more of schooling, by 12 per cent.

The effectiveness of English medium teaching

A study by Heugh et al (2007) was requested by the Government of Ethiopia to examine the current language education models being used, and to make evidence-based recommendations for policy and practice. In assessing pupils' readiness to learn in English, the researchers asked 152 educators in eight regions a series of questions about the issue.

The results described in Table 4.1 below indicate that classroom teachers fully recognize the limitations of English as a medium of instruction. More than half the teachers believe that content areas cannot be successfully taught in English until Grades 7 -10. Asked about the grade level in which full competence in English is reached, the largest percentage responded with Grades 11-12 or higher. The data underscore the importance of transitioning from the mother tongue medium instruction to English medium instruction as late as possible in the curriculum.

The language policy of Ethiopia provides a unique opportunity to assess the effectiveness of late-exit multilingual education (in which the mother tongue is used as medium of instruction for at least the first 6 to 8 years of school), as Teshome and Heugh et al did. Ethiopia is the

only country in Africa to offer the option of up to eight years of mother tongue-medium instruction; the evidence generated in these two studies supports that policy option, since they show that even by Grade 8 the most effective language for learning is the mother tongue rather than English.

Future results from the Reading for Ethiopia's Achievement Developed - Technical Assistance (READ-TA) project

Another promising source of data on language and learning outcomes is the Reading for Ethiopia's Achievement Developed (READ) project, which began in 2012 by the Ethiopian Ministry of Education, with technical assistance from partners including RTI, SIL/SIL LEAD, Save the Children and Florida State University. The goal of this five-year programme is to improve the reading and writing skills of 15 million children in Grades 1-8, in seven of the most widely spoken languages in Ethiopia. Following two years of curriculum revision and materials development, the programme was officially launched in October 2014. Data on learning outcomes in Ethiopian languages is due to be published in 2016.

Literacy Boost findings

Save the Children's Literacy Boost programme is a three-year programme of teacher training, community reading activities, and age-appropriate local-language materials to support emergent literacy skills among early grade children. Baseline and end-line reading assessments, as well as assessment of home literacy environments, allow an understanding of the impact of this model. Importantly, the reading assessment is carried out in the language of the region, which is also the language of instruction. Assessment in the language spoken by the children, rather than in a foreign language, allows a more accurate assessment of their reading ability.

A Literacy Boost programme was carried out in the Oromia Region from 2010-2012[93]. A mid-term evaluation of the programme indicated that student absenteeism decreased significantly in the Literacy Boost schools. Reading skills of the students also increased significantly over those of children in comparison schools. The Oromo language was the language of the programme and the assessment.

Table 4.1. Educator responses to questions about the grade at which English-medium instruction should commence in relation to different subjects (from Heugh et al, 2007, pp. 84-5)

Question	Grade 1-4	Grade 5-6	Grade 7-8	Grade 9-10	Grade 11-12
When are students ready to use English as medium of instruction?	10%	22%	39%	17%	5%
From which level can **Mathematics** be taught in English without the help of explanations in an Ethiopian Language?	<1%	16%	30%	26%	10%
From which level can **Natural Sciences** be taught in English without the help of explanations in an Ethiopian Language?	<1%	12%	35%	27%	10%
From which level can **Social Sciences** be taught in English without the help of explanations in an Ethiopian Language?	<1%	16%	32%	23%	11%
Students in this school/region are fully competent to use English medium by the time they reach which level?	0	1.3%	20%	19%	24%

Ethiopia

A Literacy Boost programme in the Tigray region from 2011 to 2014 (Gebreanenia, Sorissa, Takele, Yenew and Guajardo, 2014) was carried out in the Tigrigna language, the mother tongue of all of the students in the programme. Reading comprehension scores of the students able to read with comprehension increased from 31 per cent to 45 per cent. The findings of the final evaluation underscored the importance of local language and plenty of reading material aimed specifically at children.

4.1.3. Issues and challenges

Several issues related to language policy are noteworthy in the Ethiopian context.

- **The complexity of improving learning outcomes:** Ethiopia clearly illustrates the importance of addressing not only the language of instruction, but also the broader challenges to effective learning. Education authorities are using mother tongue-based instruction to generate broader reforms such as curriculum review, teacher capacity building and student access to learning materials, which they believe will result in the desired student learning outcomes.

- **Accommodating the large number of local languages:** Policy makers have realized that the constitutional commitment to provide education in every Ethiopian language is a huge undertaking. Still, the government shows an unwavering determination to serve as many of its language communities as possible with quality mother tongue-based education. Its readiness to partner with international NGOs and donor agencies to help realize this goal is an important policy position. Moreover, prioritizing the language communities with least access to quality education and the most enthusiasm for the use of their mother tongue in schools is most likely to gain the desired student learning outcomes in Ethiopian languages.

- **The growing influence of English:** The policy decision to prioritize English language learning in primary schools has meant that English is gaining greater influence on language practices in Ethiopia. It is important for education authorities to keep in mind that the global dominance of English has generated a number of myths about the value of English in local contexts as well as in the national language ecology. Keeping English "in its place" as one of many languages in Ethiopia will be important; allowing it to dominate education and other public spaces is likely to interfere with the development of Ethiopia's own languages.

- **Reading materials in local languages for early readers.** As the Tigray *Literacy* Boost report noted, the availability of easy-reading materials in local languages plays a major role in improving student reading and learning outcomes. A number of material-development models have been generated by NGOs such as SIL Africa, Room to Read, Molteno, and others; these could help to provide the local-language supplementary reading appropriate for new learners.

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93   https://www.eddataglobal.org/documents/index.cfm/LB_Ethiopia_Yr_2_results.pdf. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

4.2. South Africa

4.2.1. Background and current status

The language ecology in South Africa is dynamic and highly complex. The roles of local languages, Afrikaans and English in education and society are multifaceted and full of political implications.

When South Africa gained independence from European powers in 1961, its language policy made English and Afrikaans the official languages - the latter an informal derivative of Dutch that had developed into a language of education, commerce and governance. Throughout the years of apartheid, the use of Afrikaans and English symbolized the power dynamics among the South African descendants of European settlers. As Kamwangamalu (2004) puts it:

> "Language planning has historically been an arena for struggle, where the white segment of the country's population has sought to exercise power over other ethnic groups... [in this case] through control of language. It has been so because, decisions about language often led to benefits for some and loss of privilege, status and rights for others." (p. 207)

One prominent illustration of this power dynamic was the Bantu Education Act that mandated mother tongue-medium education across the nation (Heugh, 2012). This policy benefited the resource-rich English and Afrikaans speaking school populations, to the detriment of the rest of the nation's students. Thus this policy was very badly received by teachers and parents in the Black Homelands, where few or no educational resources existed in the language of the community (Eriksson, 2014, p. 7).[94] The Soweto Uprising of 1976 was similarly caused by a government policy requiring the increased use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in secondary schools.

When apartheid ended with South Africa's first universal elections in 1994, the new power balance played out in language policy.

Kamwangamalu (2004) notes that: "The change from apartheid to democracy brought about the official recognition that South Africa is a multilingual rather than the bilingual country it had been assumed to be in the apartheid era. This recognition has translated into a new, multilingual language policy." The current Constitution of South Africa gives official status to nine indigenous languages as well as Afrikaans and English. To support the policy and language planning, the Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB) was formed; this independent body was given the mandate to advise central and provincial government on language policy and language use (Manyike and Lemmer, 2014).

Thus, the typical practice in South African schools is to use the mother tongue through Grade 3 and then switch to English. Manyike (2013) notes that "general practice in black schools is the use of the L1 in Grades 1 to 3 with English introduced as the additional language in Grade 1 or 2. Grade 4 marks a transition to English as the LoLT [language of teaching and learning] for the entire primary curriculum" (p. 188).

Heugh, who has written extensively on this subject, argues that this practice means that the "the 78 per cent of students who have African home languages switch to English after three years while, ironically, English and Afrikaans speakers continue to benefit from mother tongue medium education as they did during the colonial and apartheid eras" (Heugh, 2011, p. 53).

An additional feature of South African language policy is that individuals and communities have the right to choose the language of instruction for their children (Government of South Africa, 1997). While this policy has the advantage of providing space for extensive mother tongue-based learning, it also allows for the choice of English over any of the mother tongues. This choice is being made more and more frequently.

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94   Interestingly, Heugh (2000) notes that "despite the cognitively impoverished curriculum, eight years of mother tongue instruction gave pupils time to learn their own language and to learn a second and a third language sufficiently well to make the switch in medium of instruction in the ninth year. During the first phase of Bantu Education, 1953–1976, the matriculation results improved, despite the poor curriculum" (p. 24).

Motala (2013) notes that "inadequate mastery of the language of learning and teaching is a major factor in the abysmally low levels of learner achievement; yet many parents prefer (with their children's concurrence) to have their children taught in the second language of English by teachers who are themselves second language speakers of English" (p. 200).

The National Education Evaluation and Development Unit's (NEEDU) 2012 national report on early grade literacy teaching and learning (NEEDU, 2013) provides further evidence of the damage being done to education outcomes by the move to English. The report points to high language diversity in the communities, reflecting a high rate of migration into these communities; this is resulting in a mismatch between the language of instruction and the home language for many South African students. In a policy environment that allows learners and communities to choose their language of instruction, the choices being made are generally favouring English over local languages.

The report concludes that "the question of a LoLT [language of learning and teaching] that is not the HL [home language] has forced itself onto the agenda, and has become a significant educational reality in schools" (NEEDU, 2013, p. 34). Further, the report states that "if the country is serious about mother tongue instruction in the first three grades, then the African languages need to be standardized and a full set of reading materials for the FP [Grades 1 to 3] developed in each [subject]. This is a major undertaking, but the present laissez faire approach is exacerbating the problem" (p. 36). A study by Heugh and Prinsloo (2013) in rural Limpopo Province also indicates that learners' home languages are being abandoned in favour of English. Where this move is not accompanied by strong English fluency, learning achievement invariably suffers.

4.2.2. Evidence on language and learning in South Africa

Due to the high political profile of language policy and practice in South Africa, as well as the work of a number of South African language scholars and research-oriented institutions, a number of important studies on language and learning have been carried out. Several of these are long-term language education initiatives with multiple emphases on research, evidence-based advocacy and capacity building. Two of the best known are the *Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa* (LOITASA) project and the *Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa* (PRAESA).

Herman (2009) argues that LOITASA findings in classrooms of isiXhosa-speaking communities helped to provide the evidence to support the development of the Language Transformation Plan by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED). Developed with technical assistance from PRAESA,[95] the plan promotes six years of mother tongue-based bilingual education, and aims to help learners gain basic conversational fluency in the mother tongue (isiXhosa), English and Afrikaans (Bloch, Guzula and Nkence, 2010, p. 89).

University of South Africa scholars T.V. Manyike and E.M. Lemmer have published an extensive review of language-in-education research (Manyike and Lemmer, 2014). They note that research done between 15 and 30 years ago was already showing strong evidence that South African children taught in a language other than their home language were not succeeding in school (Molteno Project 2000; MacDonald 1990). After reviewing more recent research findings, the authors conclude that the conditions for home language (HL) literacy acquisition in primary schools remain dismal:"[t]he majority of learners whose HL is not the medium of instruction continue to experience academic underachievement as HL education is largely ignored by the education authorities in spite of rhetoric to the contrary" (p. 256).

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95   http://wced.pgwc.gov.za/circulars/circulars07/e4_b.pdf. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

A series of articles by Manyike and Lemmer, published between 2008 and 2013, examine the development of Grade 7 students' learning ability in Xitsonga (the mother tongue) and English. In the most recent publication of the series, Manyike (2013) describes a quantitative study of the reading and writing performance of Xitsonga-speaking Grade 7 learners in Xitsonga and English. Manyike found the students' reading and writing performance to be equally substandard in both languages. Manyike concludes that these outcomes can be attributed to "short-term exposure to schooling in L1 [first, mother tongue or home language] and low levels of exposure to English outside the classroom" (p. 187).

The LOITASA project, mentioned above, was carried out from 2002 to 2011 with funding from the Norwegian University Fund. In South Africa, the research was carried out by the University of the Western Cape and the University of Oslo; its focus was a comparison of learning in isiXhosa and in English, using experimental isiXhosa classrooms and control English medium classrooms. The findings reinforce the argument that learning in the child's own language results in better achievement than does learning in a language the child has not mastered.

Taylor and Coetzee (2013) examined the impact of transitional bilingual education programmes and English immersion programmes on student learning outcomes, particularly focusing on their acquisition of English. The study combined several datasets covering 2007 to 2012, more than 800,000 students in more than 9000 schools. It was found that mother tongue medium instruction in Grades 1 to 3 significantly improves English acquisition as measured in Grades 4 to 6.

A study by Vorster, Mayet and Taylor (2012) uses a nationally representative dataset to estimate the impact of writing a test in English versus writing that same test in the mother tongue. This study examines two sets of test scores for the same (Grade 3) children, taking the same test, administered in English on one occasion and in the mother tongue on the other. A comparison of the two sets of scores indicates that the children's performance was significantly higher in their home language than in English.

A three-year study carried out in the 1980s, called *The Threshold Project* (MacDonald, 1990), examined the nature of the language and learning difficulties that Sepedi-speaking Grade 5 children in South Africa experienced when they transitioned from their mother tongue to English. The study found that these children were ill-prepared for the sudden transition of medium of instruction, with insufficient English vocabulary for learning in the ten content subjects. MacDonald maintained that attaining strong literacy skills in the mother tongue first is essential for this transition of language of instruction. Manyike and Lemmer (2014, p. 253) consider that this apartheid-era study is still highly relevant to language policy and practice in South Africa today.

Other international studies that do not specifically focus on language of instruction also indicate poor student learning outcomes in South Africa.

- *The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study* (PIRLS) study of 2006[96] assessed reading literacy at Grade 4 level in the eleven official languages of South Africa, and at Grade 5 level in Afrikaans or English. South African children generally achieved well below the international average, despite the fact that most participants wrote the test in their home language; learners tested in Sepedi and Tshivenda were especially low. Surprisingly, language of instruction practices were not mentioned as a factor in the outcomes (Manyike and Lemmer, 2014, p. 255).

- A 2007 evaluation of SACMEQ data for South Africa[97] by Stellenbosch University scholar Nic Spaull, indicates that 29 per cent of Grade 6-age children in South Africa are either not in school, or are functionally illiterate (Table 3.3).

96   http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pirls/countries.asp Accessed 11 March, 2016.

97   http://resep.sun.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Spaull-2012-SACMEQ-at-a-Glance-10-countries.pdf. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

- *The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study* (TIMSS) study of 2011 in 42 countries, including South Africa.[98] Typically given to Grade 8 students, in South Africa TIMSS testing was done on Grade 9 students. Even so, South Africa scored among the bottom six countries in both mathematics and science.

Such studies serve as a reminder that strong learning outcomes depend on strong infrastructures and systems, including but not limited to pro-mother tongue language policy implementation.

Heugh (2011; 2012) and others have argued (e.g. DBE, 2010) that the language and education policy in South Africa will only be effective when it is better integrated with the national curriculum, so that language of instruction is treated as one of several components of quality education. This perspective is supported by a number of NGO education programs that combine attention to the language of instruction with focus on teacher capacity and support, second language learning, materials development, parent involvement, and other aspects of quality education.

4.2.3. Issues and challenges

Several issues arise from the South African language dynamic.

Multiple languages in school and society

Where in-country migration is so prevalent, language is often not central to the cultural and social identity of a population. Unlike the majority of African language communities, for whom cultural identity is linked closely to one primary language, many communities in South Africa appear to be increasingly identified through social and economic features that do not include language. Stroud has written extensively on this topic from a South African perspective (Stroud, 2003; Stroud and Heugh, 2004).

The pedagogical implications of multiple languages in school and society relate to the difficulty in predicting or choosing classroom language of instruction. Where multiple home languages form the school linguistic environment, a combination of home language support and well-structured English language acquisition may be needed to achieve strong student learning outcomes. Such an English-focused approach to language pedagogy must be well supported and resourced; simply allowing parental choice to dictate English medium classroom teaching is far from adequate.

The drive to English medium instruction

It is important to maintain an appropriate role for English. The global dominance of English has generated a number of myths buttressing the value of English in both local contexts and the national language ecology. Yet the strong community and parental desire for English-medium instruction, described by Heugh, Motala and others, is likely to be a significant contributing factor to the poor education quality described by the NEEDU, SACMEQ, TIMSS and PIRLS data above. Significant commitment to advocacy and awareness-raising regarding language and learning seems crucial in this context.

Transition from local language medium to English in primary school

The common practice in South Africa appears to be the use of local languages through Grade 3, with a transition to English in Grade 4. This is a common policy choice across Africa. However South Africa has a large number of citizens who speak English either as a mother tongue or else a strong second language. Children from such households are essentially receiving mother tongue education throughout their school years, while grade 4 children from homes where indigenous languages are the norm experience the cognitive and academic shock of moving from a language they master to one that they do not. The rush to English in lower grades, described above, only widens the learning gap, since it further decreases the child's learning time in a language he or she speaks.

In this environment, equity in education would surely require substantial government support for mother tongue education through grades higher than Grade 3, support that would help to level the playing field for children and communities whose language proficiencies do not include English.

South Sudan

4.3. South Sudan

4.3.1. Background and current status

The issue of language of instruction is a critical issue in South Sudan, due partly to political reasons and partly to the poor condition of the county's education systems.

The earliest language policies in Sudan's formal education under the British colonial rule included space for local languages in early primary school, followed by transition to English. However from 1956, as part of the newly-independent nation of Sudan, southern Sudan experienced the imposition of Arabic as the only language of instruction throughout the education system. This has been interpreted as part of an effort by the northern Sudanese government to eradicate the distinct cultural, linguistic and religious features of the south (du Toit, 2014, p, 250). Between 1972 and 1983, mother tongue-based education returned to southern Sudan, under the leadership of the Institute for Regional Languages and the Southern Regional Ministry of Education (Marshall, 2012, pp. 188-189).

Upon achieving independence from the Republic of Sudan in 2011, the Government of South Sudan selected English as its official language. This choice is understandable; given the linguistic and political history of the country, the current official English policy is a strong and predictable statement about national autonomy and political alignment. However, the very limited familiarity of the population with the English language does not bode well for its use as the language of instruction from Grade 4.

On the other hand, with such a large proportion of the population speaking only indigenous languages (including Juba Arabic, which is also indigenous to the region), and with such an undeveloped central system for formal learning, a concerted effort to develop Sudanese languages of instruction could be a significant tool for building an effective national education system. As Hammond (2013, p. 20) notes, "education can only be lifesaving, life sustaining and contribute to stability and peace if children and parents can understand the messages and lessons taught."

Constitutional support for the use of Sudanese languages in early primary school indicates that possibilities do exist for supporting and resourcing such a system.

This possible future for South Sudan's education system has its challenges, however. One challenge has to do with the limited degree to which the indigenous languages have been developed so far for written use and formal learning. The number of languages spoken by South Sudanese communities is another challenge, since elevating some of them to more prestigious uses in school and governance risks resentment from those whose languages are not receiving similar attention. A third challenge has to do with the limited national and local capacity for developing and maintaining the infrastructures and resources needed to build an effective multilingual education system.

It is also important to understand the position of Arabic in this context. The choice of English as a medium of instruction has posed significant learning challenges for South Sudanese citizens who have migrated from Sudan (Breidlid, 210, p. 570). Hammond (2013, p. 9) notes that the government of South Sudan has made a policy decision to provide continued learning in Arabic from Grade 4 through secondary school for children returning from the north. Du Toit (2014, p. 364) and others believe that the move from Arabic to English as the language of wider communication will be a gradual process.

The sociolinguistic situation of Juba Arabic (also called Southern Arabic) in South Sudan is different from that of the Arabic spoken in the north. Du Toit (2014, p. 364) notes that Juba Arabic is "still the preferred lingua franca for most South Sudanese." Calderbank (2012) agrees, noting its extensive use in media, commerce and governance. However, at least as of 2012, the South Sudan Ministry of Education had no plans to include Juba Arabic in its language policy.

4.3.2. Evidence on language and learning in South Sudan

There has been little documented research on language and learning in South Sudan over

the years. The poverty and marginalization of the area when it was a part of Sudan resulted in little academic effort directed towards questions of local language-medium learning. At the same time, evidence on the ineffectiveness of English medium instruction in the country has been forthcoming in recent years.

World Bank 2012 education report

A World Bank report on the status of education in South Sudan (World Bank, 2012) contains several key observations. The report describes a *Service Delivery Study* by the Ministry of Education in 2010. As part of the study, a test of learning achievement in (English) language and mathematics was given to 1,800 primary school students from 107 mostly urban schools, in four states. The test used questions taken from the *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study* (TIMSS) and *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study* (PIRLS) assessment tools. The mean scores for the 1,800 students were 29 per cent in mathematics and 35 per cent in (English) language (World Bank, 2012, p. 67). The report notes a significant rural-urban distinction in education (p. 61). Thus these scores, because they reflect a primarily urban testing cohort, are likely to be higher than what would be found in more rural areas where English is even less familiar to the students.

The World Bank report also indicates that the general profile of education in South Sudan is one of poor education access and low learning achievement; the table below describes some of the access challenges (World Bank, 2012, p. 57).

Table 4.3.2. Access to Grade 1 and 8 in South Sudan (from World Bank, 2012)

National average	Boys	Girls
Probability of entering Grade 1	55%	48%
Probability of entering Grade 8	24%	17%

The number of out-of-school children aged 8 to 15 averages 53 per cent nationwide, and up to 58 per cent in rural areas (p. 58). In addition, 69 per cent of citizens aged up to 40 years old are non-literate (p. 60).

UNICEF education profile

UNICEF's overall profile of education in South Sudan[99] is similarly bleak. It notes that South Sudan's education indicators are among the worst in the world. Only 13 per cent of primary schools in the country offer the full primary cycle, from Grade 1 to Grade 8; the completion rate for primary schooling is less than 10 per cent, one of the lowest in the world.

A UNICEF report of January 2014[100] presented a more graphic picture of the education environment in the capital city; it described hundreds of displaced students in Juba, taking their primary leaving examination within the protection of UN compounds as fighting continued around the city. It is impossible not to be moved by the comment of one 19-year-old finishing his exam: "Not only have I lost four brothers and a friend during the clashes, but I lost all my books when we had to flee our home."

99 http://www.unicef.org/southsudan/education.html. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

100 http://www.unicef.org/southsudan/media_school-exams.html. Accessed 11 March, 2016.

4.3.3. Issues and challenges

Peace, education and local languages

South Sudan is an vivid example of the way civil conflict creates an extremely inhospitable environment for the growth of effective education systems. Unquestionably, the major cause of the challenging education environment in South Sudan today is the decades-long series of civil wars experienced by its people. The ethnic nature of these conflicts has heightened the challenges of establishing local language-based education systems, since inter-ethnic tension is not a supportive environment for the development of community languages on a national scale. Every effort to bring reconciliation and peace to the communities of this country will enhance the chances of building an education system that delivers strong student learning outcomes.

A fertile sociolinguistic context for multilingual education

Assuming that peace can be achieved and sustained to build strong national education systems, the sociolinguistic and historical environment of South Sudan could be an excellent basis for building an effective multilingual education system. The languages of South Sudan are very much alive, with many possibilities of institutional support for their written use and development. International agencies involved in helping to build South Sudan's education system could be instrumental in bringing about strong mother tongue-based multilingual education, if they were to unanimously prioritize and support it.

Juba Arabic and national identity

The position of Juba Arabic is sociolinguistically controversial: it is widely used as a lingua franca and even a mother tongue in South Sudan, yet it is ineligible for official recognition in the school system because it is reminiscent of decades of oppression from the north. This clash between pedagogical appropriateness and political unacceptability renders a potentially effective language of instruction useless. Presumably, not until Juba Arabic loses its unfortunate link to the north in the minds of South Sudanese leaders will it have a chance to be seen as the effective language of instruction that it could be.

Chapter 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusions

This review brings together a large body of data on the potential and actual impact of pro-local language education policies on student learning in the 21 countries of UNICEF's Eastern and Southern Africa Region.

The pedagogical and cognitive evidence, from both research and practice, demonstrates that the appropriateness of using a child's own language as medium of instruction is unassailable. Using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction enhances the child's cognitive learning processes, and facilitates effective learner-centred learning. Using the mother tongue in the classroom also enhances classroom participation, decreases attrition, and increases the likelihood of family and community engagement in the child's learning.

The evidence also demonstrates that concerns about the perceived higher cost of local language-medium education are groundless. These additional costs are not primarily due to the introduction of local languages into the curriculum, but rather to the immediate costs of good quality education compared to poor quality education. Not only so, but the higher implementation costs of local language-medium education are more than offset by lower student attrition and dropout rates.

The country-level reviews of policy, practice, research and program initiatives bring other evidence to light as well. Some states in the region have invested significant capital in formulating and implementing pro-mother tongue language policies; others appear to be attempting to put off serious attention to the matter. Though the language policies of nearly all of the countries in the region endorse mother tongue-medium learning in the early primary grades, commitment to implementation is by no means universal. Yet the evidence is that language policy implementation has at least as much impact on student learning outcomes as does the policy itself.

The social and political implications of language of instruction choices are complex. Language choice is highly political, and so is education. Thus the state's designation of a language medium for educating a nation's children makes a serious statement about national identity, whether the language chosen is African or European. The voice of researchers is sometimes heeded and sometimes not. To complicate the matter further, the most ardent opponents of local language-medium instruction are often the parents who speak those languages.

The evidence also indicates that pro-mother tongue language policy, even when well implemented, cannot by itself turn poor learning environments into good ones. Improved learning outcomes come about when pro-mother tongue language policy, well implemented, accompanies a range of other educational and development initiatives.

Given all of this evidence, how should education support institutions in Eastern and Southern Africa respond to issues of language and education? Below are six recommendations that emerge from the evidence presented in this report.

5.2. Recommendations

5.2.1. Advocacy

In this environment of so much uninformed opinion about language of instruction, national and international stakeholders should prioritize advocacy and awareness-raising activities regarding the realities of pedagogy and language. Much research has been done, as evidenced in this language and education review; the findings of this research need to be better disseminated and understood.

5.2.2. Regional dialogue

International education stakeholders in the region should facilitate serious discussion and exchange of experiences regarding language and education across the region. The very real issues of language and national identity need to be thought through, and policy goals need to be shaped around those issues. Regional dialogue could provide encouragement and resources to national decision makers.

5.2.3. Investing in the development of written forms of local language for pedagogical use

National and local bodies must give significant attention to the development of written forms of local languages and their suitability for pedagogical use. The design and implementation of African language medium learning programmes often includes tasks such as: orthography development and review; materials development in the target language; teacher capacity development for local language-medium pedagogy; and the development of linguistically, culturally and pedagogically appropriate reading instructional methods.

5.2.4. Using a language of instruction that learners understand should become standard practice

All institutionally supported initiatives involving learning and development of any kind must aim to use a language of instruction that learners understand. Sustainable development implies effective communication, which in turn implies the use of a language that is well understood by the target audience.

5.2.5. Investment in pilot multilingual education programmes

National and regional governments, as well as their international funders, should support the implementation of pilot multilingual education programmes that generate evidence valued by parents, communities and policy makers. These programmes are often very effective means of demonstrating the value of mother tongue-based learning to local and national stakeholders. Research such as randomized control trials has its uses in more formalized international contexts, but parents and other community stakeholders are most readily convinced by evidence of learning they observe among learners they know. Pilot multilingual education programmes are able to provide that type of evidence.

5.5.6. Careful consideration of scaling up

National and regional governments, and their international funders, must carefully think through the issues of moving from pilot programmes to a national scale initiative. The challenges of scaling up are often quite different from the challenges that have been successfully met in a pilot programme. Several of the current language and reading initiatives described in the review are providing helpful evidence on what national scale up of these pedagogical practices looks like.

Language of instruction, along with other features of quality education such as appropriate curriculum and teacher capacity, is central to successful learning. Experience shows that effectively integrating appropriate language practices into education and development initiatives is challenging, and yet it is imperative if the desired learning outcomes are to be achieved. Education stakeholders and institutional partners must think together and act collaboratively in order that all the crucial features of quality education, including language of instruction, may be successfully addressed.

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