"MATAYO IS WHAT IN ENGLISH?": ON EXPERIENCES OF ENGLISH MEDIUM INSTRUCTION IN RURAL UGANDAN CLASSROOMS

Medadi E. Ssentanda (ORCID: https://orcid.org/my-orcid?orcid=0000-0001-5420-4744)
Makerere University, Uganda & Stellenbosch University, South Africa

ABSTRACT

The question of using English as a language of learning and teaching (LoLT) has been around for some time, but limited studies have been conducted in Africa's multilingual context to understand the challenges involved. In this paper, I attempt to demonstrate the difficulties in the classroom interactions between teachers and learners in four rural primary schools in which the mother tongue is the LoLT for the first three years of primary school, followed by a transition to English as the LoLT during the fourth year and English only from the fifth year onwards. Based on fieldwork conducted in two private and two public schools in Kyotera District, Uganda, this paper investigates classroom practices related to the use of English as the LoLT. Data were collected through questionnaires, classroom observations and interviews and were analysed using a triangulation approach to determine disparities between what the teachers report in the questionnaires and interviews and what the language policy and curriculum require of their classroom practice. The findings demonstrate that both teachers and learners struggle with the English language in negotiating learning. Moreover, learners are mostly comfortable responding to questions posed to them in English in their mother tongue. Teachers' involvement of learners in the learning process is largely by cues, calling for only a word in English—an indication of learners' inefficiency in the language. The paper discusses the implications of these findings.

Keywords: Mother tongue education, transition, classroom practices, English medium education, translanguaging, Luganda, Uganda

INTRODUCTION AND AN OVERVIEW OF MOTHER TONGUE EDUCATION

The debate on the use of the mother tongue (MT) as a language of learning and teaching (LoLT) has been ongoing for many years, originating largely with UNESCO's (1953) recommendation for the use of local languages in education. Further, in the 1950s, many African countries were also fighting for independence from European colonisers. During the process of seeking independence, there was a realisation and urge for the knowledge of European languages (e.g., English). Those with a good command of European languages filled up positions in white-collar jobs, which were initially the preserve of Europeans (Bamgbose, 1999, 2000). The rush towards European languages started within this context. It is also important to note that minimal efforts were invested into the development of African languages for educational purposes (Bamgbose, 2000; Unesco Regional Office for Education in Africa, 1985). Accordingly, the use of African languages in education dwindled, especially since limited materials for teaching and learning have been developed in African languages. Moreover, teachers were not being trained to teach in their home languages. With this

background, English has thus remained the quick alternative to the inadequately developed African languages for educational purposes, as this language had readily available teaching and learning materials.

As learners began to access education in nonfamiliar languages, literacy levels undoubtedly remained low and poor in many African contexts. Moreover, the practice has been to invoke MT education programmes to scaffold the acquisition of English, with the hope that literacy levels would improve. Accordingly, many studies and innovations have been conducted on the value and role of MT in educational achievement (e.g., Fafunwa et al., 1989; Fyle, 2000; Walter & Chuo, 2012). MT educational models, such as MT-based programmes, transitional models, and immersion and submersion programmes, operate in different contexts, and each of these educational innovations has strengths and perils (Dutcher, 2003; Benson, 2008; Ball, 2011). As many of the MT education programmes are based on an early-exit model, the programmes paved the way for the English language (for example) as the LoLT from the 3rd or 4th year of education. Many MT programmes aim to use English as a LoLT with the hope that English can best be learnt when it is used as a LoLT (see Griffiths, 2023). With limited exposure to English (Ssentanda, Southwood & Huddlestone, 2019), learners transition to English with very limited knowledge of this language, to the extent that learning through it is rather difficult. Furthermore, McKinney (2017) and Ssentanda (2013) explain that many schools provide very limited time for the teaching of MTs because they are not examined (cf. Shohamy, 2006). Therefore, such schools opt for the immediate introduction of English as soon as learners enter school (Ssentanda, 2022). This undeniably creates more problems in the learning process because of the exclusive use of English in the classroom, yet the learners have not mastered it.

Against this backdrop, the levels of literacy acquisition have remained low in many African countries (Romaine, 2013; World Bank, 2010). Moreover, as learners are not familiar with the language of the classroom, they have difficulty accessing what is discussed in class. Again, there are growing concerns about this problem, namely, learners not being able to fully access classroom instruction and interaction. There is now a growing need to focus on the LoLT rather than on standard classroom instruction (Walter & Dekker, 2011). Moreover, limited studies have investigated the difficulties both teachers and learners face in English as a medium of instruction (EMI) contexts. However, there have been attempts to document these challenges. For example, in the global context, Griffiths's (2023) volume on *The Practice of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) Around the World* illuminates the EMI in various settings around the world. In her introduction of the book, Griffiths (2023:) notes, "although EMI is popular and widespread, there is actually remarkably little research into how effective it is, what problems there are may be, and how any problems need to be addressed". In the Ugandan case, Kyeyune (2003) reports on how teachers' use of EMI in secondary schools in Uganda can disrupt the learning process rather than facilitate it. This study contributes to the EMI debate by illuminating teachers' views and classroom experiences regarding the use of English as the LoLT in P4 and P5. These experiences can potentially help inform language-in-education policy in multilingual contexts and, ultimately, improve learning experiences.

THE UGANDAN LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION POLICY

English is the official language in Uganda and the language of examination at all levels of education. Despite this stipulation, Lewis, Simons and Fennig (2013) report there are over 45 indigenous languages in the country, and the majority of children in Uganda, particularly

those in the rural areas, report to school without knowledge of this language (Ssentanda, Southwood & Huddlestone, 2019).

In 2006–2007, the Ministry of Education and Sports introduced a new curriculum, the thematic curriculum, simultaneously with the MT programme (Ssentanda & Wenske, 2021). This programme requires all rural schools to use the MT, a dominant language in the area, as the LoLT in Primary 1 to Primary 3, teach English as a subject, introduce English as the LoLT in the fourth year (P4) and switch to English only as a LoLT in the fifth year (P5) onwards. The MT is to be taught as a subject all through the primary school level. Urban schools, due to the assumed multilingualism must instruct learners in English only, but teach the MT as a subject. However, in the policy guidelines, it is not clear how urban schools should choose the MT to be taught as a subject (Ssentanda, Huddlestone & Southwood, 2016).

This paper examines classroom scenarios to demonstrate how teachers and learners negotiate the language of classroom interaction to facilitate learning. By so doing, the study demonstrates the difficulties learners and teachers experience in the process of learning when using English only is emphasised. The study has three objectives:
   (i) To establish whether teachers consider learners' proficiency in English after P3 sufficient to use as the medium.
   (ii) To find out whether the teachers would tolerate the use of learners' MT, knowing that their level of English would not enable them to learn through it.
   (iii)To assess whether the responding teachers thought it wise for their learners to have more time to learn English and transition to English as LoLT much later than P4.

THEORETICAL APPROACH

This study is situated within the theoretical framework provided by studies on bilingual/multilingual education. The study is focused specifically on the translanguaging notion as is evident and known in multilingual contexts (Banda, 2010; Makalela, 2016). Translanguaging is viewed as both a theoretical and pedagogical practice. It refers to the fluid and dynamic use of multiple languages by a multilingual individual or community in either or both their interaction and learning (García, 2009b, 2009a; Makalela, 2016).

The notion of translanguaging challenges the view that languages are separate entities and rather emphasises their inherent fluidity, how they form a person's identity, and that an individual draws from such linguistic repertoire to engage in meaning-making and social interactions, including in school contexts (cf. Brock-Utne, 2011). Theoretically, translanguaging encourages using learners' linguistic repertoire in school contexts, and the outcome of this practice is improved comprehension and expression (García, 2009a). Moreover, translanguaging is the natural way in which children use language and make meaning in their everyday interactions; this natural interaction is what should be allowed as a language practice in school and classroom interactions.

Makalela (2016) and Banda (2010) argue that in multilingual contexts, including in a school environment, it is irrational to have language practices with a view of keeping languages separate (cf. Ssentanda & Wenske, 2021), namely that a leaner or teacher at school is categorised as a speaker of language X or Y, and that no one can speak both languages or

translanguage. Learning has reportedly been stifled in contexts where the above-mentioned scenario has been the practice (Merritt et al., 1992; Nyaga & Anthonissen, 2012; Shoba & Chimbutane, 2013). Research and experience have demonstrated that in African multilingual communities, children grow up translanguaging, i.e., speaking multiple languages as though they were one. Accordingly, learners' linguistic practices outside the school should not end at the school gate or classroom door (Cummins, 2000, 2001, 2005) but should be allowed in classroom interactions for meaningful learning. To keep a learner's language out of classroom interaction is to take away the resource with which they come to school—this certainly makes their learning efforts difficult (Cummins, 2001; McKinney, 2017).

Furthermore, with translanguaging, learners feel included and valued by being able to participate and contribute to their learning without limiting their linguistic practices. The main goal of translanguaging is to support learning and create an inclusive learning environment that capitalises on and values linguistic diversity in the community or school.

For this study, the theoretical and practical issues in translanguaging are helpful in understanding how teachers and learners use their linguistic repertoire to negotiate learning in P4 and P5 in rural primary schools where policy allows the use of the MT prior to the initiation of English as the LoLT and English only as the LoLT after the transition is initiated.

STUDY CONTEXT AND METHODS

Study context

As this study intended to understand teachers' and learners' use of English as a LoLT, the study employed a case of four rural schools to obtain an in-depth analysis of the issues involved (Creswell & Clark, 2011). The data reported here were collected in four rural primary schools, i.e., two government and two private schools, between September and December 2012 in the rural Rakai District. The 2012 data were later followed up with classroom observations and interviews in October 2018 in two government schools and one private school in the same District. The private school visited in 2018 was not part of the two schools visited earlier in 2012. The area from which this data were collected is now Kyotera District, as of 2017. All schools visited are in the same sub-county, approximately three to four kilometres apart.

The data collection followed a mixed methods approach through questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations. Using mixed methods approaches in research enriches and cross-validates research findings (Gillham 2007: 102). Mixed methods research also helps in addressing both the 'what' (numerical and qualitative data) and 'how or why' (qualitative data) types of research questions. As questionnaires have limitations, namely that they are at times abstract, the researcher conducted follow-up interviews with a small number of those who had answered the questionnaires (Gillham, 2007). With the questionnaires, I particularly collected the teachers' and learners' demographic data (as well as their linguistic repertoires) and their views on MT and EMI. With classroom observations and follow-up interviews, I collected data on classroom practices regarding the use of MT and English in P4 and P5 and collected data through interviews to understand the reasons for teachers' classroom language practices further. The larger study—parts of which are reported here—included P1 to P3 teachers because they prepare learners for transition into EMI. The study included P4 and P5 teachers because these classes would follow immediately after the transition to English had been initiated. Moreover, the views of teachers from these classrooms and the scenarios in the same classes could show whether the learners can interact with their teachers in English only,

as the policy assumes, or whether teachers defy the policy and what their linguistic practices look like.

The study area was chosen because the author hailed from that area and had attended one of the government and private schools in the district being studied. The four schools were purposively selected. First, the study intended to include both private and government schools to reveal the issues around EMI in this rural district. Second, the schools were chosen for convenience; I pursued schools to which gaining access was easy. Private schools are particularly difficult to access as permission must be sought from school directors/owners rather than head teachers, as is the case with government schools. Sometimes, school directors do not reside in the areas where their schools are located, and their head teachers are under instruction not to allow anyone access to school premises without their permission. For example, the private school in which the 2012 data were studied could not easily be accessed in 2018 because the school director was away. One also needs an acquaintance at a private school for easy access, and the individual who had been available in 2012 had since left the school. This was the reason for replacing the private school with another in the 2018 follow-up study.

Teacher characteristics

The questionnaire sought to collect teachers' demographic information, which partly included their training and teaching experiences.

Table 1: Level of education of P4 and P5 teachers

Teachers	Highest qualification obtained			
	Senior VI*	Grade III Teacher Certificate	Teacher Diploma	University degree
Rural P4 and P5 (n = 8)	1	7	0	0

Table 1 shows that the majority of the teachers in P4 and P5 have a Grade III Teacher Certificate as their highest qualification. A Grade III qualification is attained after training at a Primary Teacher College (PTC) for two years. The candidates for PTCs are Ordinary Level school-leavers who have completed four years of high school. Some teachers did not have this qualification, e.g., one teacher with an SVI Leaver with no formal training in a PTC. Other teachers (some of whom did not participate in the study) had not completed their secondary education. This information was obtained through informal conversations with teachers and head teachers at the schools participating in the study about teachers who did not participate in the study.

Furthermore, the majority of teachers had no experience or background in formal learning of their MTs in schools. Hence, they might either or both not know how to read and write or teach these languages. A few Ugandan languages are taught and examined at the Ordinary and Advanced Levels at the secondary school level. According to the Uganda National Examinations Board (2023b, 2023a) timetables, only 10 of over 43 languages are taught and examined at both Ordinary and Advanced Levels. These are Leb Acoli, Leb Lango, Lugbarati, Luganda, Runyankore/Rukiga, Lusoga, Ateso, Dhopadhola, Runyoro/ Rutooro, and Lumasaaba.

Furthermore, in PTCs, no Ugandan languages are taught either to prepare teachers for onward teaching of MTs in schools or as exposure to the linguistic realities in the schools in which teachers practice.

Methods

The teachers completed 39 questionnaires (for the larger study), which were later analysed. The researcher undertook 36 classroom observations to collect the 2012 data and 15 for the 2018 data. These were conducted to validate what the teachers had reported via the questionnaires through real classroom interactions. Eight follow-up interviews were undertaken for the 2012 data and nine for the 2018 data. The follow-up interviews were conducted following the end of each class, if the teacher was available, at break time, during lunch hours or after classes, whichever was convenient for the teacher.

The interviews and classroom interaction recordings were transcribed and translated where necessary. Thereafter, I followed the Braun and Clarke (2006) six-step data analysis method, i.e., familiarising myself with the data, generating initial codes, searching and generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and lastly, writing the findings in a report.

(Please note that some parts of this article are based on Ssentanda (2014), accessible at http://scholar.sun.ac.za).

The study obtained ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee (Humanities) of Stellenbosch University and the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology for the 2012 data collection and from TASO REC under reference number TASOREC/013/2020-UG-REC-009 prior to the 2018 data collection. The respondents' names were anonymised for both instances.

In the extracts cited, Luganda[1] turns are in bold italics, and English translations are in bold, regular (roman) font. Teacher turns are denoted with a T, learner(s)' turns with L(s), and the researcher's turns with MS. All the names of the schools, teachers and learners used here are pseudonyms for ethical reasons. The symbol ^, together with an ellipsis, indicates a raised tone by the teacher, with an oral gap for learners to fill.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION ON SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS, TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES, AND CLASSROOM PRACTICES VERSUS LANGUAGE POLICY AND CURRICULUM

In this section, I discuss contextual issues regarding learners' proficiency in English, teachers' perspectives on learners' proficiency in English and what classroom scenarios reveal about learners' performance in English. (These are discussed following the study objectives.)

---

[1]In this study area, Luganda is the dominant language; therefore, schools in this district would choose it as the LoLT.

School characteristics versus language policy

As much as all rural schools are bound by policy to select a dominant local language to use as the LoLT, this study found that rural private schools claim to be "too multilingual" to select a dominant local language to use as the LoLT. Thus, they have resorted to using English as the LoLT in the classes presumed to be instructed through the MT. Moreover, the private schools in this study area market themselves as instructing learners through EMI only and teaching the MT as a subject. On the other hand, government schools attempt to adhere to the policy by using the MT as the LoLT in P1 to P3 and teaching the MT and English as subjects in these classes. Moreover, teaching the MT as a subject is irregular in government schools, i.e., some teachers disregard it completely while others teach it whenever they find it convenient. Teachers argue that it makes no sense for them to teach a subject not examined at the end of primary schooling (Ssentanda, 2013).

This study also collected the linguistic profiles of learners and teachers. The data from the linguistic profiles revealed that the rural communities in which this study was conducted were predominantly monolingual (Luganda speakers). Teachers label some classes as monolingual; other identified classes had learners with MTs other than Luganda ranging from one to five (i.e., Runyarwanda, Rurundi, Runyankore, and Rukiga). The follow-up interviews with teachers revealed that such learners possessed fluency in Luganda, which equated to their L1, as found by Banda (2009), Glanz (2013), Heugh Benson, Bogale and Yohannes (2007), who observed that children in African communities grow up as fluent multilinguals). Moreover, private schools in this study teach Luganda as a subject, which begs the question of how they come to select Luganda as a language to be taught as a subject if they are 'too multilingual' to select one as a LoLT. In sum, the teachers' attempts at promoting monolingualism and their desire to keep languages separate is a problem that undermines translanguaging (cf. Makalela, 2016; Ssentanda & Wenske, 2021) that would otherwise scaffold learning, as elaborated on in the upcoming sections.

Teachers' perspectives on learners' proficiency in English

In the upcoming sections, I describe the teachers' perspectives on learners' levels of English proficiency in P4 and beyond on three issues: First, whether teachers consider the learners' proficiency in English[2] after P3 as sufficient for use as the medium of teaching and learning. Second, whether the teachers would tolerate the use of learners' MT, knowing that their level of English would not enable their learning through it. Third, whether the responding teachers considered the wisdom of their learners to be given more time to learn English and transition to English as a LoLT much later than P4.

This study used questionnaires to investigate different issues. One of the questions required teachers to rate their learners' English proficiency; accordingly, when P4 and P5 teachers were asked to rate their learners' performance in English on a scale of one (1) to ten (10), where one represented very poor and ten represented excellent performance, the mean of their scores was 6.57. This rate suggests that learner performance in English is estimated to be fairly good but certainly lower than what would be expected of them to be able to learn through this language. Furthermore, when the same teachers were asked to evaluate their learners' performance in the MT, the mean score was 7.43. It is not surprising that teachers

---

[2]For details about the time allocated for teaching English and whether the time is sufficient, see Ssentanda et al. (2019).

considered learners' proficiency in English to be lower than that of the MT. As expected from this rating, learners struggle with responding to questions posed in English by their teachers, as shown later.

Similarly, the follow-up interviews with teachers indicated that by the time learners were promoted to P4, they had not yet acquired the desired English language skills. I illustrate this view with an anecdotal observation whereby, in P4 (school RG-B), the school timekeeper attended the P4 class. Following one of the classroom observations conducted towards break time, the timekeeper left the class to go and ring the bell for break time. As I walked out of class with the teacher, we met this learner returning to class after ringing the bell, and the following conversation ensued:

> ₁T: So, you are the school timekeeper?
> ₂L: Yes.
> ₃T: What is the time?
> ₄L: ***Nnya kitundu***.
>   **Ten thirty.**
>
> *Source: Field notes*

This conversation illustrates that the learner clearly understood the question but might have lacked the vocabulary to respond in English. The data suggest that if such learners are subjected to learning through English only, their contributions to classroom interactions are bound to be limited, particularly if the teacher insists on them giving answers in English only (Brock-Utne, 2007; Kuchah et al., 2022). For example, below is the teacher's response in an interview regarding the use of Luganda in a P5 class (School RG-A).

Extract 1:

> T1:   ***Ne bwe baba bakuwaana batya nti osomesa Oluzungu** [laughs] **nga tozzeeko mu lulimi lwe n'omubuulira kino kye kino ne bw'oleeta ebyokulabirako bitya, ayinza obutaggyaamu***.
>   **Even when you are praised as the best English teacher** [laughs] **if you do not make use of the learners' language to tell them that this is this and this is that, however much you bring in examples, a learner may not pick up anything**.

Another teacher from school RG-B in P5 also believes that learners' vocabulary in English is limited by the time they reach P5.

Extract 2: Teacher's opinion about P5 learners' proficiency in English

> ₁MS*:   Naye nga level yaabwe ey'abayizi aba P5 ogiraba otya? Ey'Oluzungu, mu kuwandiika ne mu kwogera kwennyini.*
>   **But how do you evaluate the learners'** level **in P5? Their abilities in English - in writing and speaking?**
> ₂T: *Oluzungu lwabwe lutono.*
>   **Their English vocabulary is small.**

The data imply that learners may indeed be unable to learn through English only in P5 and need more time to learn English.

Teachers' tolerance for the use of Luganda (the MT) in classroom interactions

The second objective of this study was to determine whether teachers would tolerate the use of learners' MT, knowing that their level of English would not enable them to learn through it. The teachers' responses suggested that some of them did not tolerate the use of Luganda, while others thought it was practical to allow its use because learning and access to concepts would be constrained without switches (translanguaging) to Luganda.

Extract 3: Teacher's opinion about the use of Luganda in English-only lessons

1T: *Level* **[ey'Olungereza] *ekyali nzibuzibu.***
Their level [of English] **is still problematic**.

2MS: **Uhm.**
Yes.

3T: ***Era bw'oba totabudde, onnyuka nga bwe wazze!***
If you choose not to codeswitch, you will leave class just as you came in [with no impact]!

This interview extract was taken from a P4/P5 teacher at school RG-A. An extended interaction with this teacher (not excerpted here) indicated that learners' level of English in P5 was still problematic (Turn 1) and that if a teacher entered a class and did not codemix (Turn 3), they would leave the class the same way as they came in, namely, the learners would not learn anything from the teaching activities. Indeed, classroom observations, particularly in the government schools visited (RG-A and RG-B), revealed that learners understood classroom instructions given in English but could only respond in their MT, and correctly so. The translanguaging practices, particularly by teachers, demonstrated that they were aware of learners' language difficulties in English and negotiated a language—translanguaging to enable their learners to understand and follow classroom interactions.

Extract 4: Learners called upon to use Luganda in P5 mathematics lesson (school RG-A)

1T: **(…) Where is your** vowel letters? Blank, **you left it** blank. Blank; **that means we are going to go back to** P1 so that we know what are vowelˆ…

2Ls: Letters.

3T: What are vowel letters? *Ne bw'oba okamanyi mu Luganda kambuulire. Ze tuyita* vowel letters *ze ziriwa?*
What are vowel letters? **Even if you know it in Luganda, tell me**. Which letters do **we call vowels?**

Similarly, in a school RP-D P5 mathematics lesson, the teacher actually called upon learners to translate a question into Luganda for all learners to understand what the question required before they could even attempt to answer it.

Extract 5: Teachers calls upon a learner to translate a question into Luganda

1T: Who can help us translate that sentence in our mother tongue? *Mu lulimi lwa bamaama baffe*. Who can help us and translate such a question in our mother tongue? *Ani ayinza okutuyambako n'atukyusiza ekibuuzo kyaffe ekyo mu*

> ***Luganda?*** Such that everybody gets to know the meaning of that question.
> Nnyanja.
>
> Who can help us and translate that sentence in our mother tongue**? In our mothers'
> language.** Who can help us and translate such a question in our mother
> tongue? **Who can help us to translate our question into Luganda?** Such
> that everybody gets to know the meaning of that question. Nnyanja.

These classroom interactions demonstrate that teachers are indeed aware of learners' limited proficiency in English and aim to employ a language to facilitate learning, even after transitioning to EMI.

Whether teachers think that learners need more time to learn English and transition to English as LoLT later than P4

Following the third objective, in the questionnaire, I asked P4 and P5 teachers to indicate whether they considered it important for their learners to have more time to learn English before it is used as the LoLT. Surprisingly, 62.5% (5/8) of the respondents did not deem it necessary. However, P4 and P5 teachers complained about learners' inadequacy in English (see the next section), which could be an indication that children do indeed require more time to learn English. These complaints were voiced not only in the interviews but also during lessons. Moreover, during the debriefing sessions with P4 and P5 teachers, following the completion of questionnaires and classroom observations, teachers further affirmed that learners did not need more time to learn English. Instead, they argued that the learners needed to have English as the LoLT to master it well. The P4 and P5 teachers thought that when English is the LoLT, it could be acquired more easily than when it is taught as a subject for longer. For example, below is an extract from an interview with a P5 teacher in school RG-B as a compelling example of teachers' beliefs concerning the learning of English.

> Extract 6: A P5 teacher's opinion about learners' fluency in English
>
> ₅MS: *Olowooza nti singa baaweebwayokko, singa policy yali nti basomere
> Olungereza nga subject nga bwe kiri mu P1 to P3 ne bagamba nti basome
> Olungereza nga subject okumala emyaka nga etaanu kyandiyizizza
> okubongerako ku bumanyi bwabwe obw'Olungereza?*
> **Do you think if the policy was that they study English for five years from P1 to
> P5 it would help to increase their competence in English?**
> ₆T: *Nga subject kwe kugamba nga ebirala babisoma mu lulimi lwabwe
> oluzaaliranwa?*
> **As a subject but learning the rest in their mother tongues?**
> ₇MS: *Yee. Kyandibadde kitya awo?*
> **Yes. How would it be in such a case?**
> ₈T: *Nze ekintu ekyo engeri gye nkirabamu, kwe kugamba Oluzungu luno baba
> beetaagisa okusoma mu Luzungu, olw'ensonga enkulu nti ebibuuzo bye
> babuuza babibuuza mu Luzungu.*
> **From my point of view, for English, it is proper that they study through English
> because of one major reason: the exams they sit for at the end of the day
> are in English.**
> ₉MS: *Ebya P7?*
> **P7 exams?**

~10~T: *Mhm. Kaakati ng'abaana Oluzungu bwe baba tebalumanyidde, ekitegeeza nti ebibuuzo baba bateekwa okubigwa.*
Yes, since they would not be used to the English language, they are bound to fail the exams.

In this extract, the P5 teacher acknowledges that learners' English vocabulary is indeed still limited (Turns 2–4). However, when further asked in Turn 8 whether they considered it important for the learners to have more time to learn English as a subject, the respondent stated that it is preferable to have English as a LoLT. The teacher justified this perspective, namely that the examinations at the end of primary school were written in English (Turn 10). The misconception of acquiring English better when used as LoLT rather than as a subject has been observed by earlier scholars as impacting both teachers' and policymakers' decisions for teaching L2s (Benson, 2008; Dutcher, 1997). This extract also shows that the respondent does not distinguish between teaching a language as a subject and using it as a LoLT (Glanz, 2013). The latter requires a learner to be proficient in the language, while the former does not.

Furthermore, a teacher from RG-B also indicated that the transition class was indeed difficult due to the learners' limited knowledge of English.

Extract 7: Learners' proficiency in English

~1~T1:   *Nze ku lwange mu* subjects *mu butuufu,* transition *emenya…*
From my point of view, the truth of the matter is, the transition **class is so difficult...**
(…)
~2~MS: *Mhm.* So *kati bagenda okuba ng'abatereera nga bali mu* P6*?*
Yes, so **should we then say that learners stabilise around about P6?**
~3~T3:   *Aha, eyo mu* P6 *eyo gye batandikira okutegeerategeeramu.*
Right, it is about P6 **class that they start to kind of understand what is taught**.

The respondent insisted that learners begin to somewhat understand what is being taught in English in P6 (Turn 3).
The teachers' opinions in Extracts 6 and 7 show that learners' English proficiency is still limited by the time they reach P4. Since they begin following what goes on in class when they reach P6, it suggests that they need more time to learn English. This also confirms that translanguaging as a language practice should be allowed even after the transition to scaffold classroom interactions.

Experiences from classroom observations

One should bear in mind that the policy stipulates that P1–P3 classes must be instructed through the MT, and P4 is a transitional class, which means classroom interactions at this level are expected to involve codeswitching between the MT and English, i.e., translanguaging. In P5, it is assumed that learners would access all classroom interactions, including taking instructions in English only. In addition, the MT remains as a subject. However, classroom experiences in both government and private schools revealed inconsistencies with this policy: private schools (RP-C and RP-D) simultaneously use English and Luganda in instructing learners. The classroom interactions in government

schools (RG-A and RG-B)—which have tried to follow the policy in the early years—are conducted with frequent switches between Luganda and English (translanguaging) in P5 and onwards. In the upcoming paragraphs, I discuss classroom practices involving the use of English as the LoLT and demonstrate how teachers' practices are the opposite of what policy stipulates, and, as such, show how teachers' awareness of learners' limited English proficiency invites them to devise creative ways of helping learners access classroom interactions through translanguaging practices. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, on the questionnaire, teachers in private schools claim that their classroom interactions are in English only, although the classroom observations show that they also use translanguaging as a means to enable interaction between them and the learners.

Observations from government schools, RG-A and RG-B

The following example is a classroom interaction during a social studies lesson in school RG-A. At this juncture, I must point out that I reproduced all interview and classroom interactions verbatim, including instances with incorrect English grammar constructions. However, given the limited scope of the paper, I do not explore how teachers' incorrect grammar constructions can impact learners' acquisition of English. Nevertheless, the incorrect constructions reflect the teachers' English language proficiency in this study area.

> Extract 8: A P5 teacher in school RG-A uses Luganda and English (translanguages) to deliver content in a Social Studies class
>
> ₁T:	Administration system. The British colonial administration syˆ…
> ₂Ls:	System
> ₃T:	***Kaakati waatuukawo ekiseera ne bagamba nti nno kaakati tumaze okusengeka Buganda*** agreement ***twagala tunoonye nfuga ki gye tugenda okufugamu Bannayuga…***
> **There came a time when they realised that they were done with the drafting of the Buganda agreement, we now want to look for a method of administering Ugaˆ…**
> ₄Ls:	***Bannayuganda.***
> **Ugandans.**
> ₅T:	***Bannayuganda.* So,** the British were very***, baali bagezi nnyo nnyo. Mu kiseera ekyo baali tebaagala kuddayo kulaba bukuubagano buli bwe twalaba, bwe twayita*** resistances like the ***Kabaka Mwanga*** and ***Kabaka Kaabalega*** of ***Bunyoro. So bwe baalaba nga Kabaka Mwanga*** and ***Kaabalega*** of ***Bunyoro bajja kubeera bakyankalanya entambula yaabwe baagamba nti twagala tufune enkola nga Bannayuganda bawulirira nnyo nnyo nnyo mu bantu baabwe be tugenda okubafugiramu.*** Are we together?
> **Ugandans. So** the British were very very wise. **At that time they did not want to return to the conflicts that we saw earlier; we called these conflicts** resistances like **the Kabaka Mwanga** and **the Kabaka Kabalega** of **Bunyoro. So, when they realised that Kabaka Mwanga and Kabalega of Bunyoro would destabilise their operations they thought of a plan in which they would use Ugandan leaders in whom Ugandans were so loyal.** Are we together?
> ₆Ls:	Yes.
> ₇T:	In that ***baaleetawo*** two systems of admistraˆ….
> In that **they brought** in two systems of administrˆ...

₈Ls: Administration.

₉T: Administration *okuzeeyambisa* to administer Ugaˆ….

Administration to **use them** to administer Ugaˆ...

₁₀Ls: Uganda.

₁₁T :   Uganda. One, among those administration was the indirect …, indirect rule. Indirectˆ…

₁₂Ls: Rule.

₁₃T: *Mbagambye,* system *zaali bbiri ze baali beeyambisa mu ngeri gye baali bagenda okukulemberamu Ugaˆ….*

I have told you there were **two systems which they were going to employ in administering** Ugaˆ….

₁₄Ls: Uganda.

₁₅T: *Uganda. Naye nga eyasingira ddala okukyaka yali ya* indirectˆ….

Uganda. **But the most common form was that of** indirectˆ…

₁₆Ls: Indirect rule.

As noted earlier, theoretically, in P5, only English must be used as the LoLT. However, it is observed in Extract 3 that the teacher uses Luganda more than he does English (see Turns 3, 5 and 13). Further, note that all the teacher's explanations in this lesson are in Luganda. The learners' responses, although in English, are only single words and only come forth after being cued by the teacher (Turns 2, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14 and 16). The classroom exchanges are mainly dominated by the teacher, typical of what Bunyi (2001) and Hornberger and Chick (2001) have explored in Kenya and South Africa, respectively. These experiences demonstrate that the teachers are aware that their learners do not have a command of the LoLT in this class. In this study, I do not delve into whether or not the teachers would sustain a full classroom interaction if the learners were proficient in English.

In the next extract, I show a similar classroom situation as described above in employing English and Luganda in P5.

Extract 9: A P5 teacher in school RG-A uses Luganda and English to deliver content in a Mathematics class

₁T: Two thirds. Who can come and shade to us two thirds of that diagram?
        [A moment of silence in class followed by murmuring. One learner comes out to shade].

₂T: *Abange*, is it true? Is that the answer?
        Friends, is it true? Is that the answer?
        [Another learner comes out to try].

₃T: Uhm, is there a difference there? According to what we see, is there any difference? *Tugambye, obuntu buno buli bumeka?*
        Uhm, is there any difference there? According to what we see, is there any difference? **What did we say is the number of these things?**

₄Ls: Six.

₅T: *Buli bumeka?*
        How many are they?

₆Ls: Six.

₇T: *Batugambye tusiigeko bibiri bya kumeka?*
        Which fraction of twos are we shading?

₈Ls: *Byakusatu*.

Two thirds.

9T: ***Kati ebibiri eby'okusatu eby'omukaaga bye bifaanana bitya? Singa obadde n'ebitundutundu mukaaga ne bakugamba gabirako abaana bo ebitundu bibiri byakumeka?***

So how does two thirds of six look like? If you had six parts and you are told to divide among your children how many twos of six?

10Ls: ***Byakusatu.***

Two thirds.

11T: ***Ogenda kubawa ki? Ne bakugamba oku**shadinga **kuno, ebitundu biri bimeka? Kimu bibiri bisatu. Mmwe obwedda mu**shadinga **bibiri byakumeka? Kino kitegeeza bibiri byakumeka?***

What will you give them? Now that you are told to shade here, how many parts are they? One two three. How many twos have you been shading? How many twos does this represent?

12Ls: ***Byakusatu.***

Two thirds.

13T: ***Byakusatu, si bwe guli? Naye twagala* [unclear] *kubanga buno obutundu buli kamu bubiri busatu buna butaanu mukaaga. Awo we tugwira. Oluzungu awo we tukola ki? We lutukubira. Kubanga olugezaako* [unclear]**.** **Uhm?** *N'omulala naye aveeyo atukolere, n'omulala tulabe kuba tunoonya* [unclear] [*class interrupted by teacher coming in to talk to this teacher.*]

Two thirds. Not so? But we want [unclear] **because these parts are one two three four five six. That is what fails us. Because of English that is why we do what? English fails us. Because at the moment you try** [unclear] **Yes? Let another person come out and try; another person come as well because we are looking for—** [class interrupted by teacher coming in to talk to this teacher.]

In Extract 9, a mathematics lesson, the teacher employs more Luganda than English. All the core explanations for the lesson are delivered in Luganda (Turns 5, 7, 9, 11 and 13). Further, note that in Turn 11, the teacher codemixes within the same word, as in "***oku**shadinga**"** and **"*mu**shadinga**".** In Luganda, when an English verb is borrowed in the form of codemixing at a word level, it is employed in the present continuous form (the -ing form). Lugandan verbs take the (pre)prefix, **(o)ku-** and end with a final vowel **-a**. These are both prefixed and suffixed to the English -ing form, shading. The suffix -a is added because Luganda, like most other Bantu languages, does not have closed syllables. The teacher thus used the verb ***oku**shading**a** (Turn 11) in his explanation, and the learners appeared comfortable with this form of language. However, the learners' responses in this extract are not indicative of whether or not they followed what was taught.

Extract 9 further reveals that the teacher in this class was aware that the learners' English proficiency was limited to the extent that they could not read and interpret questions posed to them in English (Turn 13). This interaction suggests the learners in this class try, but their limited English proficiency fails them. This means that the learners' knowledge of English was limited, and this was perhaps the reason why teachers defied the policy stipulation of English only in P5 onwards and instead translanguaged between English and Luganda, albeit against the policy to facilitate the learning process. I must state that this is the same teacher who stated in the interview session that if a teacher did not use Luganda in P5 onwards (see Extract 3), learners would not follow what they were being taught.

A similar practice existed in a P5 class in school RG-B.

Extract 10: School RG-B P5 religious education lesson

₁T: The miracles performed by Jeˆ…
₂Ls: Jesus.
₃T: Who knows the word miracle in Luganda? Yes, tell me.
₄L1:   *Ebyewuunyo*.
         Miracles
₅T: ***Ggwe omanyi ekyewuunyo? Wali okozeeko ekyewuunyo kyonna?*** Who have ever made any miracle? You? Who have ever seen a person making a person making a miracle? Nobody I think here. Now we are going to look at the some of the miracles Jesus performed which impressed these people to write the gospels or the good news about Jesˆ…
         Do you know any miracle? Have you ever performed any miracle? Who has ever performed a miracle? You? Who has ever seen a person making a miracle? I think nobody here. Now we are going to look at some of the miracles Jesus performed which impressed these people to write the gospels or the good news about Jesˆ…
₆Ls: Jesus.
₇T: What are some of the miracles performed by Jesus? One? The first miracle performed by Jesus. ***Twagambye miracle kitegeeza*** byeˆ…
         What are some of the miracles which Jesus performed? One? The first miracle performed by Jesus. **We said** miracle means ***byeˆ***...
₈Ls: *Byewuunyo*.
         Miracles.
₉T: Nobody knows any miracle? ***Ekisooka?*** [First] Sam, give me one miracle performed by Jesus. ***Ekisooka?*** Aaah, ***mmwe*** answer ***yammwe erabika si nkyamu***. Speak up, speak up [First. No, it seems your answer is not wrong.]. Nobody knows any miracle? **First.** Sam, give me one miracle performed by Jesus. **First**? **No no, no, your answer is not wrong.** Speak up, speak up.
₁₀L1:   *Yazuukiza Lazaaro.*
         He raised Lazarus from the dead.
₁₁T: Speak up again.
₁₂L1:   *Yazukiza Lazaaro.*
         He raised Lazarus from the dead.
₁₃T: Speak up again.
₁₄L1:   *Yazuukiza Lazaaro.*
         He raised Lazarus from the dead.
₁₅T: *Yazuukiza ani?*
         Who did he raise?
₁₆T: *Lazaaro.* Yes Paul.
         Lazarus. Yes Paul.
₁₇L2:   Inaudible.
₁₈T: What?
₁₉L2:   He healed …
₂₀T: Yea, your answer is right, speak it up again.
₂₁L2:   He healed….
₂₂T: Very good, clap for him.
₂₃Ls: Clap hands.

24T: Yea, this man healed the boy with evilˆ…
25Ls: Spirit.
26T: Spirit. Healed the boy with evil spiˆ…
27Ls: Spirit.
28T: Now we can say, if you don't use this long sentence we can say, he healed the siˆ…, the sick. He healed the siˆ…
29Ls: The sick.
30T: Now this is a good answer. He healed the boy with evilˆ….
31Ls: Spirit.
32T: The person was just, a person, ***mumanyi*** causality?
        The person was just, a person, do you know casualty? Yes, ***mumanyi*** casualty? A mad man. Do you know a mad man? A person who goes on with naked, sometimes wears torn clothes and dirty clothes is what we call a mad man. But this man, I mean this boy had the evil spirit on his head. Therefore, Jesus healed the boy with evil…
        The person was just, a person, do you know casualty? Yes, do you know casualty? A mad man [mad person]. Do you know a mad man? A person who goes on with naked, sometimes is dressed in torn clothes and dirty clothes is what we call a mad man. But this man, I mean this boy had evil spirits Therefore, Jesus healed the boy with evil…
33Ls and T: Spirit.
34T: Another miracle performed by Jesus. Uhm, tell me girl. Yes Martha.
35Martha: ***Yafuula amazzi evviinyo***.
         He changed water into wine.
36T: ***Mumukubire mu ngalo***.
        Clap for her.
37Ls: Clap hands.
38T: Who can help me to change the language? You can try, yes?

This part of the lesson focused on miracles performed by Jesus. In Turn 3, the teacher verified whether learners knew what the word 'miracles' is in Luganda. In Turn 7, the teacher reiterated the same thing, reminding learners what the word 'miracle' meant if translated into Luganda. When the teacher cued the learners in Turn 8, they responded with an answer in Luganda. In response, learners contributed answers in Turns 10, 12 and 35. Furthermore, in Turn 38, the teacher asked learners whether any of them could change (referring to 'translate') what he had said in English. It is likely that if the teacher did not allow Luganda in this class, the learners would not contribute to the classroom interaction because they had the correct answers in Luganda. This is evidence that learners know the content of this topic, but they could only access it comfortably in their MT.

In other classroom interactions in which teachers rigidly followed the monolingual use of English (as prescribed by policy), learner participation was considerably hampered. These classroom observations point to the fact that learners' knowledge and experiences of what they learn in class are in their MT (e.g., see Extract 5). Thus, when learners are not allowed to use their MT in class, they are unable to share what they know as they have not yet acquired sufficient English vocabulary to articulate what they know.

Below is a related classroom interaction in which the teacher taught P5 learners about gospel writers in the Bible.

Extract 11: Learners responding to questions in English in the MT, School RG-B P5

₁T: Now, there are some, the people who write the gospel are called the gospel wri^*3*…

₂Ls: Writers

₃T: The gospel writers. We have the gospel writers. Who **have** ever heard of them? Uhm? Nakayima, have you ever heard of a gospel writer? Man, do you know any one of one? Uhm tell me.

₄L2:   *Matayo.*
        Matthew.

₅T: *Matayo* is what in English? *Matayo* is what in English?

₆L3:   Matthew.

₇T: Is Matthew. Clap for him.

₈Ls: [Learners clap hands].

₉T: This is Matthew. Matthew is the first gospel writer. The gospel according to Matthew. Then another gospel writer we have? These four gospel writers were writing about Jesˆ…

₁₀Ls: Jesus.

₁₁T: They were writing about Jesus. Then number two? Yes, no, yes girl.

₁₂L4:   *Lukka.*
        Luke

₁₃T: *Lukka* is what in English? *Lukka* is what in English? Yes? Uhm? Uh? I can write who? *Lukka* is? *Lukka* is Luke. *Lukka* is Luˆ…

₁₄Ls: Luke.

₁₅T: Is Luke, is l-u-k-e. *Gamba* Luke.
        Is Luke, is l-u-k-e. **You say**, Luke.

₁₆Ls: Luke.

₁₇T: Luke

₁₈Ls: Luke.

₁₉T: This is another gospel writer. Another one? Yes girl.

₂₀L5:   *Mariko.*
        Mark.

₂₁T: Who?

₂₂L5:   *Mariko.*
        Mark.

₂₃T: *Mariko* is what? *Mariko* is? *Mariko* is? Is what? You don't know?

Ls: Yes.

₂₄T: *Mariko* is Mark. Isˆ…?

₂₅Ls: Mark.

₂₆T: Is Mark. This is another gospel wriˆ…

₂₇Ls: Writer.

₂₈T: Writer. The gospel according to Mark, the gospel according to Luke, the gospel according to Matthew and the gospel, the last one is about who? The last one. Yes?

₂₉L6:   *Yowaana.*
        John.

₃₀T: Yes, *Yowaana* is what? Thank you, you clap for him, for her.

₃₁Ls: [Learners clap hands].

---

³The symbol is used to mark rising intonation (see Section 7.4.1)

32T: Uhm, *mu Luzungu* it is what? Don't look there, look at me. Yes, yes? Tell me girl, you seem to be with the answer. Tell me. Uhm? Uhm?
       Yes, what is it in **English**? don't look there, look at me. yes, yes? Tell me girl, you seem to be with the answer. Tell me. **Yes? Yes?**

33L6: *Yowaana.*
       John.

34T: *Yowaana* but in English *Yowaana* isˆ…

35L7: *Yoweri.*
       Joel.

36Ls: [Learners laugh.]

37T: Is who? Is who? You can laugh but you do not have an answer. Yes, yes.

38L8: *Yona.*
       Jonah.

39T: Is not *Yona. Yona* is another person. He was another person but *Yowaana* isˆ…
       Yes, Sam, *Yowaana* is who? In your villages don't you have people like *Yowaana* [people named *Yowaana*]? They are written as what in English? Yes? Is? Speak up.

40L9: [Inaudible].

41T: Is?

42L9: I don't know.

43T: *Yowaana* is? How many Johns do we have in this class? Those who are called John rise up your hands. Nobody called John?

Furthermore, as can be seen in Extract 10 above, learners understood the teacher's questions posed in English, but they did not have the vocabulary to answer in English. Instead, they gave their answers in Luganda. It is worth noting that School RG-B had an affiliation with the Catholic church. In addition, pupils in P5 in Catholic schools undergo catechism classes in preparation for confirmation. The pupils may have already learnt about Gospel writers in their catechism classes, which are taught in Luganda in this study area. They had their answers, and rightly so, in Luganda (see Turns 11–43). Note that only one learner in Turn 6 knew one of the gospel writers, i.e., Matthew in English; the rest of the correct answers were only accessible to the learners in Luganda.

Observations from private schools RP-D

I mentioned earlier that private schools in this area market themselves as English-only schools. Hypothetically, this would mean that their learners are more proficient in English than those in government schools. Indeed, classroom observations indicate that learners in private schools have a more developed oral expression (production) of English than those in government schools. Even with this being the case, classroom interactions could not be entirely conducted in English. Teachers found it practical and convenient to switch to Luganda to enable the learners to access classroom interactions more comfortably. The observations in the private school classroom interactions revealed that pupils in both private and government schools were not yet sufficiently proficient in English to learn through it. The data from private schools also suggest and confirm that teachers' oral statements and questionnaire answers need to be compared with classroom interactions where the language realities are played out.

The following example from Extract 7 is taken from a mathematics lesson in which a P5 teacher in School RP-D resorts to Luganda to enable the classroom interaction to progress meaningfully.

Extract 12: Teacher turns to Luganda to help learners understand the content, School RP-D, P5

₁T: What is another name for cost price? What is another name for cost price? Kiyonga.

₂Kiyonga: Buying price.

₃T: Buying pri…?

₄Ls: Price.

₅T: Clap for Kiyonga.

₆Ls: Clap hands.

₇T: It is buying priˆ…

₈Ls: Price.

₉T: Are we together?

₁₀Ls: Yes.

₁₁T: *Ne ŋŋamba nti* cost price is the same as buying, buying *ze ssente z'oba okozesezza okugula ekiki?* Buying means the money you have used to buy what?

₁₂Ls: *Ekintu.* Something.

₁₃T: So we are going to look for that amount of money when profit and selling price are given. *Ng'amagoba bagatuwadde n'essente ze tutunze bazitukoze ki?* When we have been given the profit and selling price.

₁₄Ls: *Bazituwadde.* When it is indicated.

₁₅T: Are we together?

₁₆Ls: Yes.

₁₇T: So we talked about that one even yesterday.

₁₈Ls: Yes.

₁₉T: So, our major concern today is about this animal. Read for me.

₂₀Ls: Finding cost price when loss is given.

₂₁T: Again.

₂₂Ls: Finding cost price when loss is given.

₂₃T: So, we are going to look for cost price when loss is given. Are we together?

₂₄Ls: Yes.

₂₅T: *Tugenda kunoonya ssente ezaakola ki?*
        We are going to look for money which did what?

₂₆Ls: *Ezaagula.*
        Which was used to buy.

₂₇T: *Ezaagula nga ssente ze twafiirwa bazitukoze ki?*
        Money which bought something when loss is done what?

₂₈Ls: *Bazituwadde.*
        Given.

₂₉T: Mind you *nti* profit *gaba maki?*
        Remember that profit refers to what?

₃₀Ls: *Magoba.*
        Profit.

₃₁T: What about loss?

₃₂Ls: *Kufiirwa.*
        Loss.

₃₃T: *Eeh, si kufiirwa muntu.*
        Yes, it is not losing a person.

₃₄Ls: Yes.

₃₅T: *Ne bw'ofiirwa omuntu eba* loss. *Si bwe kiri?*
          But even when you lose someone it is a loss. Not so?

₃₆Ls: Yes.

₃₇T: **Naye we are talking about money. *Mwo temuliimu byakufiirwa muntu*.** Are
          we together?
          But we are talking about money. **Here, there is no losing a person**. Are we
          together?

₃₈Ls: Yes.

₃₉T: Ahaa, so read the question. Example number one.

₄₀Ls: Oketcho sold a goat at five hundred…

₄₁T: Alla… Oh! First wait. ***Nakugamba*** you first apply a comma before you read a
          number in worˆ…
          Oh! First wait. I told you that you first apply a comma before you read a
          number in worˆ…

₄₁Ls: In words.

₄₃T: Ahaa?

₄₄Ls: Oketcho sold the goat at fifteen thousand shillings.

₄₅T: Uhm?

₄₆Ls: He made a loss of three thousand shillings.

₄₇T: Uhm?

₄₈Ls: How much did he buy it?

₄₉T: Who can help us and translate that sentence in our mother tongue? ***Mu lulimi***
          ***lwa bamaama baffe.* Who can help us and translate such a question in our**
          mother tongue? *Ani ayinza okutuyambako n'atukyusiza ekibuuzo kyaffe*
          ekyo mu Luganda? Such that everybody gets to know the meaning of that
          question. *Nnyanja*.
          Who can help us and translate that sentence in our mother tongue? In our
          mothers' mother tongue. Who can help us and translate such a question in our
          mother tongue? Who can help us to translate the question into Luganda? Such
          that everybody understands that question.

In Extract 12, the teacher resorts to using Luganda whenever he detects a need for a perlocutionary act. For example, in Turns 11, 13, 25, 27 and 29, the teacher turns to Luganda to explain the gist of the lesson, i.e., profit and loss. The teacher further uses Luganda in Turns 33, 35 and 37 to clarify the meaning of loss by helping learners to differentiate between loss in business and loss referring to the death of a person. The teacher must have felt that the learners' familiar language is convenient for clearing up any possible confusion about the different meanings of the concept, i.e., the loss of a person and a loss in business, i.e., *okufiirwa,* in Luganda. Moreover, in Turn 41, when the teacher wanted to remind the learners of what he had told them earlier, he turned to Luganda.

Finally, in this same classroom interaction, in Turn 49, the teacher calls for a full translation of the question into Luganda and thus, says "…such that everybody gets to know the meaning of that question". Hence, the teacher must have been aware that not all learners in this class necessarily followed the interaction in English and that a translation in Luganda was helpful. In other classroom observations, e.g., in School RG-D, the mathematics, religious education, science and social studies lessons were conducted with codeswitching between Luganda and English. Later, the debriefing sessions with teachers indicated that learners were not proficient in English to the level that would allow them to comprehend what they learnt.

Therefore, the teachers justified the use of translanguaging and confirmed they could not afford to use English only because they would be talking to themselves most of the time.

Drawing from the classroom interactions discussed in this study, one might observe that those classroom interactions are a form of translanguaging. As much as private school teachers would want the public to believe they are English-only schools, the classroom scenarios discussed and the teachers' statements in the debriefing sessions show the contrary. Learners in both sets of schools do not have the proficiency to enable their learning through English only by P4. They need translanguaging to scaffold learning.

IMPLICATIONS OF THESE FINDINGS FOR THE LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION-POLICY IN UGANDA

The findings in this study reveal a substantial discrepancy between *de jure* and *de facto* language-in-education in the classroom environment. First, the teachers consider learners' proficiency in English as insufficient by the time they arrive at P4 or P5. Second, teachers tolerate the use of learners' MT in class and invite them to use it during classroom interaction to facilitate learning. Third, teachers do not believe learners need more time to learn English as a subject before it is used as the LoLT. Instead, they believe learners should use English as a LoLT for them to acquire it proficiently. However, the teachers were aware that learners began stabilising in learning through the English language when they reached P6. Such awareness caused the teachers in the study to defy the monolingual stipulation of English-only and, instead, to work with a bilingual approach of English/Luganda (translanguage) to help learners access classroom interactions. These realities point to the need to reconsider a practical, beneficial language policy. The classroom scenarios and the teachers' views point to helpful recommendations regarding the language-in-education policy in Uganda:

(i)   The classroom scenarios in this rural context suggest that a bilingual model would be more beneficial to learners in the learning process. Both English and the MTs (translanguanging) should be allowed in the classroom from P5 onwards.

(ii) If the language policy is to be transitional, then a late transitional model, whereby English is taught as a subject for at least six years, is more realistic. The teachers in this study observed that learners began stabilising in learning through English in P6. This stage corresponds well with the late exit model of teaching L2 as a subject for between six and eight years.

CONCLUSION

This study intended to demonstrate that P5 learners in both government and private schools in rural areas are not proficient in English, even after the transition has been initiated in P4. The classroom observations demonstrated that teachers were indeed aware of this fact and, accordingly, translanguaged to facilitate classroom interactions, albeit against policy stipulations. In addition, even within this reality, the teachers' opinions demonstrated they did not support the need for English to be taught as a subject for a longer period. Instead, they supported using English as the LoLT after P4, reasoning that the examinations at the end of P7 were written in English. Accordingly, the teachers believe that for learners to learn English better, they need to be exposed to it as a LoLT longer than as a subject.

These classroom experiences point to either a need to reconsider the policy stipulations or reconceive the classroom language. It is undeniable that bilingual classroom interactions are more beneficial to the learners than either or both the monolingual stipulations and language choices. This also means that teacher training should be reconsidered to allow for the use of bilingualism/translanguaging in classrooms to facilitate learning and other classroom interactions between teachers and learners and among the learners themselves.

REFERENCES

Ball, J. 2011. *Enhancing Learning Of Children From Diverse Language Backgrounds: Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual Or Multilingual Education In The Early Years. Analytical Review Commissioned By The Unesco Education Sector*. United Nations Educational, Scientific And Cultural Organization.

Bamgbose, A. 1999. African Language Development And Language Planning. *Social Dynamics*, *25*(1), 13–30. Https://Doi.Org/10.1080/02533959908458659

Bamgbose, A. 2000. *Language And Exclusion: The Consequences Of Language Planning In Africa* (Vol. 151). Lit Verlag.

Banda, F. 2009. Critical Perspectives On Language Planning And Policy In Africa: Accounting For The Notion Of Multilingualism. *Stellenbosch Papers In Linguistics Plus*, *38*:1–11.

Banda, F. 2010. Defying Monolingual Education: Alternative Bilingual Discourse Practices In Selected Coloured Schools In Cape Town. *Journal Of Multilingual And Multicultural Development*, *31*(3):221–235.

Benson, C. 2008. Common Themes And Areas For Further Work: Questions, Answers And Remaining Issues. In C Haddad (Ed), *Improving The Quality Of Mother Tongue-Based Literacy And Learning: Case Studies From Asia, Africa And South America*. Unesco Asia And Pacific Regional Bureau For Education. 182–183.

Brock-utne, B. 2007. Language Of Instruction And Student Performance: New Insights From Research In Tanzania And South Africa. *International Review Of Education*, *53*(5):509–530. Https://Doi.Org/10.1007/S11159-007-9065-9

Brock-utne, B. 2011. *Language And Inequality: Global Challenges To Education*. Biace Presidential Address At The 11th Ukfiet International Conference, Oxford, 16th September 2011.

Bunyi, G. 2001. Language And Educational Inequality In Primary Classrooms In Kenya. In *Voices Of Authority: Education And Linguistic Difference*. Ablex. 77–100.

Creswell, JW & Clark, VLP. 2011. *Designing And Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (2nd Ed.). Sage Publications, Inc., Usa.

Cummins, J. 2000. Language, Power And Pedagogy: Bilingual Children In The Crossfire. *Multilingual Matters*.

Cummins, J. 2001. Bilingual Children's Mother Tongue: Why Is It Important For Education? *Sprogforum*, *19*:15–20.

Cummins, J. 2005. *Teaching For Cross-Language Transfer In Dual Language Education: Possibilities And Pitfalls*. Available From Https://Www.Researchgate.Net/Publication/252434703_Teaching_For_Cross-Language_Transfer_In_Dual_Language_Education_Possibilities_And_Pitfalls

Dutcher, N. 1997. *The Use Of The First And Second Languages In Education: A Review Of International Experience*. World Bank.

Dutcher, N. 2003. *Promise And Perils Of Mother Tongue Education*. Available From Https://Www.Adb.Org/Sites/Default/Files/Publication/176282/Ino-Mother-Tongue-

Multilingual-Education.Pdf

Fafunwa, A.B, Macauley, Jl & Sokoya, J. 1989. *Education In Mother Tongue: The Ife Primary Education Research Project*, 170–1978. University Press Limited, Ibadan.

Fyle, CN. 2000. Language And Literacy In West Africa. *International Journal Of The Sociology Of Language*, *140*, (?).

García, O. 2009a. *Bilingual Education In The 21st Century: A Global Perspective*. Blackwell/Wiley.

García, O. 2009b. Education, Multilingualism And Translanguaging In The 21st Century. In A Mohanty, M Panda, R Phillipson & T Skutnabb-Kangas (Eds), *Multilingual Education For Social Justice: Globalising The Local*. Orient Blackswan. 128–145.

Gillham, B. 2007. *Developing A Questionnaire*. Continuum International Publishing Group.

Glanz, C. 2013. Why And How To Invest In African Languages, Multilingual And Multicultural Education In Africa. In H Mcilwraith (Ed), *Multilingual Education In Africa: Lessons From The Juba Language-In- Education Conference*. British Council, Uk. 57–67.

Griffiths, C. (Ed). 2023. *The Practice Of English As A Medium Of Instruction (Emi) Around The World*. Springer.

Heugh, K., Benson, C., Bogale, B. & Yohannes, MAG. 2007. *Final Report Study On Medium Of Instruction In Primary Schools In Ethiopia*. Available From Http://Hdl.Handle.Net/20.500.11910/6273

Hornberger, NH. 1991. Extending Enrichment Bilingual Education: Revisiting Typologies And Redirecting Policy. In O García (Ed), *Bilingual Education: Focusschrift In Honor Of Joshua A. Fishman*. John Benjamins Publishing Company. 215–234.

Hornberger, NH & Chick, JK. 2001. Co-Constructing School Safetime: Safetalk Practices In Peruvian And South African Classrooms. In M Heller & M Martin-Jones (Eds), *Voices Of Authority: Education And Linguistic Difference*. Ablex. 33–55.

Kuchah, K., Adamson, L., Dorimana, A., Uwizeyemariya, A., Uworwabayeho, A & Milligan, LO. 2022. Silence And Silencing In The Classroom : Rwandan Girls' Epistemic Exclusion In English Medium Basic Education. *Journal Of Multilingual And Multicultural Development*, 1–15. Available From Https://Doi.Org/10.1080/01434632.2022.2159031

Kyeyune, R. 2003. Challenges Of Using English As A Medium Of Instruction In Multilingual Contexts: A View From Ugandan Classrooms. *Language, Culture And Curriculum*, *16*(2):173–184.

Lewis, MP, Simons, GF & Fennig CG. (Eds.). 2017. *Ethnologue: Languages Of The World* (Eighteenth). Sil International. Available From Http://Www.Ethnologue.Com

Makalela, L. 2016. Ubuntu Translanguaging: An Alternative Framework For Complex Multilingual Encounters. *Southern African Linguistics And Applied Language Studies*, *34*(3):187–196. Available From Https://Doi.Org/10.2989/16073614.2016.1250350

Mckinney, C. 2017. *Language And Power In Post-Colonial Schooling*. Routledge.

Merritt, M., Cleghorn, A., Abagi, JO & Bunyi, G. 1992. Socialising Multilingualism: Determinants Of Codeswitching In Kenyan Primary Classrooms. *Journal Of Multilingual And Multicultural Development*, *13*(1–2):103–121. Available From Https://Doi.Org/10.1080/01434632.1992.9994486

Nyaga, S, & Anthonissen, C. 2012. Teaching In Linguistically Diverse Classrooms: Difficulties In The Implementation Of The Language-In-Education Policy In Mulitingual Kenyan Primary School Classrooms. *Compare: A Journal Of Comparative And International Education*, *42*(6):863–879. Available From Https://Doi.Org/10.1080/03057925.2012.707457

Romaine, S. 2013. Keeping The Promise Of The Millennium Development Goals: Why Language Matters. *Applied Linguistics Review*, *4*(1):1–21.

Shoba, JA & Chimbutane, F. 2013. *Bilingual Education And Language Policy In The Global South*. Routledge.

Shohamy, E. 2006. *Language Policy: Hidden Agendas And New Approaches*. Routledge.

Ssentanda, ME. 2013. Exploring Connections: Reflections On Mother-Tongue Education In Postcolonial Uganda. *Stellenbosch Papers In Linguistics Plus*, *42*:281–296.

Ssentanda, ME. 2014. *Mother Tongue Education And Transition To English Medium Education In Uganda: Teachers' Perspectives And Practices Versus Language Policy And Curriculum* [Stellenbosch University]. Available From Http://Scholar.Sun.Ac.Za

Ssentanda, ME. 2022. Which Language(S) Matter(S) The Most? Exploring The Schoolscapes Of Rural Primary Schools In Uganda. *South African Journal Of African Languages*, *42*(1):17–30. Available From Https://Doi.Org/10.1080/02572117.2022.2039441

Ssentanda, ME, Huddlestone, K & Southwood, F. 2016. The Politics Of Mother Tongue Education: The Case Of Uganda. *Per Linguam: A Journal Of Language Learning*, *32*(3):60–78.

Ssentanda, ME, Southwood, F & Huddlestone, K. 2019. Curricula Expectations Versus Teachers' Opinions And Practices In Teaching English In Rural Primary Schools In Uganda. *Language Matters: Studies In The Languages Of Africa*, *50*(2):141–163.

Ssentanda, ME & Wenske, R. 2021. Either/Or Literacies: Teachers' Views On The Implementation Of The Thematic Curriculum In Uganda. *Compare: A Journal Of Comparative And International Education*, 1–20. Available From Https://Doi.Org/10.1080/03057925.2021.1995700

Uganda National Examinations Board. 2023a. *Uganda National Examinations Board Examination Timetable For U.A.C.E*. Uace Timetable 2023. Available From Https://Uneb.Ac.Ug/Wp-Content/Uploads/2023/10/Uace-2023-Time-Table.Pdf

Uganda National Examinations Board. 2023b. *Uganda National Examinations Board Examination Timetable For U.C.E*. Uce : Exam Time Tables Final. Avaiable From Https://Uneb.Ac.Ug/Wp-Content/Uploads/2023/10/Uce-2023-Time-Table.Pdf

UNESCO. 1953. *The Use Of Vernacular Languages In Education*. Unesco.

UNESCO Regional Office For Education In Africa. 1985. *African Community Languages And Their Use In Literacy And Education*.

Walter, SL & Chuo, KG. 2012. *The Kom Experimental Mother Tongue Education Pilot Project Report For 2012*. Available From Https://Www.Google.Com/Url?Sa=T&Source=Web&Rct=J&Opi=89978449&Url=Https://Mlephil.Wordpress.Com/2012/08/06/The-Kom-Experimental-Mother-Tongue-Education-Pilot-Project-Report-For-2012/&Ved=2ahukewj0i-F71bqgaxvbskeahdeca-Sqfnoecbmqaq&Usg=Aovvaw3x5omx0mkfpha1nihzbifw

Walter, SL & Dekker, DE. 2011. Mother Tongue Instruction In Lubuagan: A Case Study From Philippines. *International Review Of Education / Internationale Zeitschrift Für Erziehungswissenschaft / Revue Internationale De L'education*, *57*:667–683.

World Bank. 2010. *Mother Tongue Instruction And Learning For Quality Education: The World Bank's Education Sector Strategy 2020*.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Medadi E Ssentanda (PhD) is a Senior Lecturer at Makerere University, Department of African Languages (Uganda) and a Research Associate at Stellenbosch University (South Africa). His research interests are language policy in the school context, mother tongue/multilingual education, English medium education, classroom interactions and linguistic landscape. E-mail address: medadies@gmail.com