

# **Challenges of Using English as a Medium of Instruction in the Upper Part of Primary Schools in Rural Uganda**

**A Case of one Primary School in Mpigi District**

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## **Abstract**

The study explored the challenges of using English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools in rural Uganda. The sample consisted of the head teacher; pupils and teachers of upper primary school grades (five to seven), from one selected primary school in Mpigi district. The research questions used were:

How do teachers use English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools in Mpigi district? How are teachers facilitated by the government in using English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools in Mpigi district? How does English as a medium of instruction affect pupils' academic performance in the upper part of primary schools in Mpigi district?

The study adopted a qualitative design. In-depth interviews were conducted with selected pupils, teachers and the head teacher. Classroom observations were also conducted as a support method with teachers of English, Mathematics, Basic science and health education as well as social studies, the examinable subjects in Ugandan primary schools. In addition, relevant policy documents were reviewed.

The findings revealed that pupils and teachers in the rural primary schools experience dilemmas and tension, in the teaching and learning process, partly owing to language in education policy. Implications for the teaching in either local language or English as a medium of instruction were discussed and a number of challenges in using English as a medium of instruction were revealed, which consequently had a negative effect on pupils' academic performance. This proved that pupils understand better when they are taught in a familiar language (local languages) than when they are taught in a non-familiar language (English), as it has been claimed by several intellectuals in the same field of study.

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Uganda is a country composed of different ethnic groupings that were united to form a nation. As a result, the search and use of a common language in governance and administration of institutions of which education forms part, suffered a terrible set-back during the British colonization between 1887 and 1962. While a section of the population advocated for the most dominant local language to be used as the official, national language, minority ethnic groups rejected this claim and instead advocated for a neutral/foreign language. In this chapter, I have presented a general overview of the language situation before and during independence and the transformations that have occurred in the development and application of a language policy in Uganda generally and specifically a medium of instruction in schools.

Before and during independence different and succeeding administrations had their set of policies which were quite different from each other but all directed towards finding a suitable medium of instruction to be used in the educational system of Uganda. Disagreements and counter-rejections ensued but finally the English language emerged as the official language and eventually a medium of instruction in schools. A detailed account of this would be discussed. Traces of colonial policies on language are very much visible in the policies on language today. In this study I have critically examined whether this is the cause of the problem that has bedeviled the use of language by both teachers and pupils in the upper part of primary schools of rural Uganda.

### **1.1 An Overview of language in education policy in Uganda**

Uganda is a multilingual country with five area languages of wider communication. They include: Luo, Runyakitara, Luganda, Ateso/ Akarimojong and Lugbara (Government White Paper 1992). Vernacular languages are languages spoken by different ethnic groups (Legere 1992). A vernacular language is associated with a specific group, culture, identity and location (Batibo 1992). English is a foreign language, which is commonly

used by the elite group. It is commonly used in formal education, which was introduced by the British during their colonial rule in Uganda (Mochiwa 1991).

By the time Uganda was colonized in 1887, it consisted of Bantu, Luo, Nilotics and Nilo-hamite language groups. Therefore, the colonizers found Uganda as a multi-lingual country, with no national language. The colonizers wanted to introduce Kiswahili, but the missionaries and chiefs rejected it. As a result, English was adopted as a medium of instruction in higher institutions of learning. By the time of independence in 1962, English was declared the official language in absence of a national language. To date, Uganda has no national language. Even parliamentary debates are held in English.

Within the period the late 1870s to 1903, the language policy in schools was dominated by “area languages” as the medium of instruction in the early years of school while English dominated as a subject taught as well as being the medium of instruction at higher levels of education. The missionaries translated the Bible into the local area languages to make it easy to evangelize and convert Africans into Christians (Prah 2005).

In the late 1920s the British colonizers took over control of the Government and its education system. They emphasized Luganda, Kiswahili and English to be the languages of instruction in school and national languages in Uganda (Ssekamwa 1999). In 1923 the British government did not do much to spread educational developments but emphasis was put on introducing the British culture. In 1925 English was declared by the colonial government to be taught in the top classes of primary schools and local vernaculars in the lower primary school classes. In the same year the missionaries attempted to make some of the local vernacular languages media of instruction in their vernacular schools; Luganda in the central and the east, Runyoro- Rutoro and Runyankole- Rukiga in the west, Luo in the north while in the north-west Lugbara.

In 1927 Kiswahili was declared as the official language in central and eastern Uganda and as an official language of business. In schools English was declared the medium of instruction at the lower level in these areas. Growers, the Governor from 1927,

emphasized the use of Kiswahili because it was understood by the colonizers and used widely in the great lakes region. This was a way of avoiding the use of Luganda, which was more of an indigenous language to Uganda (Clifford 1972).

In 1928 the policy was mother tongue to be taught the first elementary years and followed during the final years by Kiswahili in all provinces of the protectorate, with the exception of Buganda where it was rejected. Kiswahili was however, not supported by Ugandans because it was associated with slave trade and Islam. Ugandans, therefore, opposed Kiswahili becoming a Lingua Franca at the expense of a local language. Instead, they favored English because they considered it to be a path for modern science, technology and information (Ssekamwa 1997).

In 1933 opinion leaders were invited to London to give their views about the official language to be adopted in Uganda, and they recommended English because they saw it as the source of knowledge. From 1935 the language policy focused more on English and local area languages, but the intention was to promote use of the English language. In 1936, therefore, the Kiswahili policy was abrogated and the original policy of 1925 was reverted to. This is because Mitchell, who was the Governor within the period 1935 to 1940, wanted more administration assistants who could use English. He therefore, discouraged the use of Kiswahili in Ugandan schools because it would interfere with the development of English (Ssekamwa 1999).

In 1947 the Directors of Education in the East African territories recommended minority local languages to be used in the rest of the primary school classes and English to be taught in class seven. In 1948 an advisory council further emphasized the teaching of English in primary school grades. The council recommended English to be taught as a subject from class five onwards but not to be used as a language of instruction in the primary schools as a policy. Schools had however, the freedom to teach English as a subject, from the first year of school if they wanted. In addition, Luganda, Runyoro, Luo, Ateso and Lugbara were accepted as media of instruction in primary schools, while Kiswahili was an optional subject (Clifford 1972).



In 1953 a commission was set up to implement the teaching of English as a subject from class two and to ensure the use of local languages (Ssekamwa 1999). The British government introduced English in primary schools at an early stage, which has led to African local Languages being regarded as inferior to English by the Africans (Brock-Utne 2000).

After independence in 1962, the Government of Uganda set up a Commission which was chaired by Castle in 1963 to make recommendations, which guided the Ugandan education system. The Castle report of 1963 recommended six area languages namely: Luganda, Luo, Runyankole-Rukiga, Runyoro- Rutoro, Ateso/ Akarimojong and Lugbara. The same commission recommended the use of English as a language of instruction from primary four and English to be taught as a subject from primary one. Recommendations of the report were approved by the Ministry of Education in 1965. The 1965 recommendation on the language of instruction was in policy but not in practice. This was partly the cause of the establishment of a new commission to review the education policy in 1987 (Ssekamwa 1999).

In 1987, the Kajubi Commission was established to review the education policy (Government White Paper 1992, Ssekamwa 1999). The Kajubi report was eventually approved by the Government of Uganda as the Government Education Policy known as the Government White Paper (1992). To date, the Uganda education system is guided by this policy document (Government White Paper 1992).

The Government White Paper (1992:19) states the following language policy for primary schools in Uganda:

In rural areas the medium of instruction from P.1to P.4 will be the relevant local area languages; and from P.5 onwards English will be the medium of instruction. In urban areas the medium of instruction will be English throughout the primary cycle. Kiswahili and English will be taught as compulsory subjects to all children throughout the primary cycle, in both rural and urban areas. Emphasis in terms of allocation of time and in the provision of instructional materials, facilities and teachers will, however, be gradually placed on Kiswahili as the language

possessing greater capacity for uniting Ugandans and for assisting rapid social development. The relevant area language will also be taught as a subject in primary schools; this applies to both rural and urban areas. However, students may or may not offer this subject for Primary Leaving Examination (PLE). Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) will, nevertheless, provide the examination in all the five main Ugandan languages (Luo, Runyakitara, Luganda, Ateso/Akarimojong and Lugbara) in PLE for those who study any of these languages as a subject for examination.

On the other hand, a new curriculum policy for lower primary school classes was approved by the Ministry of Education and Sports in 2005 which emphasizes the use of local language policy in the first three grades of primary education, it states:

Only main languages already approved by the MOES can be used as LOI without specific approval from the MOES. The main area languages are currently: Lugbara, Luo (including Alur, Acholi/Langi and Dophedola), Ateso/Ngakarimojong, Luganda, Runyoro/Rutoro and Rukiga/Runyankole. .... English may be used as a LOI only where there is a wide variety of languages enrolled in schools and there is no obvious dominant local language that can be identified. ....Where a local language is spoken in only a limited area and does not meet the criteria specified in the circular it can be used as a language of oral instruction in P1 only but should not be used as a LOI. ....Under the new plans, P4 will be an important transition year where all pupils will have to shift from the use of a local language as an LOI to the use of English as an LO1. Specific guidance will be developed for the teachers in due course to enable them to cope with the transition where there will be a big increase in the amount of English learned and in the amount of time allocated to English in order to ensure the effective learning in English from P5. In 2005, Kiswahili will become an optional subject. Schools that have started to teach the subject are encouraged to continue teaching it. However, those schools unable to introduce the subject due to lack of teachers and lack of appropriate materials should see it as an optional subject until more resources are available. Lesson time made available for Kiswahili in the timetable should re allocate to other subjects if schools cannot offer Kiswahili as an option (Ministry of Education and Sports 2005: 3-4).

The above background clearly reveals the dilemma experienced with the medium of instruction in Ugandan primary schools, since colonial time to independence. It would seem that the main cause for the language dilemma is the fact that Uganda has no national language and therefore, the official language (English) which was introduced by the colonizers and adopted after independence continues to be a priority. This means that

the question of what should be the medium of instruction in primary schools of Uganda remains a challenge to be considered by all academics who wish to create a positive change in the Ugandan education system. Hence, the need for this study to explore the challenges of using English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools in rural Uganda.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Language is a very important tool for communication hence, teaching and learning can only take place when the right and appropriate language is selected and used as the medium of instruction in schools. Hence, if a familiar language is used as a medium of instruction in schools it enhances effective teaching and learning, while if a non familiar language is used as a medium of instruction it becomes a barrier to teaching and learning. If teachers and learners get confused with the medium of instruction, the teaching and learning process cannot be effective (Malekela 2004). This means that the teaching and learning processes should be conducted in the appropriate, right, clear and familiar language to achieve desirable results.

Brock-Utne (2000), Prah (2000) and Ngugi (1986) claim that children learn better when the language used for instruction in the teaching and learning process is a familiar language which people speak in their everyday lives, and this facilitates the acquisition of other languages more easily. However, according to the Ugandan language in education policy, as stated above, we see that in the lower primary school curriculum policy Ministry of Education and Sports (2005), pupils have to start using English as a medium of instruction a year earlier and it recognizes six main area languages to be used in schools contrary to what is stated in the Government White Paper (1992). In addition, by the time this study was carried out, study findings done in Uganda revealed that though the language in education policy states so, in practice teachers found it rather difficult to implement the policy, right from the first grades of primary school (Brock-Utne 2000, Muzoora 2005, Majola 2006).

According to Brock-Utne (2000), since the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in Uganda, teaching and learning is still done in English. Even in the

Complimentary Opportunity for Primary Education<sup>1</sup> (COPE) schools in Uganda, the teaching in all grades including grade one is in English and all textbooks are written in English. Muzoora (2005) also asserts that in Uganda examinations for all classes from primary one to primary seven are set in English and all instructional materials provided by the Ministry of Education and sports are in English. This means that though the language policy is clearly stated as above, little effort has been taken by policy makers to monitor and assess to what extent the policy is being implemented on the ground and its effect on the learners' academic performance. These findings reveal that there is a problem in implementing the language in the education policy of 1992.

Therefore, basing on the views concerning the dilemma of the language in education policy for primary schools in Uganda as stated above, the intent of this study was to explore the challenges of using English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools of rural Uganda, as stated in the government education policy (Government White Paper 1992).

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of this study was to explore the challenges of using English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools of rural Uganda, in particular in Mpigi district.

### **1.4 Specific Objectives of the study**

The following were the specific objectives of this study:

- i) To assess the use of English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools in Mpigi district
- ii) Examine the extent to which teachers have been facilitated by the government in using English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools in Mpigi district
- iii) To establish the effect of using English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools on pupils' academic performance.

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<sup>1</sup> These are schools in Uganda which cater for children who have either dropped out of school very early, or never went to school

## **1.5 Research questions**

This study was guided by the following research questions;

### **1.5.1 Main research question**

What are the challenges of using English as a medium of Instruction in the upper part of primary schools in Mpigi district?

### **1.5.2 Specific research questions**

The following are the specific research questions that guided me during my study:

- i) How do teachers use English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools in Mpigi district?
- ii) How does Government facilitate teachers in using English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools in Mpigi district?
- iii) How does English as a medium of instruction affect pupils' performance in the upper part of primary schools in Mpigi district?

## **1.6 Scope of the study**

The study focused on establishing the challenges faced in the use of English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools in rural Uganda. The study was carried out in one selected primary school in Mpigi district, located in the central region of Uganda. It covered three upper primary school grades (five-seven).

## **1.7 Significance of the study**

English is both taught as a subject and used as a medium of instruction in the primary schools of Uganda including the rural area where the common language used is usually the local language of the area. I expect the findings of this study to:

Provide the Ministry of Education and Sports in conjunction with the National Curriculum Development Centre with information to readdress the question of medium of instruction in primary schools, by way of effecting and implementing the intended education policy document (Government White Paper 1992) during the teaching and learning process if learning is to be meaningful at all levels of education in Uganda.

I hope to contribute towards the knowledge of first language as a medium of instruction especially help school administrators and policy makers to understand the challenges associated with the current medium of instruction and pupils' performance in primary schools of rural Uganda.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, I review existing literature on the challenges of using English as a medium of instruction in primary schools highlighting existing and related concepts and theories. I made use of available policy documents on education curricula in relation to pupils' performance in the upper part of primary schools in rural Uganda.

#### **2.1 Overview**

This section looks at some of the ways in which the use of English as a medium of instruction sometimes frustrates the pupils' learning efforts in the upper part of primary schools in rural Uganda, instead of facilitating them. Suggestions for change include adopting mother tongue as an alternative medium of instruction. Though this option would lead to a great improvement in the pupils' performance, the problem of low academic performance in the primary schools of rural Uganda is also related to other problems which include lack of textbooks, high pupil to teacher ratio, teacher absenteeism because of low salaries, children absenteeism because of hunger, and child labor at home. However, to facilitate learners' comprehension and analysis of classroom talk, it is argued that teachers should be trained in the skills necessary for supporting learning through an analytical understanding of language-related barriers. In addition, they should be fluent in the skills of questioning and explaining (Ministry of Education and Sports 2005).

There is a growing public concern in Uganda that, poor standards of English, among teachers and pupils, are leading to an unsatisfactory quality of educational performance. This is felt not only in Uganda but is probably shared by critics in other learning situations on the African continent where English is not only the official language but also the medium of instruction for the greater part of school life (Brock-Utne and Rodney 2005). This raises questions about the nature of the teaching practices and provokes interest to explore the challenges of using English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools in rural Uganda.

The process requires posing some fundamental questions to guide the study: How do teachers use English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools in rural Uganda? How are teachers facilitated by the government in using English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools in rural Uganda? How does English as a medium of instruction affect pupils' academic performance in the upper part of primary schools in rural Uganda?

To answer these questions, it is essential to analyze the learners' position in the teaching and learning process. The process of analyzing may lead us in a useful direction for understanding the changes necessary to introduce as a means of improving the teaching and learning process and generally pupils' academic performance in the upper part of primary schools in rural Uganda. The process here is facilitated by analyzing data initially gathered through qualitative methods, aimed at an in-depth exploration of the challenges faced in using English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools in rural Uganda as stated in the Government education policy document (Government White Paper 1992).

In this context thick descriptive and in-depth data from a purposively selected primary school has been analyzed from an interpretive approach for insights into the challenges of using English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools in rural Uganda. An understanding of these challenges is presumed to be the basis on which we can found the suggestions for an improved education policy in relation to the medium of instruction for the primary schools in rural Uganda.

## **2.2 The Role of English in the Education System of Uganda**

It is necessary to pose a general question about the challenges of using English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools in rural Uganda: What has gone wrong with the teachers' use of English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools in rural Uganda? Some intellectuals claim that English is a foreign language which was used as an instrument of colonial administration in many developing countries, including Uganda. They advocate for the restoration and use of the mother tongue as the child's natural medium of thought, expression and empowerment. Hence,



the child's right to be taught through the first language (Brock-Utne 2000, Prah 2005, Ngugi 1986).

The root cause of the problems related to the use of English as a medium of instruction can be traced from the historical background of the language in education policies, before and during independence in Uganda, as described in chapter one of this study. One critical example is that the policy was pushed too far, expecting even infants in their early childhood development stage to be taught English and to use it as a medium of instruction in primary schools including even those in rural areas.

Philipson (1990) suggests that policy formulation has erred. He explains that when in 1961 a conference at Makerere University in Uganda, resolved that English should be taught in the early years of education, the main arguments were invalid. The arguments led to the conclusion that the earlier the children were exposed to English, the better for improving its use. However, later education policy declarations to the contrary have not affected to practice. The Government White Paper (1992) recommends that children in rural schools be taught in the mother tongue for the first four years of primary school, while learning English as a subject, and then be gradually weaned on to English as a medium of instruction. To date, available study findings done in Uganda reveal that though the policy states so, in practice teachers find it rather difficult to implement it (Brock-Utne 2000, Muzoora 2005, Majola 2006).

Education being the imparting of knowledge, skills and values, the role of English as a medium of instruction in the primary schools of rural Uganda has not been translated into practical, conscious and careful manipulation of learning activities. Teachers in rural primary schools are not aware of the significance of using English as a medium of instruction and the pupils have no mastery of the English language. This all, is because they have experienced it only in the formal academic and structured arrangement of the classroom. Teacher and learner interaction has only been with their non-native speaking teachers and a few English textbooks and this is commonly done for the purpose of passing examinations (Ministry of Education and Sports 2005).

Some Ugandan elites argue that using English as a medium of instruction means including all learners in the mainstream of the education system. The proponents of this argument think that English being a foreign language to all makes it neutral with respect to all the indigenous population. They argue that using any of the indigenous languages of Uganda may in effect identify knowledge with the host tribe (Nsibambi 2000). The above views make my study which explores the challenges of using English as a medium of instruction in the primary schools of rural Uganda fundamental for the necessary change.

### **2.3 English as a Medium of Instruction**

A language of instruction is the language in which basic skills and knowledge are imparted to the population and the medium in which the production and reproduction of knowledge take place (Prah 2005).

This illustrates that a medium of instruction is supposed to be an enabling tool in the teaching and learning process. It should facilitate the learning of subject content. It ought to help pupils react to different facts and viewpoints in order to construct a new view of the world, including the meanings they attribute to the new concepts they are introduced to, and the values they attach to them. This means that a medium of instruction should be one which is familiar to the teacher and the learner if communication has to be effective. However, it seems that the policy makers in Uganda take the learners' language ability for granted and perceive any gaps in learning to be merely a result of the teachers' and learners' lack of commitment by promoting English a former colonial language as a medium of instruction in the primary schools, especially in rural Uganda.

### **2.4 Mother Tongue versus English**

In my documentary review process, literature from the National Curriculum Development Centre focused on clarifying basic concepts and a discussion of the educational obligation of ensuring that education programs in Uganda take due accounts of the medium of instruction for primary schools in Uganda.

According to the National Curriculum Development Center (2002), the term 'first language' has, in the specific context five major connotations and these are:

- The language transmitted by the family as members of the ‘indigenous language community in a given geographical-linguistic environment’ (mother tongue or native language)
- A non-mother tongue lingua franca (most widely used language) in the immediate environment of the learner
- The widely spoken language in a community in which the learner is growing up, but which is not necessarily the language of his/her parents
- The first, in strictly chronological order, of the languages learnt and regularly used by an individual
- The most perfectly mastered language (though not necessarily the first in the chronological order of acquisition) by an individual

The National Curriculum Development Centre illustrated these first-language situations as follow:

First Situation: A learner of Buganda origin, growing up in a Luganda-speaking home, in a monolingual Buganda environment in central Uganda; or a native Luo learner, growing up in a predominantly Luo rural environment in the northern region of Uganda and using only Luo in all social interactions.

Second Situation: A learner in the western part of Uganda, whose home and family language is Lusoga, but whose environment is dominated by Runyankore-Rukiga, as a language of wider communication, a similar situation to that of the Lugbara home-language learner in parts of Buganda whose environment is ruled by Luganda as a language of instruction.

Third Situation: A learner from a West Nile immigrant family living and growing up in central Uganda, where Luganda is the community language, a case in which the language of the family might be that of the parents (Luo) but in which the learner operates in the language of the host community (Luganda) once outside the circle of the nuclear family. The same is true for a learner of Busoga eastern Uganda parentage living in Kabarore (Fort Portal) western Uganda who would possibly speak the language of the parents

(Lusoga) within the family but for whom the immediate community language is Runyoro/Rutoro.

Fourth Situation: A learner, who begins life socialization in a language community, then goes on to acquire that language. In later life (during childhood and adolescence) the person comes in contact with and masters other languages, each of which is used as a given communication situation demands.

Fifth Situation: This will apply to any person with a rich multi-lingual background, who is compelled by socio-linguistic circumstances to use any one of the languages most actively, and most of the time, in a wide variety of situations. As a result, that person acquires an all-round communicative competence in the most frequently used language.

The above situations illustrate that the first language could be the mother tongue. It could also be a non-mother tongue. Whether it comes first or last in the chronological order of one's linguistic repertoire, the first language is (in all socio-linguistic conditions) the most frequently used, the most intimately mastered, and the one in which a person with multi-lingual competence feels most at home.

Research literature that reflects psychological theories of language acquisition and development, and order of socio-cultural evolution takes the view that in education, the learners' first language or another familiar African local language ought to be developed as the language of instruction (LOI) so as to foster the evolution of a truly indigenous way of life in formerly colonized societies (Mazrui 1994, Ngugi 1986).

Like Prah (2002a), the Government White Paper (1992) on education in Uganda views indigenous languages as the core of education. According to their view, these languages are central to the transmission of the local culture, values, norms and creation of a national identity. Therefore, where LOI is the mother tongue, it is an affirmation of the developmental capacity of the mother tongue to grow as a language of culture, science and technology. Given the fact that the LOI is the mother tongue as argued above, it gives

confidence to the people, with respect to their historical and cultural baggage. This means that a LOI, which is the mother tongue, acts as an instrument for the cultural and scientific empowerment of the people.

Where the language of instruction is different from the languages of mass society, those who work in the language of instruction, foreign from the languages of the masses, become culturally removed and alienated from the masses. Indeed, where the language of instruction is different from the mother tongue of the people there is almost always a history and persistence of patterns of dominance, over-lordship or colonialism (Prah 2002a:4).

While accepting that as a global language, English is important in the education system, the recent public commission on the lower primary school curriculum review in Uganda (Ministry of Education and Sports 2005) highlights the growing body of research findings that support the centrality of first language in basic education: the first language is essential for the initial teaching of reading and comprehension of the subject matter. It is the necessary foundation for the cognitive development upon which the acquisition of other languages is based. Reflecting thinking in post-colonial Uganda, the commission's report complains to the colonial condemnation of African languages and cultures, and advocates for the restoration of local language as the desirable core of education.

The lower primary school curriculum (Ministry of Education and Sports 2005) emphasizes local languages to be the core of education as stated in the Government White Paper (1992). This means that acceptance and use of English has negative effects in that the Africans, including Ugandans, have slowly but willingly lost their culture and identity. Language is a vehicle of the transmission of culture hence the acceptance of English has led to the adoption of English culture at the expense of traditional cultural values. The above view is in line with arguments held by Brock-Utne (2000) and Prah (2005).

In contrast to perceptions of and advocacy for giving priority to African languages, there is evidence that, rather than visualize English as a foreign intrusion that should be relegated, most African stakeholders in education see English as part of the current reality

and an important tool in socio-economic development. Recent studies on LOI in Uganda primary education systems found that some parents, pupils and teachers perceive English as the key to further education and socio-economic advancement. In spite of the conviction that local languages have a role and ought to be taught in schools, some respondents held the view that English should be given increasing emphasis as the primary school course progresses (Project Research Team 2006).

The Government of Uganda, rather than relegate English as a foreign language, after attaining independence, like other African countries developed policies that embrace the use of English as a medium of instruction after the third or fourth primary school grade (Government White Paper 1992, Ministry of Education and Sports 2005). This policy position is tantamount to recognition that English is a key gateway to further education, access to public administration, governance, industry and business and an increasingly globalized economy characterized by rapid technological change.

However, the dilemma inherent in the mother tongue versus English clash cannot be easily wished away. Educational policy development with regard to language is a highly emotive phenomenon partly because it is intimately linked to cultural identity and way of life of individuals and communities. Wholesale relegation of either mother tongue or English in the school system may not be a viable option. The way forward would seem to lie in accepting multi-lingualism in the school system and making concrete efforts to address it. The theory of linguistic interdependency, for instance, that the development of local language can be contemporaneous with and could be a sound antecedent for learning yet another language, provides a guide to policy development. Several intellectuals among others Brock-Utne (2000), Prah (2005), Ngugi (1986), Government White Paper (1992), Ministry of Education and Sports (2005) agree that children learn better if they first develop their mother tongue through which they can easily acquire other languages.

The literature on language in education is replete with findings that, given adequate resources, adoption of multi-lingualism is a viable approach in developing education

systems particularly in settings where mother tongues are in competition with widely spoken languages such as Luganda in the case of Uganda (Cummins 2000, Schmied 1991, Mazrui 1997).

## **2.5 Language Policy Development in the Primary School System**

According to Rogers (1990), the development of literacy in primary education is hampered by lack of concerted efforts by education authorities to bridge the observable gap between LOI policy and practice in primary schools. For example, previous findings reveal that primary schools in practice do not adhere to the language in education policy (Government White Paper 1992) as already stated in chapter one of this study above.

The most common practice is a mixture of first language (often Luganda and Kiswahili in parts of Uganda) and English to be used as medium of instruction in lower primary school. Pointing to this practice, the Project Research Team (2006) observes that the mixture of languages is used in teaching in most primary schools in Uganda and that, contrary to the policy, its use is continued into upper school. A less common approach is for some schools to use English as LOI right from the beginning of the first primary school grade. This practice is found in well-resourced primary schools where the parental clientage comprises of elites most of whom wholly or in part communicate in English at home. Children in these all-English primary schools will most likely have attended kindergartens in which English was the medium of instruction.

Research findings from the western part of Uganda by Brock-Utne (2000) reveal that in the primary schools, including the Complimentary Opportunity for Primary Education schools in Uganda, the teaching in all classes including primary one is in English and all textbooks are written in English. In addition, Muzoora's (2005) findings confirm that textbooks for all classes including the mother tongue curriculum are written in English (Ministry of Education and Sports 2000). In such a case, Mazrui (1997) argues that a language is more easily used as a medium of instruction, when textbooks and other instructional materials are available.

The foregoing practices reflect the effects of a combination of factors, among which are the following: First, with regard to local language the curricula are ambivalent about the expected outcomes of developing literacy in lower primary schools in more than one language. With regard to English, the lower primary school syllabi do not specify the level of proficiency that pupils need to attain in order to successfully use the language as the medium of learning in upper primary school. As a consequence, teachers are left groping in the dark as to the nature of achievement expected of their pupils.

Secondly, significant proportions of teachers lack the academic and pedagogical qualifications necessary for imparting mastery of English;

(a) many of the teachers are limited by a tenuous grasp of English and consequently resort to using the mother tongue in English lessons (Ministry of Education and Sports 2005). Muzoora's (2005) findings from the western part of Uganda prove that teachers use two languages the local languages and English for teaching all classes at primary level, because they are not competent in either of the two languages;

(b) in contrast to practice at an earlier period, teacher training does not seem to give adequate attention to systematic skills of facilitating mastery of English by children; and

(c) rather than being required of all teachers, the development of English is left to designated language teachers.

Thirdly, there are shortages of the variety of reading materials necessary for making pupils autonomous learners;

(a) This partly reflect constraints in resources for education, the school systems are wedded to the idea that, even in lower primary, literacy can be successfully promoted through provision of one or two textbooks; and



(b) the processes of curriculum development and implementation, and reading material development, production and distribution are not sufficiently synchronized, with the consequence that the publishing industry concentrates on textbooks for which the educational authorities provide a market.

The all-English elite schools manifest inequity in the system of education and the economy. Children who attend these schools significantly advance their chances of success vis-à-vis their peers in schools where the development of literacy in English is dicey. The reasons why these children do well, however, is not that they have English as the language of instruction, but that the schools they attend are better resourced.

With regard to future development of policy and practices that rationalize the acquisition of literacy in primary schools, it should be borne in mind that the current situation could partly be attributed to educational planners turning a blind eye on the plight of the majority of schools and children because the elite patronizes the currently advantaged schools.

## **2.6 Monitoring and Assessment of Language Acquisition**

In addition to lack of clarity with regard to the English language skills that pupils should acquire in lower primary school in preparation for using the language as a medium of instruction in the upper primary school onwards, the school systems of Uganda lack a tradition of continually and systematically monitoring and assessing progress and achievement. At the national level the only regular systematic measure of achievement is the end of primary course public examination (Primary Leaving Examinations). There is no national system for assessing progress in English and the Local languages acquisition among the cohorts below the public examination class. This weakens efforts to provide formative feedback to schools, teachers, pupils, parents and other educational stakeholders (Majola 2006). The results of the end of primary school examinations provide some feedback, but its usefulness is weakened by two interrelated factors:

First, these examinations only rank a candidate against peers for the purpose of placement in secondary school. Thus the results do not explicitly show the degree of pupils' mastery of curriculum content and concomitant skills.

Secondly, in these examinations all essential aspects of English proficiency are not examined. For instance in Uganda there is no oral examination to help measure listening and speaking skills since the English examination is dominated by multiple choice or short answer questions, candidates are not required to demonstrate their mastery of writing skills through a continuous composition paper. As part of their work, teachers set tests in language but the quality of these tests as measures of all round progress in language proficiency is weakened by the strong tendency for teaching and learning to be dominated by the end of course examinations that encourage rote learning. Language skills that are not examined in the Primary Leaving Examinations are likely to be ignored in teaching and learning.

So long as only a small proportion of primary school leavers are selected to fill the places available in secondary school, there is little concern in the society as to what level of knowledge the pupils obtain in primary school. It can be deduced that these pupils are deemed by society to have acquired the English language skills necessary for further education. The research evidence revealed earlier makes this assumption false.

## **2.7 Communication Skills**

According to Hornberger (2002), teachers' explanation and questioning skills are too poor for teacher communication to be effective. This means that it is necessary to examine teaching and learning as an essential communication process which requires developing the teachers' communication skills, through involvement in communication oriented learning activities both in and outside the classroom. This would serve as a means of sharing and articulating knowledge between the teacher and the pupils in the teaching and learning process.

Through the use of poor communication skills, teachers find it rather difficult to explain the meaning and application of new concepts to the pupils, yet pupils' questions and requests for clarification are a positive sign of their attempts to internalize and organize knowledge. The teachers' ability to explain concepts to the pupils and exchange of ideas through classroom dialogue /question and answer, creates good teacher-pupil relationship

and it facilitates effective teaching and learning process hence, improving the pupils' academic performance.

Explanation of new concepts requires the teacher's mastery of the subject content, his/her ability to select appropriate vocabulary and to interpret written literature, especially textbooks including the school curriculum. Teachers need to be aware that pupils cannot depend solely on narrated concepts in a teaching and learning situation. This means that for pupils to apply the acquired knowledge skillfully, teachers need to develop the learners' ability to learn through asking critical questions in dialogue form with the teacher. Communication skills are, however, totally dependent on what language is used as a medium of instruction. This means that all presupposes a good mastery of the language of instruction. Brock-Utne's (in press) findings from her study through classroom observations in some Tanzanian secondary schools revealed that if students are taught in a foreign language they learn to obey, be quiet, to be indifferent and apathetic. On the other hand, if students are taught in a familiar language they develop critical thinking and they are able to challenge the authority.

## **2.8 Learning With, In and From the first language**

This section describes three related distinctions of the educational use of language which include learning with, learning in and learning from. Learning with, refers to learning a language as a subject. This means one language can be taught using the same language. For example; if Luganda as a local language in Uganda is taught using Luganda or English as a foreign language in Uganda is taught using English. Learning in, refers to a situation in which a language is selected to be used as medium of instruction, either in a restricted sense to selected subjects or to a given sub-sector or level of education. For example, Uganda language -in-education policies promote the use of the first language as a medium of instruction in the early stages of formal education and English to be used as a medium of instruction in the late stages of formal education. Learning from refers to acquiring the skills of a particular language for the purpose of using it for national or international communication. For example Kiswahili being a widely spoken language in East Africa can be learnt for the purpose of using it as a national language in Uganda, or English can be learnt for the purpose of making international communication possible

(Ministry of Education and Sports 2005). This description illustrates that language is a powerful element of quality in education and that the quality potentials of language -in- education cannot be fully harnessed if learning is not carried on with, in, and from language.

In a nutshell, the above concepts show that the use of English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools in Uganda seems to be negatively affecting pupils' academic performance in the rural primary schools of Uganda, where English being a foreign language is rarely used in the locality. Therefore, the status of the current language in the education policy requires an exploration of the challenges of using English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools in rural Uganda.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

Chapter three presents the theoretical framework used in the study. Here I explored the main theory adopted for the study “Pedagogy of the oppressed”. This theory guided me in gathering data, because without it, it would be difficult to collect valid data since it is well known that all research is based on certain theoretical understanding. I also utilized thoughts of some influential critical intellectuals who have done enough research in Africa, concerning the topic under study. Through existing theories I was able to establish answers to the questions of my study as stated earlier in chapter one. Within the theoretical framework I focused on pupils’ participation in the classroom situation. I also assessed the relevancy of the language policy of 1992 in connection to pupils’ acquisition of subject content.

The theory adopted for the study “Pedagogy of the oppressed” was pioneered by Paulo Freire, a philosopher from Brazil and it was first published in 1968. Freire believed in empowering the oppressed. In his attempt to make change, he created an educational revolution through adult literacy programs in Brazil. Freire’s (1993) theory is famous for the two educational approaches; Problem-posing method and the banking concept. His approach to education system development has been appreciated by many intellectuals throughout the world, in the current education systems especially in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Freire’s ideas have inspired current movements for empowerment of ‘the masses’ and democratization of education in Africa (Majola 2006:8).

I have adopted Freire’s theory in an attempt to explore benefit from pupils and teacher participation in the teaching and learning process and the challenges caused by the use of a foreign language (English), as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools in rural Uganda.

I have further utilized the thoughts of influential critical intellectuals from the developed and developing countries who challenge the African elitist view of education in former colonial African countries, including Uganda. These include among others; Kwesi Kwa Prah's theory which emphasizes African languages as the key to empowerment in Africa and Birgit Brock-Utne's work which emphasizes the value of African languages as media of instruction in the African education system, to mention a few.

These theories have been utilized because they complement each other. They all emphasize freedom of speech, through using a familiar African local language, as the only way to empower the African masses. These are believed to be critical theories to enable me gather, analyze and discuss in-depth data for my study which aims at exploring the challenges faced in using English in the rural primary schools of Uganda where everybody uses a local language in every day communication.

### **3.1 Pedagogy of the oppressed and pupils' participation**

There seems to be a general agreement that effective teaching and learning is best attained through a medium that can be understood by both the learner and the teacher. Learning in primary schools seems to require usage of a local language commonly used by the pupils so that pupils can participate freely in the classroom lessons (discussion) with their teachers. Thus, effective teaching and learning can be achieved and the pupils and teacher relationship attained in the form of a dialogue. The use of a common local language leads to effective understanding and comprehension of concepts and statements and this also makes the teachers' work easier. Freire (1993), in his theory "pedagogy of the oppressed", argues for the "problem-posing" method of education which empowers the oppressed through dialogue, and he argues against the "banking" concept of education which dehumanizes the oppressed and reduces them to mere containers to be filled by the oppressors.

### **3.1.1 Problem-posing method of education**

In this type of education it is not the teacher alone teaching, but even the students are teaching in their process of learning. According to Freire (1993), the problem-posing is a method through dialogue, where the teacher and the pupils have the freedom to pose problems/questions in the process of a lesson. In this type of method there is exchange of knowledge through questioning all the time, why, how, where, from teachers and pupils. It is a revolutionary method where you identify a problem and deal with it.

Freire (1993) argues for the problem-posing concept of education which emphasizes dialogue during the teaching and learning process. According to his theory children's participation in the teaching and learning process effectively enhances their learning and it also encourages and improves their morale in class. However, for gains accruing from the dialogue approach, to be optimally achieved, other institutional and curriculum reforms ought to be made.

According to Freire (1993), learning tasks are explored through participatory learning whereby learners participate in the questioning and answering process after which the responses or answers and questions are given consideration by their teachers.

Only dialogue, which requires critical thinking, is also capable of generating critical thinking. Without a dialogue there is no communication and without communication there can be no true education (Freire1993:73-74).

But how is it possible to have dialogue in a language neither the students nor the teacher master? Freire argues that learners need a type of education that will enable them to solve problems. His view emphasizes use of dialogue. In other words he argues that exchange of ideas during the teaching and learning process is the best in a formal kind of education. He advocates for the use of a dialogue method where both the teacher and the learner dominate a discussion and become co-investigators, which means both parties are learners as well as teachers. This is a method where there is equal participation by all

actors in the teaching and learning process. A dialogue makes learners creative and confident which makes education a tool for liberation and meaningful development.

The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who—teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for the process in which they grow (Freire 1993: 61).

Freire used the problem-posing concept method of education to change people's lives in Brazil, through asking them critical questions which were related and relevant to their own experiences. This made the people aware of the power structures in the society in which they lived, which otherwise was impossible before Freire developed the adult literacy program revolution in Brazil. Freire's literacy education program approach is to empower the marginalized, through critical thinking, which encourages questioning how, why, when.

In problem-posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in the process, in transformation (Freire 1993: 64).

Freire's approach to cause change, succeeded in developing literacy skills and in arousing critical awareness among the marginalized class in Brazil. Freire, however, was eventually confronted by criticism and attacks from the privileged group of people who enjoyed monopoly of power, because lack of social and political awareness made it easy to manipulate the marginalized group of people. Freire (1993) refers an act of use of the banking concept as manipulation:

The dominant elites are so well aware of this fact that they instinctively use all means, including physical violence, to keep the people from thinking. They have a shrewd intuition of the ability of dialogue to develop a capacity for criticism (Freire 1993: 130).

Among the criticisms of Freire was that he used a radical approach, used a collection of complex philosophical terms such as dehumanization, naming the world, and that he did not clearly explain them. So he was criticized that he used a language which mismatched



with his message of liberation of the oppressed (Coben 1998). Hence, Freire's literacy education programs proved a threat to the privileged group of people in Brazil. Freire was put in prison and eventually forced into exile. Freire's experiences were not different from those of an African intellectual from Kenya; Ngugi (1981) who was also imprisoned by his own government because of his critical arguments for the African empowerment through uplifting African languages. Freire (1993: 131) criticizes such dominant minority politicians and elites who oppress the masses:

The emergency of populism as a style of political action thus coincides causally with the emergency of the oppressed. The populist leader who rises from this process is an ambiguous being, an "amphibian" who lives in two elements. Shuttling back and forth between the people and the dominant oligarchies, he bears the marks of both groups.

Freire claims that the oppressed do not know that they are oppressed. Therefore, they struggle to behave like the oppressors. They become convinced of their intrinsic inferiority and recognize the superiority of those who oppress them. For example, the oppressed want to become like those who oppress them by responding to their values, culture and standards, hence belonging to two cultures. Freire emphasizes that for the oppressed to get liberated and empowered, it requires the oppressors to join the oppressed by going to them and communicating to them. There should be true dialogue through cooperation and organization with the people because dialogue does not impose, nor does it manipulate (Freire 1993).

### **3.1.2 The Banking concept of education**

Freire (1993:56) defines the banking concept as an assumption that:

A person is merely in the world, not with the world or with others; the individual is a spectator, not a re-creator.

The banking concept of education is where the teacher will talk alone and the pupils' task is to remember, whether they understand or not. For instance; the teacher teaches and students are taught and they have to cram what they hear for examination purposes, the teacher disciplines and pupils are disciplined, the teacher is the subject and pupils are the objects. In case the pupils are able to think critically and ask logical questions for

example why, how, where; when the teacher has no answer, he/she will discourage the pupils because he wants to control alone.

Narration (of teacher) leads the students to memorize mechanically the narrated content. Worse yet it turns them into “containers”, into “receptacles” to be “filled” by the teacher. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat (Freire 1993: 52-53).

Freire criticized the banking concept of education, because it limits the child’s creativity and makes a dull child. Freire (1993) relates the banking concept of education to a teacher-centered method where the teacher is active and the learners are passive. The banking concept of education implies that teachers regard children to know nothing, and the teachers have to feed them with all information because teachers think they know everything and pupils should only listen to the teachers’ instructions.

The current language policy for the primary schools in Uganda promotes the Banking theory which was criticized by Freire as a concept which does not empower the oppressed, but only treats them like animals who cannot think for themselves, but the teachers have to think for them. The Government of Uganda and the National Curriculum Development Centre assumes that pupils at the primary level can learn effectively through a foreign language (Government White Paper 1992). It, however, has been challenged by several intellectuals as illustrated below.

### **3.2 Ugandan language in education policy**

According to the Uganda Government White Paper (1992), children need to learn with, in and from the language that they can understand better in order to ease learning and enable transmission of culture and behavior. This policy, therefore, states that local languages should be used as languages of instruction during the first four years of school in the rural areas but in urban schools the language of instruction should be English from the first year of school.

On the other hand, the aim of the Ministry of Education and the National Curriculum Development Centre revision of the language policy was assumed to enable all learners have a hand in the teaching and learning process so as to perform better. However, in contrary, to date it emphasizes the use of local languages only in the first three years of primary school education, and there after to use a foreign language (English) as a medium of instruction (Ministry of Education and Sports 2005).

The language issue is finally being addressed, but in a somewhat contradictory manner. On one hand the government is down playing the role of local languages, assuming that it can only be of assistance in rural areas. On the other hand, they acknowledge that “local languages are indeed gaining prominence” and that textbooks are needed urgently. Another detail is that the government only mentions P1 to P3, even though The Ugandan White paper 1992 states that the local language policy covers the first four grades of primary school. It might seem as the government is sending mixed signals about the validity of the policy by reflecting an attitude of using local languages only as a means of introducing English in that the sooner a teacher can switch to English in the lower grades the better (Majola 2006: 26).

When a foreign language is used in the teaching and learning process, for instance, in Uganda where English is used as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools, even in the rural areas, it is difficult to use the dialogue method because the language used is unfamiliar to both the teachers and the learners. Therefore, such a language is a barrier to communication. A foreign medium of instruction decreases children’s understanding and their ability to express themselves (Brock-Utne 2000).

This study concludes that for the Government of Uganda to achieve its Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in the changing socio-economic environment, the Ministry of Education and Sports and the National Curriculum Development Centre ought to have an idea on the mechanism through which culture, behavior, and tradition can be transmitted to pupils. Ngugi (1986) argues that a familiar local language is both an effective means of communication and a carrier of culture. Similarly, pupils tend to devise coping mechanisms when they find education is not friendly and motivating, which makes a good number of them drop out of school.

It was clearly pointed out that the aims of the Jomtien World conference on Education for all in 1990 was to discuss and to find appropriate strategies for the falling enrollments, high dropout rates and poor achievement results in primary schools of the developing countries by the year 2000. Having the former colonial languages as the medium of instruction in African schools adds an inferiority aspect to the problem of understanding. Such an inferiority aspect undermines the African identity and hinders the decolonization processes because the power structures from the colonial period are preserved through the use of the colonial languages (Brock-Utne 2000). This means that for the government of Uganda to be able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, the language of instruction should be critically assessed. This challenge leads us to pose a question: Can a developing country like Uganda be able to achieve its Millennium Development Goals through a former colonial language?

There is probably no strategy that could better decolonize the mind than restoring the African languages to their dignity, having them used as languages of instruction in school. This would make for better learning as well as strengthening the self-concept of the African learner (Brock-Utne 1997:22).

Government recruits trained and qualified teachers who are creative, innovative and committed to the educational goals and objectives, hence enabling them gain a competitive advantage in the education system. Such a workforce would improve the pupils' academic performance. However, this may not be achieved if teachers are not trained to teach in the local languages, in which learners can understand well and comprehend what is being taught in class. It is in this regard that schools in developed countries are teaching in their local languages rather than in foreign languages. In this way they aim at promoting their culture, tradition and behavior. Prah (2005) asserts the view that all societies in the world which have managed to develop use their mother tongue or local languages from primary through tertiary levels. Prah argues that the use of a European language as a medium of instruction after independence in Africa, including Uganda, is a heritage of colonialism.

Societies which are dual, "reflex", invaded and dependent on the metropolitan society cannot develop because they are alienated; their political, economic, and

cultural decision-making power is located outside themselves, in the invader society (Freire 1993: 142).

The education system in most African countries, Uganda inclusive, is theoretical and irrelevant to African development. Intellectuals argue that because the medium of instruction is in most cases a former colonial language, such a language in the education policy functions as a tool to exclude the marginalized population from decision making (Prah 2002a). Freire (1993: 122) refers such an act of the banking concept theory of education as Divide and Rule:

As the oppressor minority subordinates and dominates the majority, it must divide it and keep it divided in order to remain in power. The minority cannot permit itself the luxury of tolerating the unification of the people, which would undoubtedly signify a serious threat to their own hegemony.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

Each piece of research has a procedure through which the data is presented. However, there are different types of presentation depending on the researcher's style and the focus of his/her study. In this chapter, therefore, I described the general methodological framework which I used to collect and analyze my data.

For this study I developed a qualitative research design to enable me gather thick descriptive and in-depth information and be able to analyze it in a narrative manner which I perceived could best present answers to my research questions. This includes: research design, data collection methods, population sample, sampling techniques, triangulation, data collection procedures, data analysis method, limitations to the study, reliability and validity and ethical issues to validity.

#### **4.1 Research design**

A research design relates to the criteria that are employed when evaluating social research. It is therefore, a framework for the generation of evidence that is situated both to a certain set of criteria and to the research question in which the investigator is interested (Bryman 2004: 26).

Silverman (2000:88) states that methodology is the "general approach to a research topic". This means that research design can be thought of as the *structure* of research, in other words, it is the "glue" that holds all of the elements in a research project together. We often describe a design using a concise notation that enables us to summarize a complex design structure of a given research efficiently. It means research should have a framework that fits the model the researcher wants to use in the process of collecting and analyzing data.

A researcher requires a flexible design when conducting a study in a social setting because the participants and the society in which they live are dynamic entities (Durrheim and Wassenaar 1999). Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that the flexibility of

qualitative studies precedes the flexibility of quantitative research in most cases. A research design, in other words is the researcher's main plan/tool because it explains and clarifies how the whole process of the research will be carried out. A design specifies the different procedures to be followed by the researcher in trying to answer his/her research questions.

I have used a qualitative research approach in order to have an in-depth study of the language situation as it is on my research site. Furthermore, the qualitative research paradigm has been used to enable me describe the phenomenon under study and gather information in a detailed manner. Qualitative research attempts to provide an understanding of the complex causes and sequences that affect human behavior. It seeks to avoid the deliberate manipulation of variables as the case for quantitative research (Brock-Utne 1996).

According to Bryman (2004) a research design can be put into five different types; experimental design, cross-sectional design or survey design, longitudinal design, comparative design and case-study design. For the purpose of this study, I will focus more on a case-study.

#### **4.1.1 Case study**

I used the case study research design, which is a non-experimental cross sectional research design. A case study involves a detailed and intensive analysis of a study of a single event, a business setting, school, or a neighborhood. Bryman (2004:48) cites Stake (1995) to have observed that:

Case-study research is concerned with the complexity and particular nature of the case in question.

Again Bryman (2004) explains that in case study the emphasis tends to be upon an intensive examination of the setting. According to Yin (1994) cited in Cozby (2007: 117):

Case-studies may use such techniques as library research and telephone interviews with persons familiar with the case but no direct observation at all.

According to Jensen and Rodgers (2001), case study research is a time-honored, traditional approach to the study of topics in social science and management (education inclusive).

This implies that cases are unique and specific to their settings. Research findings can be replicated at different places with similar environmental conditions rather than generalizing research results. Different types of case-studies can be identified. This includes: The critical case, the unique case and the revelatory case. In this study I used the critical case-study.

Here the researcher has a clearly specified hypothesis, and a case is chosen on the grounds that it will allow a better understanding of the circumstances in which the hypothesis will and will not hold (Bryman 2004: 51).

To reduce errors and increase the reliability and validity of my findings for the study, I used semi-structured interviews, participant observation and documentary review as instruments for data collection. This idea of triangulation has been supported by Bryman (2004) where he pointed out that the same phenomenon can be investigated using multiple additional procedures. According to Villiamy, Lewin and Stephens (1990) cited in Brock-Utne (1996: 609-610):

Qualitative research tends to incorporate a wide variety of specific research techniques, even within one research project.

The concept of triangulation has been described in detail as follow.

#### **4.1.2 Triangulation**

A combination of research methods increases the validity of findings, as the strength of one method compensates for the weakness of another method. This is called triangulation. It is important to triangulate research methods in research because all methods have strength and weaknesses. Triangulation helps the researcher to reduce possibilities for errors that may result from using one technique and to increase the strength of findings in a study (Bryman 2004). Therefore, for the purpose of my study I



used multiple methods of data collection which include semi-structured interviews as the main method of my study, supported by participant observation and review of policy documents as an additional method. I also used different categories of participants, who included pupils and teachers as main informants and the head teacher as a key informant. The multiple methods of data collection helped me to cross-check the trustworthiness in the findings gathered through the different sources of information employed in my study. The main aim in employing the triangulation method was to reduce the weakness of the different sources and to emphasize on the strength of each method used in the study, which consequently increased reliability and validity of my findings.

## **4.2 Research Methods**

### **4.2.1 Interviews**

An Interview is literally an interview, an inter-change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest (Kvale 1999: 14).

The interview format is related to survey research as the face-to-face interaction between the respondents and the case researcher. In other words the method of gathering data from respondents thought to be representative of some population, using a guiding instrument composed of open-ended questions.

This was the dominant form of data collection that I used in this research and found to be the mostly used in the social sciences, providing for efficient collection of data over purposively selected populations, amenable to administration in person, by telephone, and over the internet. Some forms of face-to-face interviews and by telephone or the Internet can be completely automated (Nesbary 1999).

We all think we know how to ask questions and talk to people, from common, everyday folks to highly qualified quantophrenic experts. Yet, to learn about people we must remember to treat them as people, and they will uncover their lives to us. As long as many researchers continue to treat respondents as unimportant, faceless individuals whose only contribution is to fill one more boxed response, the answers we, as researchers, will get will be commensurable with the questions we ask them. ...The question must be asked person-to person if we want to be answered fully (Fontana and Frey 1994: 374).

Qualitative research interviews allow participants to air out their views about the social world in a relaxed manner, through conversation with the researcher. Qualitative interviewing enables the participants to describe their social world in their own words. Qualitative interviews give the respondents opportunity to give their views, experiences and their own interpretations of the social world around them (Patton 1990, Silverman 2000). I preferred the oral interview method because there was information that I could not gather through observation. The best way I could get this information was through face-to-face interviewing. Thus qualitative interviewing gives insight into the past experiences that would not be studied through any other means (Patton 1990). However, some of the past experiences can be cross-checked through records to increase validity and credibility. This is why it was important for me to look at some of the relevant documents to support information collected through face- to- face interviews.

Since in qualitative research the best instrument is the researcher, his/her main role is not merely to obtain answers as the case in structured closed interviews, but to learn what to ask, how to ask and when to ask them. This gives the researcher more chances to learn and interpret the participants' social world through repeated contacts over a period of time. Therefore, the researcher being the main instrument in the study he/she sets the agenda and guides participants through the interaction (Miles and Huberman 1994).

However, critics of interview methodology hold it to be a method which artificially forces respondents to formulate opinions, masking the complexity of conflicting views and unconscious biases within each respondent. Critics note that in many arenas (for example, race relations) interviews questions poorly predict actual behavior (Taylor and Bogdan 1984). This is another reason why I employed the triangulation method for instance, the observation method to cross check on the findings gathered through the oral interviews.

The study elicited data from a cross-section of respondents. I employed this interview method as my main source of data collection, to elicit data from not only classroom teachers and the head teacher, but also from the pupils. I employed oral interviews basing

on the fact that most of the administrators and teachers are usually more respective to detailed discussions especially when conducted at their workplaces. Where as, for pupils, given the fact that they are located in rural areas, they are more or less unfamiliar to the language of the questionnaire (hardly read and comprehended). The face-to-face interviews certainly allowed for thick description and in-depth investigation because they facilitated probing of the study subjects for both additional responses and/or clarity in a conversation manner between the researcher and the participants (Riessman 1993). In other words, through qualitative interviews I was able to probe the participant to throw more light on their responses/words. Probing yielded more details of people's experiences and enabled me to clear contradictions in my findings.

Qualitative research is sensitive to the human situation, it involves an empathetic dialogue with the subjects studied, and it may contribute to their emancipation and empowerment. The qualitative interview is a uniquely sensitive and powerful method for capturing the experiences and lived meanings of the subjects' everyday world (Kvale 1996:70).

I designed an interview format to guide the interviews and as a tool to ensure consistency in the interview process. In order to effectively gather adequate and valid data in this regard, I used semi-structured interviews and interview guides where open-ended questions were employed.

An interview guide is a list of questions or issues that are to be explored in the course of an interview (Patton 1990: 283).

An interview guide helps a researcher to answer his/her research questions from a number of people by covering the same material during the interviewing process, and helps in conducting group interviews. With an interview guide the interviewing process becomes more systematic and comprehensive by determining the boundaries of the conversation (Patton 1990). After a careful study of my research questions I designed different interview guides for the three categories of participants in the study, who included pupils, teachers and the head teacher. The interview guides were discussed with my advisor. The interview guides included different questions in connection to the research questions of the study. These guided me through the interview process (see

Appendices I-III). The interview guides were not rigid but flexible, in such a way that the order in which I asked my questions did not matter. I asked questions depending on the way each participant was able to respond to my previous question.

Structured interviewing is aimed at minimizing errors. However, structured interviewers are aware that interviews take place in a social interaction context, and they are influenced by that context. This means that interviewers must be aware of respondent differences and must be flexible enough to make proper adjustments for unanticipated developments. (Fontana and Frey 1994:364)

The way one participant answered determined the number of questions to ask him/her and also which question was to be asked next, because in this approach pre-set questions are flexible in a way that they can be modified to allow follow up questions on emerging issues, as emphasized by Fontana and Frey (1994: 365) that “the interviewer must be flexible, objective, empathetic, persuasive, a good listener, and so on”.

Before commencing the oral interviews with individual participants, I sought their views concerning the language they preferred to use in the interviews (Scheyvens and Storey 2003). All of them preferred to be interviewed in the area local language (Luganda). It was okay for me as I was an insider researcher who knows the language and understands the culture of the participants, I did not need an interpreter.

Respondents may be fluent in the language of the interviewer. But there are different ways of saying things, and, indeed certain things should not be said at all, linking language and cultural manifestations (Fontana and Frey 1994: 366)

This increased the validity of results as participants had the chance to express their views in a familiar language. It also reduced the tension which would be otherwise caused through using an unfamiliar language (English) which the majority of the participants could not speak or understand. This approach enabled me to save a lot of my time, I avoided making mistakes, participants did not ask for pardon and I had a few problems of question clarification (Fontana and Frey 1994). It is important to note that as an insider researcher, the language issue was a very important advantage in my research, because it increased participants’ motivation to release information without fear and it created high

cooperation between me and the participants throughout my fieldwork period. This approach, however, created double work for me because I had to take time to translate their views into English to make a meaningful presentation of results to all readers of this piece of work.

While being an insider researcher was of great advantage to me, I had to avoid the problem of culture blindness. Vigdis Stordahl (1994) cited in Brock-Utne (1996:610) did research on her own people (Sami population in the north of Norway) after staying in school for many years, which made her an average Sami. But the people had confidence in her and they expected her to cause a positive change to their society. Using her experience as an average insider researcher, she warned against the problem of culture blindness:

Culture blindness is a phenomenon which has to do with the fact that you may become blind to what you experience every day. It is difficult to go from being a participant to being an observer. And if you succeed in being an observer it may also be difficult to “switch off”.

In relation to her experience, by the fact that I did my research on my own people in Uganda (Africa) after staying abroad (Norway) for one year, I avoided influencing the findings by being flexible. People live in a dynamic society whereby their attitudes change with time (Durrheim and Wassenaar 1999). Many changes would have taken place during my absence. At the same time I had a different view of the world after getting new experiences from my studies in Norway. However, I respected my participants' which is also my culture but, I maintained my position as a researcher. For example I focused on my research questions, I did not ask leading questions and I allowed my participants to air out their views without much interference. This helped me to avoid gathering and reporting biased findings.

I noted that, at the beginning of my study there was an attitude among the participants of receiving me as more of an outsider (school inspector) than an insider researcher. Such a threat was reduced through the informal conversations I had with my participants

especially during break and lunch hours, which made them gain confidence in me and consequently they released the information that I intended to gather in a more relaxed manner.

Techniques can be varied to meet various situations, and varying one's techniques is known as employing tactics. Traditional techniques tell us that the researcher is involved in an informal conversation with the respondent, thus he or she must maintain a tone of "friendly" chat while trying to remain close to the guidelines of the topics of inquiry he or she has in mind (Fontana and Frey 1994: 371).

Being partly an outsider and an insider researcher, I was conscious and I tried my best to avoid the problem of going native. I basically avoided this error by not getting too close and again by not staying too far from the participants as this would bias my findings to create errors instead of increasing reliability and validity in my study.

Close rapport with participants opens doors to more informed research, but it may also create problems, as the researcher may become a spokesperson for the group studied, losing his/her distance and objectivity or may go "native" and become a member of the group and forgo the academic role (Fontana and Frey 1994: 367).

Brock-Utne (1996) asserts that the African researcher knows his/her environment better than any expatriate and he/she is likely to ask better questions if he/she is not influenced with concepts formed in the developing countries, but if he/she trusts his/her own experiences and uses them to form concepts. According to Kirk and Miller (1986:30) cited in Brock-Utne (1996: 607):

Asking wrong questions is actually the source of most validity errors. Devices to guard against asking the wrong question are critically important to the researcher.

Considering the above concept, I did not entirely depend only on the available literature in the University library about my study, but in addition I had to go and talk to the people and gather information about the phenomenon from its natural setting, after I had designed appropriate research questions for my study. This helped me to get first hand information concerning the prevailing situation in relation to my study. In addition I

increased the validity of the findings gathered through oral interviews by cross-checking it with the participant observation as described below.

#### **4.2.2 Participant Observation**

Jorgensen (1993) defines participant observation as a straight forward technique: by immersing himself or herself in the subject being studied, the researcher is presumed to gain understanding, perhaps more deeply than could be obtained, for example, by questionnaire items. During the observation process the researcher needs to be more focused on the research questions and yet there may be many things happening at the same time that can easily disrupt the observer from the objectives of the study.

Observations can be overt or covert; in covert observation the observer is not known by the people he/she observes and he/she does it in secrecy while in overt observation, the observer is known by the people he/she observes (Patton 1990). In my study I used participant observation/overt where I basically observed lessons in progress. I played an active role in the study, since I was known by the people I was observing. For example, I helped the teachers by giving out books to the pupils, I guided pupils when they were writing given exercises by clarifying the teachers' instructions and I helped by collecting the books when pupils had completed the given tasks. This approach helped me to assess the pupils' level of understanding the taught concepts.

However, there is always doubt about the reliability and validity of observational data where people are aware that they are being watched and thus some people think that covert observations are more likely to capture reality than overt observation. Hence, the downside of participant observation as a data-gathering technique is an increased threat to the objectivity of the researcher, unsystematic gathering of data, reliance on subjective measurement, and possible observer effects, for example observation may distort the observed behavior (Patton 1990). I reduced this threat by creating a friendly atmosphere between me and my participants. I did not show that I was different from them or that what they were doing was extraordinary. In fact I told the pupils that I was a student like them and I was there to learn more with and from them. When they heard those nice words from me they gained confidence, relaxed and felt at home being with me as a

fellow learner. Besides, qualitative researchers think that participant observation is the best and it is ethical and done in investigative social research (Patton 1990).

Arguments in favor of this method include reliance on first-hand information, high face validity of data, and reliance on relatively simple and inexpensive methods. The choice of this type of design was based on the fact that it does not violate people's rights; it could easily obtain supplementary reliable and valid data given the constraints of time, funds, personnel and equipment; could easily be used to measure whether even in the field despite the invalidating events; and, it could keep me from making mistaken conclusions like accepting the hypothesis when it is actually false, or rejecting it when it is in fact true. In general, the various components of this research design aimed at providing an answer to the selection of variables, type of data to the study, data collection techniques, sampling procedure, data collection, reliability and validity.

I used the observation method as a supplementary method/data collection technique to the interview method. I used this method purposely to get a clear and direct establishment of facts from the pupils and the classroom teachers regarding the subject under study. This method was easy to employ because it only required me to attend the class during the teaching and learning process to observe and gain proof of information given during face-to-face, the interview process between the main participants; teachers and pupils themselves regarding the language of instruction used during the teaching and learning process. During this process, I sat with pupils in the classrooms during the teaching and learning process and verified the data I collected through the oral interviews and documentary facts provided by the respondents, prior and/or after the class observations.

The lesson observation process aimed at helping me to see the reality of 'how' effective teaching and learning in English is in a rural setting of Mpigi district and how it influenced the teachers' and pupils' abilities to perform their tasks.

Remain focused on your research question, but be open to unexpected information. Never take anything for granted. Keep asking yourself questions



about what is going on: who, what, when, where, why, how? (Blanche and Kelly 1999: 137).

In the process of observation I used structured form of observation, whereby I focused on the same features in all the classes and the lessons I observed. For this method I designed questions which guided what I saw and heard (see Appendices IV) (Spradley 1980). In my classroom observation, therefore, I focused on establishing the medium of instruction used by teachers in practice, pupils' possible participation in the teaching and learning process and how the use of English as the medium of instruction influenced pupils' abilities to learn new concepts.

#### **4.2.3 Document analysis**

Document analysis is another research method or technique that is used to collect data for qualitative research (Bryman 2004, Patton 1990, Silverman 2005). I used document analysis as an additional method as it was necessary to look at some of the policy documents which explain the language policy being followed in the primary schools of Uganda. Therefore, I preliminary reviewed the available policies relating to the key aspects under investigation that is, English as a medium of instruction and the challenges to its use in primary schools of Mpigi district in Uganda. Information relating to the phenomenon was reviewed and important documents and reports were perused and salient issues noted. The research continually incorporated such other information as long as it was relevant to the study topic.

I gathered some documents from the school where I did my study, but I had to buy some of them from a book store in Uganda. Document analysis is normally used along with interviewing and observation in qualitative research (Patton 1990, Silverman 2005). These documents gave me an insight into the problem and supplemented the information which I had gathered through oral interviews and participant observation. The documents provided the "official" view point which helped me to contextualize the individual voices. Documents, written words, texts and objects all constitute aspects of social organization, so they are meaningful constituents of the social world (Patton 1990). Researchers in qualitative research analyze documents in order to produce reliable

evidence about the phenomenon under investigation (Silverman 2005). Hence, documents increase knowledge and understanding of the researcher about the phenomenon he/she is investigating and provides historical information as argued by Patton (1990).

### **4.3 Population sample**

According to Cozby (2007) population is composed of all individuals of interest to the research. The view by Cozby as stated determines the type of sample I need to involve in my study. The selected population should be one which has the potential to provide valid and reliable information to provide answers to my research questions in this study. This means that the choice of my sample should be representative of the entire population from which I needed to draw the conclusions for my study.

This research was carried out in one selected government aided primary school in Mpigi district, Uganda. The choice of Mpigi district was determined through purposive sampling because I anticipated that it would be convenient for me in terms of time and financial factors which were limited. The fact that it is located in rural Uganda I saw as an advantage. This was possible because being my district of work and residence; I was familiar with the place which made interaction and accessibility of participants easier.

The choice of the school was based on the fact that the study area had many government aided primary schools of which many of them were located in rural areas. Given the fact that the study was particularly enshrined to rural Mpigi, it was found justifiable to select one school of the study area to represent the rest of the schools in the sample. My research took into consideration the intensity of the problem to be investigated. I found Nsenza primary school<sup>2</sup> appropriate for my study since the problem was glaring at me at first sight. Also by considering transportation problems, time and financial constraints, I found this school appropriate for my study.

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<sup>2</sup> A Pseudonym for the case study sample

For the purpose of the study, therefore, I conducted my research in Nsenza primary school found in the rural area of Mpigi district and it was undertaken using a predominantly qualitative research design. Hence, it will hopefully provide the basis for understanding the significance of the use of English as a medium of instruction in pupils' learning.

The study focuses on assessing; ways in which primary school teachers in Mpigi district use English as a medium of instruction, the extent to which the government facilitates teachers in using English as a medium of instruction, and the effect of using English as a medium of instruction on pupils' learning.

The population included pupils, teachers and the head teacher. Hence the selected case study area had a large population which could not all be included in the sample. The school had a population of 655 pupils, comprising 302 girls and 353 boys. In addition the school had thirteen teachers including the head teacher, comprising seven females and six males. Since the whole population of the school could not be used in this case-study, it was necessary to sample the respondents in this research. Therefore, I sampled some respondents who were included in the sample and these participated in the study process. Below I describe the sampling techniques employed in my study.

#### **4.3.1 Sampling techniques**

Population sampling techniques involve a certain degree of probability. This is because the researcher does not hand-pick the respondents based on his/her familiarity with them, but purely on the grounds that will ensure validity of the findings. Sampling involves decisions about which people, settings, events, behaviors and/ or social processes to observe (Durrheim 1999). What exactly a researcher samples has a direct bearing on the unit of analysis. The main reason for doing sampling is to have a fair representativeness of the respondents to use in order to draw a conclusion based on a general consensus.

Sampling techniques can be on the basis of probability or non-probability. Probability methods include: simple random sampling, stratified random sampling and cluster sampling. Non-probability methods include: haphazard sampling, purposive sampling

and quota sampling (Cozby 2007). Because I used purely qualitative methods of data collection, due to the large size of the population and other constraints, I used purposive sampling to reduce the size of the population. Purposive sampling was applied to select the head teacher, the teachers and pupils from the three different classes involved in the study. The sample population depended upon the number of schools that were included in the sample.

#### **4.3.1.1 Purposive sampling**

In this part I explain how I selected the pupils, teachers and the head teachers to participate in the interviews. I also explain how I selected the classes and lessons to be observed. Purposive sampling is a non-probability technique where particular people are purposively selected to participate in the research because of their unique features as required by the nature of the study. My study focused on the upper part of primary schools which includes primary five to seven. In this regard I picked a boy and a girl from each of the three classes in order to balance gender representation from the sample; hence in total I interviewed six pupils. For teachers, I selected all teachers teaching in the upper primary classes (five to seven) to participate in the study. These included the head of English department and the teacher in charge of academics; in total I interviewed eight teachers. On the other hand the head teacher was also purposively selected because the nature of the phenomenon required a head teacher to be interviewed. It is normal that a school always has one head teacher, in this case the head teacher of Nsenza primary school automatically qualified to be interviewed (Cozby 2007). Four of the selected teachers were males; the other four and the head teacher were females. The case study catered for gender balance. Classes and lessons to be observed were also purposively selected. I observed lessons from the three classes in the upper part of primary school, as they were the main focus of the study. I observed examinable lessons only, because the non-examinable lessons were not taught in the school.

#### **4.3.1.2 Sample size**

The sample size was arrived at after considering the number of schools selected, pupils, teachers, and the head teacher from the school and classes included in the sample. The sample size covered six pupils, eight teachers and one head teacher from Nsenza primary

school. A total of fifteen respondents participated in this study arrived at as explained above.

I observed lessons of the four examinable subjects, from each of the three classes which were included in the sample. The subjects included mathematics, basic science and health education, English and social studies. In total I observed twelve lessons. In my design I intended to observe the non-examinable subjects like physical education, art and crafts, music, reading and writing but in practice this was impossible. Although non-examinable subjects appeared in the school curriculum and on the school time-table, they are regarded as minor subjects and therefore they are not taught in Nsenza primary school.

#### **4.4 Data Collection Procedure**

This part explores the process through which I managed to enter the field, access participants and to gather information which helped me to answer my research questions and to draw conclusions for my study. Since this was purely a qualitative research, it required the researcher to investigate the phenomenon under study in its natural setting.

Before commencing my fieldwork, I presented a research proposal to my advisor and to the class of Advanced Education and Development, unit of Comparative and International Education at the Institute of Educational Research, University of Oslo. Through the class presentation I received useful comments from my lecturer who is also my supervisor and also from colleagues, which helped me to improve on my proposal before I again presented it to my supervisor for her approval. The proposal included interview guides which were to be used in data collection. The contents of the interview guides were discussed with my supervisor to ensure that they would capture the required information from the field. In addition, the lectures conducted in qualitative data collection methods, enabled me to pre-test my interview guides on fellow students and I was able to improve them before I went for my fieldwork (Scheyvens and Storey 2003).

#### **4.5 Data Analysis**

Given the fact that I used a predominantly qualitative research design, predominantly qualitative data was collected and qualitative data analysis was undertaken. Gibbs (2002)

refers Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) to the range of processes and procedures whereby we move from the qualitative data that have been collected into some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation of the people and situations we are investigating. To him, QDA is usually based on an interpretative philosophy. The idea is to examine the meaningful and symbolic content of qualitative data. For example, by analysing interview data I attempted to identify the following: Someone's interpretation of the issues at hand; why they have that point of view; how they came to that view; what they have been doing; how they conveyed the view of their situation and how they identify or classify themselves and others from what they say.

The process of QDA involved two things, writing and the identification of themes. According to Gibbs (2002), writing of some kind has been found in almost all forms of QDA. In contrast, some approaches, such as discourse analysis or conversation analysis in many cases do not require the identification of themes. Nevertheless finding themes is part of the overwhelming majority of QDA carried out today. Further, Coffey and Atkinson (1996), assert that qualitative modes of data analysis provide ways of discerning, examining, comparing and contrasting, and interpreting meaningful patterns or themes. Meaningfulness is determined by the particular goals and objectives of the project at hand: the same data can be analyzed and synthesized from multiple angles depending on the particular research or evaluation questions being addressed. The varieties of approaches - including ethnography, narrative analysis, discourse analysis, and textual analysis - correspond to different types of data, disciplinary traditions, objectives, and philosophical orientations. However, all share several common characteristics that distinguish them from quantitative analytic approaches.

In quantitative analysis, numbers and what they stand for are the material of analysis. By contrast, qualitative analysis deals in words and is guided by fewer universal rules and standardized procedures than statistical analysis. Therefore, qualitative techniques were employed in analyzing the data that was collected. The qualitative data that had been collected through the interviews and observations was continuously analyzed in the field

as I collected it. The data was then continuously analyzed manually throughout the period of the research using the themes and code categories.

First, I organized the mass of data and meaningfully reduced it. Miles and Huberman (1994) describe this first of their three elements of qualitative data analysis as data reduction.

Data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written-up field notes or transcriptions (Miles and Huberman 1994:10).

To them, not only do the data need to be condensed for the sake of manageability, they also have to be transformed so they can be made intelligible in terms of the issues being addressed. Data reduction often forces choices about which aspects of the assembled data should be emphasized, minimized, or set aside completely for the purposes of the project at hand; this is because even at this stage, the data do not speak for themselves. This was followed by singling out for description according to principles of selectivity as stated by Miles and Huberman (1984). This involved a combination of deductive and inductive analysis. Throughout the whole analysis process, I remained open to inducing new meanings from the data available. Data reduction was guided primarily by the need to address the salient evaluation questions. This selective winnowing was however, difficult, both because being qualitative data, it was very rich, and because I was at the same time the data analyst.

During the analysis a list of key beliefs, opinions, ideas, statements and attitudes expressed for each topic (theme) of the interview was made. The statements were coded in the left margins of the interview reports and comments were put on the right side margin. The statements were further categorized. Answers from different respondents were compared to establish the most occurring responses and these were used in the analysis and interpretation of the data. The data was summarized in a narrative form and the most important presented as the purpose of data analysis is “to place real life events

and phenomena into some kind of perspective” (Blanche and Kelly 1999: 139). Theories, reviewed and relevant literature was also used to discuss the findings of the study.

Narrative analysis according to Riessman (2001) is analysis of a chronologically told story, with a focus on how elements are sequenced, why some elements are evaluated differently from others, how the past shapes perceptions of the present, how the present shapes perceptions of the past, and how both shape perceptions of the future. Narrative analysis is seen as a more in-depth alternative to survey research using psychological scales. Some advocates see it as an "empowering" social science methodology insofar as it gives participants the venue to articulate their own viewpoints and evaluative standards. Freire (1993: 87) in his problem-posing concept approach to education, which empowers the oppressed, states:

To investigate the generative theme is to investigate people’s thinking about reality and people’s action upon reality, which is their praxis. For precisely this reason, the methodology proposed requires that the investigators and the people (who would normally be considered objects of that investigation) should act as *co-investigators*.

## **4.6 Emerging issues**

### **4.6.1 Limitations of the study**

The following were highlighted as the limitations to this study:

- High costs to cover all the research requirements.
- Limited time in which the research was supposed to be completed.
- I found some difficulty in getting information from a few pupils given the nature of their education system and culture which prevented them from free expression of ideas.
- I had problems in coding and analyzing data, because qualitative methods provide thick descriptive information which required a bit of more time to be analyzed.
- Also the first two weeks during my fieldwork was time for school holidays.



- Furthermore, the family programs consumed part of my time as I had been away for one year. However, with their support I managed to collect the data in the period of the two months as I was required (Scheyvens and Storey 2003).

#### **4.6.2 Reliability and Validity**

For a research study to be accurate, its findings must be reliable and valid.

The issue of reliability and validity has been addressed differently by different writers. According to Bryman (2004) reliability is the degree to which research findings reflect consistency when repeated on several occasions in the same social setting. According to Kvale (1996) reliability is concerned with the persistency of the research findings. According to Yin (1994: 37) “the aim of reliability is to minimize errors and biases”.

Reliability, therefore, means that the findings would be consistently the same if the study were done again. In the case of my study, for example, if the teachers, head teacher and pupils from Nsenza primary school were asked the same questions after a certain period of time, they would be able to give similar answers; this would make my research findings more reliable. Reliability in case study research is the extent to which other researchers would arrive at similar results if they study the same case using exactly the same procedure as the first researcher (Gall et. al 1996).

Durrheim and Wassenaar (1999) argue that peoples’ behavior depend entirely on time. They believe that people live in constantly changing societies; therefore, they expect them to behave differently and express different views as the societies keep on changing. Their view is different from that of other researchers because they suggest that findings should be dependable, depending on the time the study is carried out either by the same researcher or by different researchers. According to their view, in a qualitative research it is hard to have consistency in findings, because societies are not static but they keep on changing with time. For example, another researcher going to do research at Nsenza primary school this year 2007 may find that not only the head teacher and other teachers are transferred, but also some of the pupils will be new in the school. This means that such a researcher would get different participants with different views and attitudes. Such a change depending on the time would cause inconsistency of results.

On the other hand, validity is the degree to which a choice of a research method investigates what it is intended to investigate. Validity, in other words refers to the truthfulness and trustworthiness of findings. In my situation the research was carried out in a truthful manner and the questions were answered, recorded and analysis was carried out. Validity refers to a situation when a research method helps the researcher to gather the intended information to address the questions as designed for a particular study and when such findings reflect a clear relationship between the variables of the study (Kvale 1996, Bryman 2004).

As mentioned earlier, in a qualitative research design, like mine, I was the main tool in ensuring gathering reliable and valid data, which means that findings in this approach entirely depended on how I designed my study, the type of methods and techniques I employed in my data collection and analysis and how I found the condition at that particular time during my study (Durrheim and Wassenaar 1999). Hence, I attempted to reduce the threats to reliability and validity through this type of design I adopted in my study, as described throughout this work.

Qualitative researchers insist on replication of the findings of a study in another setting, having similar characteristics as the one under consideration, rather than generalization of findings to similar contexts. Hence, the findings of this study do not aim at generalizing findings to the entire population in the sample, due to the fact that it is a single unique case-study and involved a limited number of participants. However, the findings can be employed to generate theories for a deeper understanding of the phenomena under investigation (Bryman 2004).

On the other hand, protecting the anonymity of the case study would increase the ecological validity of the findings.

This concerns the extent to which behavior observed in one context can be generalized to another (Brock-Utne 1996: 617).

In my study I used a pseudonym (fictitious name) to represent the school and the participants' names remained anonymous. I assured them of privacy, confidentiality and protection of their anonymity with the information revealed to me. This issue has been further described in the following section.

#### **4.6.3 Ethical Issues to validity**

Ethics plays a major role in judging qualitative research because qualitative researchers spend a great deal of time with participants and should treat them with dignity (Silverman 2005). According to Patton (1990) and Bryman (2004) ethics increase credibility of a study.

Because the objects of inquiry in interviewing are human beings, extreme care must be taken to avoid any harm to them. Traditional ethical concerns have revolved around the topics of *informed consent* (consent received from the subject after he or she has been carefully and truthfully informed about the research), *right to privacy* (protecting the identity of the subject) and *protection from harm* (physical, emotional, or any other kind) (Fontana and Frey 1994:372).

Throughout my work I have emphasized the issue of ethics to increase reliability and validity to my study. Before I went for data collection, I was given a letter of introduction from the Department of Comparative and International Education, University of Oslo, to the concerned officials and authorities in Uganda, where I spent two months (September and October 2006) doing my field work. This was done because it was considered ethical to introduce myself to the Government officials, who gave me permission to undertake the research.

When I reached Uganda I made appointments with the participants on the time and venues of their own choice and convenience. On the onset of the study, I explained to the participants the purpose of my visit and study and full consent to conduct the study was obtained in all cases. Informants need to be given informed consent to participate in the study (Kvale 1996). Most of the study was carried out in the participants' places of operation. I worked closely with the heads senior officials at Mpigi district offices to make appointments with the head teacher, who introduced me to teachers who enabled me to access the pupils.

First of all I went to the district head offices at Mpigi where I approached the District Education Officer<sup>3</sup>. He welcomed me and I presented my introductory letter, from the University of Oslo, to him. I explained to him the purpose of my research and he was indeed excited about it. Very willingly he allowed me to carry out my field work in any schools of my preference depending on my research design. He forwarded my introductory letter and further requested the head teachers included in the sample to provide me with the necessary assistance.

The District Education Officer, however, informed me that schools were on holiday for the next two weeks. This was a challenge to me because of the limited time I had to carry out my research. However, I was patient with the condition.

Creating a good impression requires a flexible approach to first meeting and the willingness to adjust according to the needs of others. In order to create a good first impression, however, we may have to practice patience and discretion (Scheyvens and Storey 2003: 102).

I utilized this time to look for the relevant documents I needed for my study and it also enabled me to pre-test my interview guides again with my family members. This helped me to get more prepared for the fieldwork as it was my first time to go into the field as a researcher. I purposely selected one school from the sample area.

When the holiday was over I approached the head teacher of the selected school. The head teacher welcomed me and after introducing myself, I explained to her the purpose of my research. She liked the topic for my study and thanked me for selecting her school for the study and she promised to provide me with any type of assistance I needed for my study.

On the following day the head teacher called a staff meeting and introduced me to all the teachers. In the staff meeting I explained the purpose of my research to the staff

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<sup>3</sup> The administrator in charge of all primary schools in the district

members. I briefed them about the methods I intended to use, the number and category of participants I needed for my study. During the staff meeting I sought consent from the head teacher and the teachers if I could include the real names of the participants and that of the school in my report. They preferred their names to be withheld for the purpose of securing their school and job. With their consent I used a pseudonym/a fictitious name “Nsenza primary school” to represent the real name of the school. For the teachers and the head teacher, I referred them to their classes/responsibilities. In the case of pupils, I referred them to their classes and gender. In addition, the head teacher and the teachers requested me to give them a feedback about my findings and I promised to give them a copy of my thesis on my return to Uganda. Giving feed back to participants was a good idea because it would serve to prove if their consent, confidentiality and anonymity was respected and maintained.

Our deceptiveness and broken promises, especially if benefits and costs have been inequitable or harm has occurred, will make any continuation of inquiry problematic. We will have wronged not only our respondents but also our colleagues (Miles and Huberman 1994: 293).

After the meeting, the head teacher called for a special assembly where she introduced me to the pupils. At the assembly I explained briefly the purpose of my visit to the pupils. In the process of the meeting I took note of the language which was used by the head teacher and the teachers in the staff meeting and at the assembly since it was the focus of my study.

Protecting the school and the participants’ anonymity and also assuring them of privacy and confidentiality with information revealed to me, enabled them to air out their views freely, in detail without fear of any harm. This approach reduced anonymity of the case study, but it increased the ecological validity to my study as claimed by Brock-Utne (1996: 618):

In order to ensure high ecological validity it is necessary that as many characteristics as possible about the school in question are given. This means the number, training, age, gender composition of the teaching staff, the number of

students, subject combinations, grades, resources at the disposal of the school, and so on.

However, Brock-Utne (1996) explained that the more characteristics are given, the easier it becomes to identify the school and makes it difficult to secure the anonymity as required by some schools. In my study I avoided this threat by giving a few characteristics to the school and my participants, which reduced the possibility of school identification. This increased ecological validity to my findings.

The next day I embarked on the oral interviews. I assured all participants of the confidentiality in the whole exercise. To strengthen my confidentiality, still with the participants' consent I was provided with a special room where I conducted my interviews without interference.

Confidentiality recognizes that a researcher may be entrusted with private information. For example, field notes, tapes, or transcripts should be stored in a safe place and information contained in them be used only for the purposes of the research. Researcher should also be prepared to destroy information provided by someone if he/she requests that it be withdrawn (Schyvens and Storey 2003: 146).

Having a special room for my study helped me to keep information more private and to maintain confidentiality of records. I discussed with every participant and we agreed that all written information was not to be exposed to any other participant, but only to be used for the purpose of my research. All participants liked the idea and they felt relaxed to reveal information as there was no third party involved in the conversation. Each of them revealed his/her own views and did it without fear. This increased ecological validity to my findings, because participants did not influence each other in the information they revealed to me. All institutions, including schools, are characterized by a hierarchy of credibility. However, they rarely work as intended because they employ people with different interests. This means that if a research report contradicts with the interests of the leadership of the institution, then it will be inevitably threatening. Hence the need for the researcher to maintain confidentiality and to protect the anonymity of the institution

involved in the study. This would consequently lead to high ecological validity (Brock-Utne 1996).

In the process of the study, I used verbatim recording of all the data from the participants. After collecting data from the pupils and teachers who were the main informants, appointment was made with the head teacher and she was approached in her respective office and interview conducted there. Lastly, I sought consent from the teachers to observe their lessons and this was done at their convenient time. All participants were very co-operative, they availed me with all the required information to answer my research questions during the study. In addition they also accessed to me some documentary data.

Gift giving is another means of showing appreciation to those who have assisted you or given up their time to speak to you. It is, however, a very delicate issue. Before giving a gift careful thought should be given to the nature of your relationship with the informants and the type of offering (Scheyvens and Storey 2003: 157).

At the end of my fieldwork I gave out gifts of pens and notes books to all pupils who participated in the study. I organized a wonderful get together party for the head teacher and the teachers and I thanked all of them for their cooperation, time and knowledge which enabled me to gather data, analyze and to make conclusions for my study as I intended. Every body was happy for my going to do my research in that particular school. They welcomed me to come back as many times as I needed to carry out similar studies. This approach was found appropriate as it opened up gates for future researchers who will be interested in the sample area, to establish the reliability/dependability and validity of the findings of my study from its natural social setting (Scheyvens and Storey 2003).

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings, discussion and analysis of the research findings gathered from the participants through interviews, participant observation and documentary review. The sample being in the rural area, interviews were conducted in the local area language (Luganda) as it was preferred by all respondents. I later translated it into English. To interpret and discuss the findings I used the theory outlined in chapter three 'Pedagogy of the oppressed' by Paulo Freire (1993) and the literature review as indicated in chapter two of this study. As a result of the qualitative methodology used in the study, the data collected has been presented in narrative form basing on the following themes:

- i) How do teachers use English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools in Mpigi district?
- ii) How are teachers facilitated by the government in using English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools in Mpigi district?
- iii) How does English as a medium of instruction affect pupils' academic performance in the upper part of primary schools in Mpigi district?

The school under study is a public one, found in the rural area of Mpigi district in the central region of Uganda. It is a primary school with grades/classes from one up to seven and it is implementing Universal Primary Education or Education for All policy, like all the other public primary schools in Uganda.

According to the head teacher, out of the thirteen teachers in the school; ten of them were Grade III teachers<sup>4</sup>, one of them holds an Ordinary Level Certificate, one other teacher holds a Bachelor degree in Arts; these two respective teachers are not trained, but they are licensed to teach in primary school. The head teacher holds a diploma in primary education.

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<sup>4</sup> The minimum qualification required to teach in the primary schools of Uganda



Of the eight teachers interviewed; three of them had a teaching experience ranging between one and five years. Five of them had a teaching experience which ranged between six and twelve years, and the head teacher had taught for fifteen years. This means that it was a sample of experienced teachers. According to the responses, teachers had certain defined classes they were teaching. However, it was revealed that teachers had much work to do as some of them taught both upper and the lower primary classes.

The responses on each research question have been categorized and coded in themes as presented below:

## **5.1 How do Teachers Use English as a Medium of Instruction in the Upper part of Primary Schools of Mpigi district?**

### **5.1.1 The commonly Used Local Language in the School Environment**

In the first instance, I conducted interviews with the pupils, and then their teachers concerning the commonly used local language while at school. Responses from all the pupils indicated that Luganda is the commonly used language by both teachers and pupils irrespective of the class grades (both upper and lower primary) in academic and non academic situations. A primary six boy for instance said:

I speak Luganda because it is my language. English is hard and our teachers converse with us in Luganda outside the classroom; and Luganda is the language which works in Uganda.

Teachers' responses to this question supported the fact that Luganda is commonly used at school. They gave as the reason for this fact that teachers basically aimed at making the pupils understand what their intention was, as a primary five teacher mentioned:

Given the fact that our school is found in Buganda, and above all in a rural area, pupils use Luganda most of their time while communicating to either teachers or their fellow pupils.

The above responses were in line with the head teacher's response. According to her, Luganda is the easiest language for both her staff and the pupils. In her words she said:

Luganda is easy for them, I think you can even hear the pupils as they are playing, they are only using Luganda.

Through participants' observation methodology, I observed myself that the majority of the pupils and teachers communicate in Luganda, the local area language, with their fellow teachers for the case of teachers and fellow pupils for the case of pupils. This was further affirmed through my observation where for the time the research was being conducted; all pupils were using Luganda in their communication. The same applied to the teachers themselves and the head teacher. They all used Luganda in staff meetings and when addressing school assemblies.

Luganda, the local area language, is commonly used by everybody including parents, pupils and teachers. This means that all the time the pupils and teachers speak and listen to the same language. In such a situation it becomes difficult for them to change to English as a medium of instruction only in the classroom situation. This is because the highest population in rural areas did not attend formal education and they cannot speak English. For example, pupils and teachers have to talk to parents in the local language at home and even at school. Therefore, lack of practice makes it difficult for pupils and teachers to manage communication in English and they prefer communicating in the local language which they are comfortable with and the one everybody understands better.

#### **5.1.2 The Medium of Instruction Used in the Upper part of Primary Schools of Mpigi district**

From the interviews with the teachers, it was found out that they were aware of the language policy of 1992. They explained that classes from primary five up to seven are supposed to use English, but given the fact that their pupils do not understand and comprehend English vocabulary; they are compelled to use Luganda for clarity to the learners. A primary seven teacher said:

Well, the policy tells me to teach in English and examinations are set in English, but pupils understand better when I teach in Luganda. Our language is very rich; a

pupil understands fully if he/she is taught in his/her own language. English is hard, so we translate into Luganda for them to understand better.

A primary six teacher said:

The head teacher told us to teach in English. But I find a problem when pupils do not understand English, so I am forced to translate into Luganda even when I am teaching an English lesson.

A primary five teacher revealed that a new curriculum for lower primary classes (one to three) was established in 2005 which emphasizes using local languages in the lower primary classes, and she explained:

Before this policy was introduced we used to teach in English from primary one to seven. But some teachers can not teach in English. They used English and Luganda in all classes, especially in the lower classes where most of these teachers teach.

This was further supported by the pupils. In their responses, four out of the six pupils interviewed indicated that they were accustomed to Luganda being their language of instruction. While the other two said that their teachers use both Luganda and English when teaching all subjects. The responses by teachers concurred with the head teacher's response on teacher use of English language. She is aware of the policy, and according to her, the teachers try to follow the policy, though it is not easy for them.

From my observation, teachers were not following the official medium of instruction policy as stipulated by the education policy on the language of instruction, even though some teachers expressed their support for the policy. This was also seen by their own explanation concerning the reasons as to why they used Luganda to communicate with pupils.

Some teachers said that they used English as a medium of instruction during classroom lessons and Luganda out of classroom instruction. However, their statements were found to be in contradiction to my observation where the class lessons were mostly taught in

Luganda. This is a strategy teachers use due to the fact that pupils do not understand concepts in English before translation, while also the teachers themselves do not feel free to use English. According to my observation, when English was used during some class lessons pupils did not understand what was being taught, and teachers' instructions were not clearly stated, implying that both teachers and pupils were not used to English as a medium of instruction. In my view the problem of medium of instruction begins from teachers' training colleges because the teachers also go through the same experience of combining languages because even the tutors who train them went through the same education system. These findings concur with Brock-Utne's (in press) findings from her study which compared the benefits of learning through a familiar language with learning through a foreign language in some Tanzanian secondary schools as described in chapter two of this study.

Therefore, basing on this observation, although the 1992 Uganda education policy on the language of instruction states that English should be used as the medium of instruction in the upper primary schools in rural Uganda, teachers themselves do not follow the policy. They promote the local language both in classroom and outside the classroom even to the upper primary class pupils. This is in line with Freire's (1993) theory which asserts that human beings cannot be compared to animals. They respond to challenges with actions and therefore, none of them can think for the other as in the case of government policy makers who name the world on behalf of the teachers who implement the language policy in Ugandan primary schools.

To sum up, all the teachers and the head teacher were aware of the fact that English is the official language of instruction in the upper part of primary school according to the Government White Paper (1992), but they found it rather difficult to implement this since the pupils did not understand English.

### **5.1.3 Problems encountered in Using English as a Medium of Instruction**

From the interviews conducted with the teachers and pupils, different views were ascertained regarding the disadvantages of not teaching and learning using the first language as a medium of instruction. And these among others were as follow:

### **5.1.3.1 Pupils' Class Participation**

Pupils expressed their dissatisfaction that when the language of instruction is English, their learning is hampered. They claimed that when teaching is done in English, their participation in the learning process is quite limited or completely non-existent. This means that using a foreign language as medium of instruction, prevented the pupils from asking and answering questions during their lessons.

When asked about pupils' participation in the classroom, all the teachers agreed that they do not respond in class if the teacher uses English, but they do participate if the teaching is done in Luganda. A primary six teacher said:

Pupils do not speak in class, they just keep quiet throughout the lesson and when they go out of class they converse and play in Luganda.

On pupils' participation in class, the head teacher confirmed teachers' and pupils' responses that pupils keep quiet in class because they cannot express their ideas in English. And if they are compelled to use English, they hate the school and even drop out, since they find the use of the foreign language as the medium of instruction such a problem.

Responses from pupils supported the findings concerning the influence of English as a language of instruction on the learner's participation in class. It was found out that teaching and learning in a foreign language (English) creates a teacher-dominated classroom, where talking and chalking replaces genuine teaching and learning. According to Freire (1993) if a teaching and learning process lacks problem-posing, then there is no dialogue and without dialogue there is no communication. Without communication, therefore, there is no effective teaching and learning.

All teachers and the head teacher agreed that pupils do not participate in the class lessons because they do not understand and comprehend what is being taught effectively and attributed this problem to the medium of instruction used (English) being a barrier to learning. This view confirms findings that education and restoration of the African

children, of which Ugandans are inclusive, is handicapped through ambiguous language policies which emphasize colonial languages as media of instruction (Brock-Utne 2000).

During my classroom observation, I noted that it was difficult for pupils to participate because first of all teachers indicated discomfort and did not conduct their lessons in a relaxed manner. This was because teachers were aware that they were supposed to use English as they had already informed me in the oral interviews. I noted that some of them found it difficult to express themselves in English, while at the same time they hesitated to use Luganda throughout their lessons. In this case some of them read notes from textbooks while writing on the chalk board and the pupils' work was to copy.

Freire (1993) referred such a situation to the use of the banking concept of education. This implies a teacher-centered/lecture method where the teacher has to feed pupils with all information because he/she thinks he/she knows everything and they have to listen. Freire criticized the banking concept because it limits the pupils' creativity, dehumanizes them and reduces them to mere containers to be filled by the teacher. He advocated for the use of a dialogue method where both the teacher and the learner contribute to a discussion in a teaching and learning situation. In the dialogue method, the teacher and the pupils play an equal role in the teaching and learning process. According to Freire a dialogue makes learners creative and confident, hence education functions as a tool for liberation and meaningful development.

Some people in the education system are concerned with learning and mostly use of the first language as the medium of instruction because children understand better. In their view, education and language are intimately linked. This means that it would be inconceivable to think of an educational situation that leaves out learning in the first language. Mazrui (1994) argues that Africans' freedom of thought is compromised by enslavement which might require an educational revolution before Africans languages can be adopted as media of instruction.

This means that such a situation, which exists in some parts of Uganda, often leads to a condition in which the first language runs the risk of obsolescence because it is no longer subjected to the constant evolution that all living languages go through, mainly because of their being used in active communication. The learner begins learning basically without a linguistic foundation and a solid cultural base, as there is no opportunity to consolidate the language skills acquired in early childhood.

#### **5.1.3.2 Code-switching**

When I asked teachers the language they use in teaching pupils of upper primary classes, all of them said they use two languages that is, Luganda and English. In justification of this a primary five teacher said:

In the lower classes pupils are supposed to be taught in Luganda but teachers do not follow it. Instead they use Luganda and English in all subjects. In this case in the upper classes it is hard for pupils to understand English because they did not master the local language in the lower primary classes. Therefore, when we teach in English we do not achieve the objectives of our lessons, so we translate into Luganda if we want them to understand.

A primary six teacher had this to say:

At the lower classes, pupils do not learn to read and write in the mother tongue, because teachers of those classes combine English and Luganda in all subjects. This makes English very difficult for the pupils in the upper primary classes, but also some teachers are not confident in English. Such teachers find it is easy to teach in their own local language.

The head teacher explained that teachers try to teach in English, but they are not good at it, so they decide to use both English and Luganda. When I asked how many teachers were trained to teach English, she said there was none because primary teachers in Uganda do not specialize; they are trained to teach all subjects. She criticized English as a medium of instruction saying:

The practiced language policy differs widely from the official language policy as teachers constantly resort to code-switching to get psychologically closer to pupils.

This was confirmed by a primary seven boy who said:

None of us, including the teachers themselves, have an appropriate level of the mastery of English language.

The above responses illustrate some of the desperation that teachers and pupils experience, during the teaching and learning process when English is used as a medium of instruction. It also illustrates that the desperation is aggravated by some of the teachers' lack of awareness of their own inadequacy in language use. In their failure to explain the difficult terms used in English, the teachers seek an escape by making it seem that the fault lay with the pupils rather than the teachers themselves. This is so because to date, there is no clear written statement to guide language in education policy and practice, therefore, schools continue to use a combination of English and local languages as media of instruction in primary school grades including nursery schools, which is contrary to the language in education policy document (Government White Paper 1992). These findings confirm the argument by Muzoora (2005) that teachers in Uganda primary schools use two languages for teaching at all primary levels, because they are not competent in either of the two languages which are the local languages and English. This as a consequence has effect on pupils' understanding of new concepts as described in the next section.

### **5.1.3.3 Pupils' understanding**

Concerning pupils' understanding in the classroom, all teachers and the head teacher agreed that when pupils are taught in a foreign language (English), they do not understand the subject matter. Instead they start sleeping one by one, others prefer conversing with their neighbors and others play in the process of the lesson. Teachers said it was easy to tell when pupils are not following the lesson, for example, when they ask questions which are quite different from what is being taught.



A primary five teacher said:

When I teach in Luganda pupils understand, but the problem is that notes must be written in English. Pupils do not understand these notes and they get confused. When I emphasize translating into Luganda, and give an exercise in English, most of the pupils fail. Some pupils write correct answers in Luganda, but according to the policy, writing must be done in English.

When asked about what he does in such a situation, he responded that he also gets confused. But he tells the pupils that what they have done is wrong and they must do corrections in English.

The head of English department used a non-verbal facial expression and said:

I have even hated teaching English as a subject, and even the pupils hate it. Pupils do not understand English because they only hear it in the classroom. So I use Luganda when I want them to understand.

She gave reasons for not strictly prohibiting the local language Luganda because some parents blame teachers that they emphasize or force pupils to speak English and yet they are Baganda (People from Buganda in the central region of Uganda).

This means that pupils do not understand English because they do not practice its use apart from reading it from the textbooks and in a few cases when talking to teachers who are not from the local area. On the other hand, parents do not value English because most of them are aware that their children will not continue with secondary education because of poverty and child labor which makes many of them drop out of school before or after primary seven. And there after in most cases they send them to get married.

The head teacher said:

...Using the first language as medium of instruction is a qualitative education tool, in that it is more likely to inculcate the higher order comprehension and communication skills that are evidence of deep learning. Pupils listen but cannot comprehend English; the three skills of speaking, reading and writing are a problem and it is seriously affecting their academic performance. It is common to find a child just moving on to do something different from what he/she has been

instructed to do. Because they fear to ask, they go on doing what they think is right. Therefore, learning in the first language has the advantage of facilitating learners' comprehension, ensuring a sound cultural base for the learner, keeping the first language alive, and therefore continuously growing, like all living languages.

According to the head teacher only seven out of thirteen teachers in the school, can use proper English. The rest are not able to, since their performance in secondary school was below average. Some of them even failed English at the training colleges, but were still recruited into teaching. She attributed this to the fact that there is a lot of politics in schools. And she suggested that politics should be eliminated from schools. This means that the Ministry of Education and Sports employees under qualified teachers to teach in primary schools who are sometimes not even trained. This is because students who perform well in secondary schools are not interested in joining the teaching profession because of the low salaries teachers are paid, instead they prefer other professions like medicine and law which pay better salaries. In addition well qualified teachers like to work only in urban areas where they get other allowances on top of their salary. Therefore, many people join teaching when actually they are not interested in the job hence, they do not mind implementing policies because they see it as a burden.

All pupils agreed that they do not understand if they are taught in English. Some pupils expressed their frustration about their teachers' lack of attention to the fact that pupils need to have concepts clarified. One primary six girl said:

We find a problem when we are taught in English. Some teachers use difficult words in class. And when we say we do not understand, they ask us what we mean and they leave us confused. Some times I come to class and I do not understand anything.

A primary five boy had this to say:

If we do not understand, it is difficult to ask the teachers; some of our teachers are rude, they do not want us to ask them questions when they are teaching. Some of them say: I do not want your questions, keep them you will ask me later.

This view was confirmed, through interviews when a primary five teacher said:

Most of the time I teach pupils in English and they do not understand, but I continue teaching and at the end of the lesson, I leave them there because I have nothing else to do, the policy says I must teach in English.

It was further proved through my classroom observation in primary six, when one of the pupils asked a question and the teacher responded that: “now another one is also going to say that I have not understood.” After the teacher’s comment he tried to explain briefly to the pupils but generally, I observed that the teacher had a problem with the medium of instruction, whereby he could neither express himself properly in English nor in the local area language because he spoke a different language. Since, the pupils had been discouraged from talking, the teacher continued talking alone up to the end of the lesson. This means that some of the teachers lack commitment to any potential means of bringing about the desired change. They leave the challenges to the pupils. Prah (2005) argues that all societies in the world which have managed to develop use their mother tongue or local languages from primary through tertiary levels. The above view means that where language of instruction is the mother tongue language, it is an affirmation of the developmental capacity of the mother tongue to grow as a language of culture, science and technology.

Pupils emphasized that if the teachers’ refused to switch to the use of local language, they did not understand what was being taught/explained in English. This means that these pupils solely attend class but at the end of the day they have grasped nothing because it is quite difficult for them to understand what their teachers teach. They therefore end up performing poorly. Pupils’ views illustrate that English is a burden because they cannot read and interpret questions and are unable to answer in English. It means that pupils could answer questions if teachers read and interpreted for them in the local language. The pupils concern, therefore, is that teachers do not explain tasks sufficiently to enable pupils accomplish them.

The above views are in line with the Uganda’s Education Policy Commission Report (Government White Paper 1992), which asserts that indigenous languages are the core of

education, as central to the transmission of the local culture, values, norms and creation of a national identity. According to this commission's findings, the first language is essential for the initial teaching of reading and comprehension of the subject matter. It is the necessary foundation for the cognitive development upon which the acquisition of a second or third language (for example English) is based. This supports Prah (2005) in his view that using mother-tongue for instruction in the early years of basic education helps pupils acquire knowledge faster.

This means that pupils do not understand when English is used as a medium of instruction unless there is translation into the local languages. While on the other hand, teachers insist that examinations must be done in English because it is the official medium of instruction. This situation creates a problem to the pupils during examinations if they cannot read and understand English, therefore requires exploring problems related to examinations, where teachers are not supposed to translate for the pupils, as illustrated in the following section.

#### **5.1.3.4 Problems with Examinations**

All teachers expressed their great concern with examinations. The majority of them said that it would be good to teach in Luganda, but examinations are set in English from primary one to primary seven. A primary seven teacher of English said:

In marking examinations if we mark according to how well they write correct English, pupils score very low marks. The background from the lower classes affects the learning of pupils in the upper classes. For example, teaching in the local language is not emphasized in the lower classes and they write examinations in English. It becomes hard to teach pupils in English before they learn their own language. Yet there is no way we can teach full time using the local language because the policy stipulates that English should be used as a medium of instruction from primary five upwards and all examinations have to be done in English.

The head of English department said:

I feel like using a language that will help my pupils understand what I teach but not necessarily English. During marking we follow a marking scheme and if a pupil makes a point he gets the marks.

A primary seven teacher revealed that they teach extra lessons after the normal school hours. This teacher explained to me that officers involved in the education sector are so much concerned with Primary Leaving Examinations results. This forces the teachers to teach extra lessons after the normal school hours when they want to improve pupils' performance, but the parents have to pay. Muzoora (2005) reported that lack of proper implementation of the language in education policy in Uganda, leads to lack of seriousness among teachers and learners; instead it promotes corruption and cheating in the examinations. Examinations in Africa are part of colonial rule and students are forced to sit for examinations in foreign languages, while most of the students in the developed countries do them in their own languages (Brock-Utne 2000).

The head teacher encouraged Luganda to be a medium of instruction, if English continues to be taught as a subject and she wanted examinations to be set in the local language, apart from English which should be taught as a subject. According to the head teacher, there is a big problem with the language policy itself. She said:

The first thing to note is that we are divided, for example the urban schools' policy is different from that of the rural schools and yet we do the same national examination. The policy should be uniform.

All respondents agreed that there is a problem with English being used as a language of instruction and many called for usage of the local language in the teaching and learning process and during examinations. Most of the teachers including the head teacher and pupils were of the view that the education language policy allows primary schools to use the local languages for instruction and English to be taught in upper primary classes because schools in rural areas cannot effectively use English as a medium of instruction.

The views illustrate that teachers in the lower primary grades do not promote the use of local language because all examinations including the national ones are set in English and yet the official language is English. This means that they have a fear that if pupils started using English as a medium of instruction at a later year, they would not be able to do examinations and to communicate in English. On the other hand, teachers are not bothered with pupils' mastery of the use of language because in marking local and national examinations, they look for pupils' ideas and not how well they use language. This situation encourages the language dilemma especially in the rural primary schools, the teachers and pupils remain incompetent in the use of both the local languages and English and at the end of the day the pupils perform poorly.

The alternative of everyone learning (or not) in a second/third language (English) in Uganda from the early years of primary school has met serious problems in Uganda. This is why Uganda adopted the new lower primary curriculum policy (Ministry of Education and Sports 2005) which emphasizes teaching using the local languages. Prah (2005) asserts the view that the use of a European language as a medium of instruction after independence in Africa, including Uganda, is a heritage of colonialism. Freire (1993) relates this view to the banking concept of education, where politicians use divide and rule method to dominate the oppressed.

However, the medium of instruction poses some practical challenges, which my study rightly points out. But those are parts of the reality of a multilingual society, not something that can be resolved by a monolingual education policy. How Uganda, and its donor friends concerned with helping expand Education For All (EFA), to deal creatively with those challenges in order to make a success of the language in education policy seems to be an issue. As pointed out by Brock-Utne (2000) the aims of the Jomtien World conference on Education for all in 1990 was to discuss and find appropriate strategies for the falling enrollments, high dropout rates and poor achievement results in primary schools of the developing countries by the year 2000.

#### **5.1.4 Staff Opinions on the Medium of Instruction**

When I asked teachers the language they preferred to be the medium of instruction for the upper part of primary schools, for example in Nsenza primary school, only two out of eight teachers supported English as the medium of instruction in the upper part of primary school classes, while the majority (six out of eight) wanted Luganda to be used as the medium of instruction and English to be taught as a subject in all primary school classes. They suggested that the school administration should advocate for the Ministry of Education and Sports and the National Curriculum Development Centre (Policy Makers in the Education sector) to provide for the local language to be used as medium of instruction instead of English and to make the policy uniform for all primary schools in Uganda.

##### **5.1.4.1 Support for English**

A primary five teacher in support of using English as a medium of instruction justified her view that, English should be the language of instruction in the upper part of primary school classes as it is an instruction from the Ministry of Education and Sports. However, according to her, given the fact that pupils do not understand English, she emphasizes translation to Luganda for pupils to understand what is taught. A primary six teacher also in support of using English as a medium of instruction said:

All pupils should be taught in English, I do not agree with the current policy which says that lower classes should be taught in local languages while upper classes in English, because it is confusing. Local languages as media of instruction will divide Uganda and Uganda needs a local national language as an identity and which can be used for examination purposes.

This teacher further argued that:

There are a number of issues which need to be borne in mind as the new policy gets implemented because efforts to create a nation called Uganda are going to become harder. The new policy in a way tends to lock people into their ethnic communities, rather than opening them up. Many people from different areas face problems getting places for their children's schooling because they speak different languages.

Considering the teacher's view that the local policy in a way may lock people into their ethnic communities, rather than opening them up was based on the argument that some children are not able to attend school in their home districts, and supposing an Acholi (a person from northern Uganda) with a six-year old child is posted or transferred to work in Mbarara (western Uganda), he may have to decline the offer or resist the transfer because his child may not be able to start school. If he/she goes, the child who does not know a word of Runyankole will understand nothing in primary one. If the family is then transferred to Teso (eastern Uganda) the child may go to primary two and understand nothing the whole year. A transfer to Masaka (central Uganda) will make the child go through primary three without picking up a thing. This means that the problem of having many (52) ethnic languages in Uganda makes it difficult for some teachers to support and implement the local language policy for lower primary school. This is because many people do not work from their home districts and they have children who will be disadvantaged with the local language policy. However, children are able to pick language faster as long as it is the language of daily use in the environment.

#### **5.1.4.2 Support for Local Languages**

Teachers in support of using the local languages as the media of instruction, in the upper primary classes, justified their view by saying that, English is difficult for pupils to use, because during most of their time, at school and at home they use Luganda, which is a local area language. These teachers suggested that pupils should be taught in their local language because they already know it, but policy makers complicate learning when they say it should be done in English. A primary five teacher in support of local languages explained that:

Our languages are getting lost. We are not developing them; instead we are promoting the British language (English) while ours are dying. The local languages are dying because there is no research done on them. And we are not developing because we do things in a language we are not competent in. We are therefore in the middle not competent in either of the two languages. And nobody tells us to translate into Luganda but we just do it ourselves against the policy.



The teacher in charge of academics said:

It is true that if a pupil first masters his/her language, he/she learns better even in secondary and higher institutions of learning and can easily learn other languages.

The head teacher asserted that according to the Ministry of Education and Sports, the official policy is now for schools to teach in local languages during the first three years of primary education and then switch to English as the language of instruction. According to her, this is an official policy and little can be done about it because educationists who approved it must have had studies and concluded that it is the best way to teach the children of Uganda.

From the head teacher's point of view, the selected local language should be used as the medium of instruction. In her response she said:

It is hard to use English alone, because pupils are used to Luganda, they do not practice English, so it is hard to learn it.

In support of her opinion, she gave her example that during her primary school, she was taught in Luganda up to primary three. From primary four in English and she was able to use English. So she believes if children master the first language they can learn better.

This was in line with the new lower primary school curriculum (Ministry of Education and Sports 2005), which highlights the growing body of research findings that support the centrality of the mother tongue or at least a familiar language in basic education. According to this policy, the first language is essential for the initial teaching of reading and comprehension of the subject matter. It is argued that the first language is the necessary foundation for the cognitive development upon which the acquisition of another language (for example English) is based.

This means that the area local language (Luganda) is the most preferred language and easy to understand by teachers and pupils during teaching and learning process. Though a few teachers in their responses tried to prove that they teach in English by way of implementing the language policy, all teachers and the head teacher expressed their need

to use Luganda as the medium of instruction being the area common local language. This is because in all school activities the pupils and teachers including the head teacher use the local language and it is the language which everybody feels comfortable to communicate with.

These findings support the view by many scholars like Clifford (1972), Batibo (1992), Mochiwa (1991), Ngugi (1986) who reflect psychological theories of language acquisition development and learner comprehension. They claim that in education, the learners' first language must be developed as the language of instruction. This implies that the use of a first language in instruction has got a positive effect on the pupils' mastery and comprehension of what is taught both in class and/or outside classroom.

## **5.2 How does Government Facilitate Teachers in Using English as a Medium of Instruction in the upper part of primary schools of Mpigi District?**

### **5.2.1 Instructional Materials**

When asked whether pupils had the freedom to access school textbooks at home, all teachers and the head teacher agreed saying that it is a government policy, but pupils lose them. Parents do not help their children because they do not know English and pupils have a lot to do at home. A primary six teacher said:

Often when given home assignment, pupils come back with it undone. This is because parents of this school do not value education, but they send children to school because it is a policy of Universal Primary Education.

On the other hand, responses from all pupils interviewed indicated that they do not take textbooks home. They all said that teachers do not give them textbooks to take home for fear that they will get lost, and yet parents are not in position to pay for them if they get lost.

When the head teacher was asked if the government provides materials to facilitate English as a medium of instruction, she responded that they provide English textbooks, but they are not enough. However, when contrasted with the pupils' responses, she

expressed a dislike for the policy of putting textbooks in the hands of the pupils, because she found it useless. In her words she emphasized:

Even giving pupils textbooks to take home is a useless policy because pupils cannot read English. When given textbooks they just tear and lose them.

This means that there is a government policy that pupils should be allowed to take textbooks home. However, the teachers and the head teacher do not practice the policy. They claim that pupils cannot read and when given books they do not see the value instead they get rid of them either by losing or tearing them. This means that one of the teachers' failure to implement the local language policy is that there are no textbooks to enable teaching and learning in the local language.

Findings from teachers and the head teacher revealed that the reading materials they get from the government are not adequate and are more or less useless to them, English being a problem to the pupils. This was confirmed during my classroom observation; I noted that textbooks were too few compared to the number of pupils in each class and that a number of between six to ten pupils had to share the same book. This made it difficult for some pupils to participate in the lesson and to complete lesson assignments in time, because very few pupils could reach the textbooks. On the other hand, some subjects appear on the curriculum but there has never been any provision for their textbooks and therefore, they are not taught. A primary seven teacher stated:

Some subjects appear in the school curriculum but we do not teach them and it seems they were not for helping pupils but only for political purposes. First of all, we do not teach them because there are no reference books for them and secondly they are not examined.

Mazrui (1997) argues that it is easy for a language to be used as a medium of instruction when textbooks and other instructional materials are available. The teachers' views mean that they are not consulted by the Ministry of Education and Sports on matters concerning policy formulation and curriculum development. This means that the policies are made by a few individuals from the top and they are imposed on the teachers to implement.

This makes implementation of policies difficult when implementers do not perceive any value out of such policies.

According to the study findings, teachers were more concerned with the advantages of using the first language for instruction in teaching and learning. This is a situation in which classroom activities are carried on in the first language, the teaching and learning materials, for example, where textbooks and audio-visuals are in the language that teachers and learners understand best, and the medium of instruction is that of the immediate environment.

### **5.2.2 Monitoring and Supervision**

All teachers informed me that school inspectors do not take time to visit schools, and therefore are not well informed about such problems like those associated with language policy. In as much as the problem of pupils not understanding one medium of instruction is told to the education inspectors, nothing can be done to avert the problem. The teacher in charge of academics said:

School inspectors do not come to our school and we do not tell them our problems. But we have a problem, that even if we tell them they would just say it is a policy to teach upper primary classes in English and that is it.

A primary seven teacher said:

Government should mind about monitoring the implementation of policies. Some subjects appear in the school curriculum but we do not teach them. For example Kiswahili does not help us, it is a foreign language.

Teachers in their responses mentioned several times that my visit was the first to discuss language problems in this school. For example, the head of English department in her words said:

You have been the first person to come and discuss language and educational problems with us. We requested for an inspector to come and help us, but he has never come. We, further requested head teachers of this zone to help us as a group, but they have not done it.

The head teacher revealed that:

Every time government just comes up with new policies before monitoring the one in place. They want to show donors that they are doing a lot of work. But even district inspectors do not visit schools. They say they are not funded by the government.

When asked how often the Education department organizes seminars regarding English as a medium of instruction, all teachers interviewed said that they never have such seminars, unless they as teachers organize the seminars themselves.

This study revealed that the Ministry of Education and Sports neither consults nor monitors/supervises the implementation of policies in some primary schools. This was revealed when all teachers expressed their concern about the fact that they were not getting any seminars about the language policy. Consequently the teachers do what they think is right, without any guidance.

The views illustrate that the government of Uganda promotes the banking concept of education, which was criticized by Freire (1993). It means there is no dialogue between the policy makers and the implementers. Policies are made from the top government through the National Curriculum Development Centre in collaboration with the donors, for the teachers and head teachers only to implement. Two teachers and the head teacher informed me that policies are made by the politicians and that they do not consult them who implement their policies. This means that although the teachers prefer using their local languages, they also lack sensitization from the Ministry of Education and Sports about the policy. It means teachers find it difficult to interpret the policy so they do what they think is right without any supervision or advice. This causes confusion among the teachers and the pupils which consequently affects the pupils' performance negatively.

According to the banking concept of education, the top government officials in Uganda think they know everything, the teachers and head teachers know nothing. Their work is to implement. Freire (1993) argues that leading the oppressed without involving them in

the act of liberation is to treat them like mere objects to be deposited and transformed into masses to be manipulated and he described such a situation as being violent.

### **5.3 How does English as a Medium of Instruction Affect Pupils' Performance in the Upper part of Primary Schools in Mpigi district?**

From the teachers' and pupils' responses, it was found that the first language dominates classroom interaction in a situation in which English is supposed to be the language of instruction.

I attempted to ask teachers whether they were satisfied with the pupils' academic performance in class. Almost all teachers expressed their dissatisfaction. For example a primary seven teacher said: "very few try to perform, because the majority cannot read and comprehend English."

From the interviews conducted with the pupils and teachers and basing on my observations, the prevailing situation has resulted in a linguistic dilemma, a situation in which the learner at the end of the basic education cycle (primary level) is neither proficient in the first language (local language) nor in the official language (English). The learner's linguistic failure also gives rise to academic failure. Even in cases in which official examinations have been passed, learning has been mainly by rote. Deep learning has not taken place, and consequently there can be no qualitative improvements in the learner's behavior. Worse still, learning becomes not a pleasure, but drudgery. The habit of learning how to learn that the knowledge economy demands thus becomes difficult.

Based on the findings from interviews conducted with pupils and from my classroom observations, teaching and learning in a non-familiar language (English) has the effect of creating teacher-dominated classes, where 'talking and chalking' replaces genuine teaching and learning. It was found out that teaching in English, impact negatively on learning for example it involves: giving directions, asking questions on the previous lesson, giving information, correcting errors of language, scolding the learner, repeating set phrases, observing moments of inactivity. Language error correcting normally

consumes a good amount of teaching-learning time and efforts when classroom interactions are carried out in a non-familiar language.

Through classroom observation it was revealed that the teacher who exhibits such negative teaching behaviors while using English as a medium of instruction turns around to exhibit positive behaviors when there is a switch from English to the first language as a medium of classroom instruction. This means that the teacher operating teaching in the first language of the children has significantly higher scores on the following items: expanding information with additional examples, enriching activities through discussions, demonstrations and giving inter-relationships. The teacher operating in the first language of the children spends little time on correcting language errors, scolding learners, repeating set phrases. Language errors are practically not a problem when teaching and learning instructions are carried out in the first language.

The above findings reveal differences in the level and type of learner participation in classroom activities between pupils taught in the first language and those taught in English. Pupils learning in English show superiority in the following items: nonverbal responses and monosyllabic responses from the teacher, respectively, two items that are evidence of learner passivity; incorrect use of language, a confirmation of the non-familiar language being a strong barrier to learner participation in classroom activities.

On the other hand, pupils taught in the first language are superior in the items that show full learner participation and a more dialogical teaching and learning process: giving conversational responses to the teacher; giving full sentence responses; volunteering extra information; relating lesson to their daily experiences and arguing for further clarifications. This point is in line with Freire's (1993) view that it is not our role to narrate to the people our views about the world and impose it on them, but it requires a true dialogue between the oppressed and the dominators about how they view the world.

This means that transition from home to school is easier, since both home and school operate in the same language. Collaboration between the wider community and the

school is also made easier, as there is no linguistic distance between them. The cultural resources of the language and those of the environment are more easily harnessed to enrich teaching and learning, and education is not limited to bookish learning. Teacher-learner and learner-learner interactions in the classroom are not likely to be characterized by psychological inhibitions, and as a result, classroom activities are most likely to be participatory. Understanding at higher cognitive levels is more likely to be promoted, as against mere memorization of lesson content that characterize situations in which language constitutes a barrier to teaching and learning. As described by Freire (1993) narration of content by the teacher leads the students to memorize the narrated content mechanically, and it turns them into containers and receptacles to be filled by the teacher.

The education system in Uganda has long failed the majority of its learners. This failure can be measured in high dropout rates and repeater rates, low learner participation and poor academic results. A major cause of this failure has been the under utilization of the learners' first languages in schooling, in favor of (English) the former colonial language in Uganda (Ministry of Education and Sports 2005). Freire (1993) relates this view to the banking concept of education, where the oppressed men and women recognize the culture, values, standards and goals of the oppressors as being superior and their own as being inferior.

The Daily Monitor of Saturday, 15 July 2006, takes a skeptical view of the lower primary school curriculum policy (Ministry of Education and Sports 2005) in Uganda which emphasizes teaching in the children's first languages for the first three years of school. In particular it claims that this policy will be negative for national unity, as it was claimed by one teacher above. This means Ugandans continue to prioritize teaching and using English as a medium of instruction in all classes because English is the official language which is used in all offices including the parliament. On the other hand, the observations concerning families moving to different regions of the country, and what happens to their children is a threat to many Ugandans because children would take a bit of time to catch up with a new language in a new environment. However, this would not be a great problem since children learn faster in their early years and especially in a situation where



most languages are related like in the case of Uganda. As for the issue of primary school teachers having to teach in their first language or another indigenous language they speak fluently is a threat because many teachers do not want to work in their home districts. Therefore, such people do not support the use of local languages because they have a fear that they would not have any more chances of going to work outside their home districts.

An important point that was established from the findings is that the quality dimensions of the use of the first Language as a medium of instruction in primary school education can best be promoted when learning is with, in and from the language. Learning with a first language children master higher cognitive and communication skills, learning in the first language reinforces the language skills acquired in early childhood, while learning from a first language promotes the feeling of belonging and self-confidence.

The above revealed challenges of using English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools of rural Uganda and in particular Mpigi district, lead us to draw conclusions for the study and to make recommendations for further considerations by the Government of Uganda and the International Funding Bodies. It also requires identification of important areas to be considered for further research as stated in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.0 Introduction**

This chapter is a presentation of conclusions and recommendations of the findings plus suggestions for further studies. The main purpose for this study in the education sector was: To explore the challenges of using English as a medium of instruction in primary schools of rural Uganda. Upper primary school classes in Nsenza primary school rural-based in Mpigi district were the cases studied.

#### **6.1 Conclusion**

The study attempted to explore challenges of using English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools in Mpigi district, Uganda. Three research questions were used: How do teachers use English in the upper part of primary schools of Mpigi district? How does government facilitate teachers in using English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools in Mpigi district? How does English as a medium of instruction affect pupils' academic performance in the upper part of primary schools of Mpigi district?

The study established a number of challenges related with the use of English as a medium of instruction and the benefits associated with the use of the local area languages in the teaching and learning process in primary school education system in rural Uganda. Basing on my research, I found that teachers' use of English as a medium of instruction sometimes frustrates the pupils' learning efforts instead of facilitating them. My findings revealed that teachers are not following the language policy as per the Government White Paper (1992). This was proved through classroom observation as Luganda was the most commonly used medium of instruction in all grades/classes though in a few cases English would sometimes be used in primary seven. Most of the time teachers used Luganda, the local area language, for instruction while English was only used for writing lesson notes, assignments and examinations and in a few cases when it required reading from the textbooks which are written in English. In addition, it was revealed that teachers and pupils do not feel free if teaching and learning is in English. Teachers use lecture method

whereby the pupils play only the role of listening without active participation. While on the other hand, the teachers and pupils speak freely if teaching and learning is in Luganda and pupils are able to ask and answer questions.

One of the causes for such a practice is attributed to the fact that most teachers are incompetent in using English not only in lower primary but even in upper primary school grades. This is because some teachers did not perform well academically, especially in English before joining teacher training colleges, while some of them are not trained teachers but they were licensed by the Government of Uganda to teach in the primary schools. However, the teachers do not admit the fact that they as well lack mastery of language, they only emphasize that pupils do not understand if they are taught in English.

Therefore, these teachers prefer using Luganda the local language area contrary to the stated language policy document (Government White Paper 1992). This means that the requirements to practice the policy have not been given due attention and some teachers have not committed themselves to using English as a medium of instruction to enable effective teaching and learning. The practice of using the local language for instruction, while using English only for reading and writing confuses not only the pupils but even the teachers themselves. This is because the pupils do not master any of the two languages as they cannot read and comprehend English. This prevents pupils from understanding new concepts and consequently affects their academic performance.

In addition, the study further revealed that the government partially tries to facilitate the use of English as a medium of instruction. This was clearly stated by the teachers including the head teacher that they had too few textbooks as compared to the number of pupils they have to teach. Also some subjects were not taught because teachers lacked references. Through my classroom observation I noted that a number of about six to ten pupils had to share one textbook during the lesson. This means that in addition to the English language being a burden for the pupils to read and comprehend, lack of enough textbooks was also another barrier to pupils' learning as a few pupils would reach the textbooks. Furthermore, lack of enough textbooks contributed to the teachers' failure to

put textbooks in the hands of the children as they feared to lose the few copies they had for the whole class. This makes it rather hard for the pupils to master the English language as they lack enough practice of English use. In addition teachers lack textbooks for teaching in the local language in the lower primary classes which compels them to use English in the case where local language is supposed to be the medium of instruction.

Findings also revealed that the District Inspectors do not monitor or supervise the implementation of Government policies in schools. Neither do they organize any seminars in relation to using English as a medium of instruction. The explanations given for their failure were that first of all the District Inspectors do not realize that teachers and pupils have difficulties in using English as a medium of instruction and secondly that they are poorly financed by the Government. Therefore, teachers including the head teacher do what they think is right as there is nobody to guide them at the school level. For example, the teachers revealed that nobody tells them to teach in Luganda in the case where English is supposed to be the medium of instruction but they do it on their own when they want children to understand what is taught in class. While in a few cases they continue teaching in English even when the pupils do not understand anything.

This illustrates the cause for the poor academic performance of pupils from the rural primary schools that is a function of the language of instruction, and the responses clearly indicate this, more especially from the pupils themselves. As argued by Freire (1993), for effective learning to take place there is need for both the learner and the teacher to participate during the teaching and learning process. However, the findings indicate that there is no dialogue between the teacher and the pupils because they have no mastery of what is taught and therefore cannot understand what to discuss and how to go about the whole concept.

Freire's (1993) and Ngugi's (1986) experiences explain the prevailing gap between policy and practice in African countries, like Uganda, where some politicians in collaboration with the minority elites promote former colonial languages as medium of instruction in schools. In addition, this explains why Freire's theory is worth and fitting to

be outlined in my study which explores the challenges of using a foreign language (English) as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools in rural Uganda. With the above conclusions a number of recommendations have been suggested for future considerations.

## **6.2 General Recommendations**

The recommendations presented in this section have taken into regard the findings and interpretations of this study. Findings have revealed a number of challenges resulting from using English as a medium of instruction which negatively affect pupils' academic performance in the upper part of primary schools in Mpigi district, Uganda. Therefore, I recommend the following:

The language in education policy document (Government White Paper 1992) as stated in chapter one of this study should be followed in all grades of primary school. This is because since this policy was approved little effort has been made to practice its implementation by both the policy makers and the teachers. Implementation of the policy will help Ugandans to develop their local languages as well as English from their early years of school. This is because Uganda has no national language and continues to use English as the official language in all government institutions. This will aid in the pupils comprehension of what is taught and their participation in classroom lessons and transformation of socio-economic culture behavior. In other words, this will help to improve on their performance in all subjects. This makes Freire's (1993) theory of "pedagogy of the oppressed" to be valid. According to the problem-posing method of education, learners need a type of education that will enable them to solve problems.

The Government of Uganda should consider approving a Ugandan local national language which could eventually be used as an official language and a medium of instruction in schools. This is because lack of a national language in favour of English being the official language, has contributed to the failure to implement the Government White Paper policy (1992) in the primary schools because teachers see more value in the official language, resulting in a language dilemma where both the teachers and pupils

lack mastery of either English or the local languages which causes pupils to perform poorly especially those in the rural schools of Uganda.

The Government of Uganda should be able to provide schools with enough instructional materials including local language and English textbooks while considering the number of pupils registered in a school. This is the only way to enable pupils practice proper use of language if they are exposed to enough reading materials during class lessons and outside the class lessons.

The Ministry of Education and Sports should sensitize parents, teachers including the head teachers about the language policy through monitoring and supervising policy implementation. In addition the Ministry of Education should consider consulting teachers and head teachers on matters concerning policy formulation. This is because some of these groups of people, for example do not see the value of teaching or using local languages, since the official language is English and national examinations must be written in English. Many people assume that pupils already know the local languages and they do not need to learn them anymore at school which is not the case.

In addition, the Ministry of Education and Sports should have the responsibility to interpret new policies to the implementers especially the teachers and always to make a follow up in the course of implementation in order to establish the strength and weaknesses of such policies. This will enable policy makers to take appropriate decisions for the necessary policy reviews and hence it will improve pupils' academic performance not only in the upper part of primary schools of rural Uganda but in all primary school grades and all other levels of the education system in the entire Uganda.

The Ministry of Education and Sports should consider only recruiting teachers who have been trained to teach primary schools to teach in the primary schools of Uganda. This means that teacher trainees should be equipped with appropriate skills necessary for supporting learning through an analytical understanding of language-related barriers. For example, teachers should be fluent in the skills of questioning and explaining to help

pupils in the upper part of primary schools overcome the problems of reading and comprehension and improve their examination performance and also be trained in the selected local languages.

This means that teachers need to break away from teacher classroom domination or lecture methods and the emphasis of subject content and adopt communication-oriented or participatory approach to teaching and learning through problem-posing method of education. This approach recognizes learner's participation and teacher responsibility whereby the teacher and learners assume equal responsibilities in the teaching and learning process. By focusing at the challenges of using English as a medium of instruction as established through this case- study, further research in this field of study is required to be carried out in a wider perspective to validate these findings especially in the areas as suggested below.

### **6.3 Suggestions on Further Research**

The study has revealed that for a better understanding of the challenges associated with using English as a medium of instruction in the upper part of primary schools in rural Uganda, there is a need for substantial investigation. The suggested areas are:

- A critical analysis of the language in Uganda Education Policy of 1992
- The role of local language in literacy development in the primary schools of Uganda
- The effect of local language as a medium of instruction on pupils' performance in the primary schools of Uganda

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix I: Interview guide for the Teachers**

#### **SECTION A: PERSONAL DATA**

1. What is your teaching experience?
2. What is your mother tongue?
3. What is your qualification?
4. What class do you teach?
5. Which subjects do you teach?

#### **SECTION B: ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION**

1. What is the local language commonly used around the school environment?
2. Which language do you think pupils use most of their time?
3. What is the official medium of instruction for upper primary schools in Uganda?
4. Do you follow the official medium of instruction?
5. What do you feel should be the medium of instruction in the upper primary classes?
6. Give reasons for your answer for question 5

#### **SECTION C: TEACHERS' USE OF ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION**

1. Do students follow your lessons?
2. If the answer for question 1 is no, what solution do you have to make them follow?
3. To what extent do the students participate during the lessons?
4. Do you find any problems in using English as a medium of instruction?
5. If your answer for question 4 is yes, explain what type of problems?
6. In case your answer for question 4 is yes, how do you solve such problems?
7. Which language do you use to communicate to students outside the classroom?

#### **SECTION D: GOVERNMENT FACILITATION TO TEACHERS' USE OF ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION**

1. Does the government provide the school with enough materials for using English as a medium of instruction?
2. If the answer for question 1 is no, what do you do?

3. If the answer for question 1 is yes, what type of materials are available?
4. How often do you attend seminars about using English as a medium of instruction?
5. Do pupils access textbooks in the school library?
6. If the answer for question 5 is no, explain why.
7. Do school inspectors visit your school?
8. If the answer for question 7 is yes, how often do they discuss matters about English medium of instruction?
9. Do students access school textbooks while at home?
10. If the answer for question 9 is no, explain why not?

## **Appendix II: Interview guide for the Head Teacher**

### **SECTION A: PERSONAL DATA**

1. What is your working experience?
2. What is your mother tongue?
3. What is your qualification?

### **SECTION B: ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION**

1. Which language do the pupils use most of their time?
2. Which language do the teachers use most of their time?
3. What is the official medium of instruction for the upper primary classes in Uganda?
4. Do the teachers follow the education language policy regarding the medium of instruction?
5. What do you think should be the medium of instruction for the upper primary classes in Uganda?
6. Give reasons for your answer for question 5

### **SECTION C: TEACHERS' USE OF ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION**

1. Do the pupils follow lessons taught in English?
2. If your answer to question 1 is no, what solution do you have to make them follow.
3. To what extent do pupils participate during the lessons?
4. Are teachers comfortable with the English medium of instruction?
5. Justify your answer for question 4.

6. How many teachers have a good command of English?
7. How many teachers are English specialists?
8. Which language do teachers use to communicate to students outside the classroom?

#### SECTION D: GOVERNMENT FACILITATION TO TEACHERS' USE OF ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

1. Does the government provide enough materials to facilitate English as a medium of instruction?
2. If the answer for question 1 is yes, what type of materials are available?
3. How often do teachers attend seminars about English as a medium of instruction?
4. Do pupils access textbooks in the school library?
5. Do school inspectors visit your school?
6. If your answer for question 5 is yes, how often do they discuss matters concerning English as a medium of instruction?
7. Do pupils access school textbooks while at home?
8. If the answer for question 7 is no, explain why not?

#### **Appendix III: Interview guide for Pupils**

1. What is your mother tongue?
2. What language do you speak at school?
3. What language do you speak at home?
4. Which language do the teachers use most of their time?
5. Which language do your teachers use in teaching?
6. Which language do your teachers use to communicate to you outside the class?
7. Which language do you feel should be used by teachers in teaching?
8. Why do you prefer the language?
9. Do you participate during the lessons?
10. Do you access textbooks in the school library?

## **Appendix IV: Classroom Observation**

The following questions guided me gather and analyze data through the classroom observation method:

1. What medium of instruction was used by teachers while teaching?
2. To what extent did the pupils participate in the teaching and learning process?
3. Which language was used by the teachers to interact with pupils in the teaching and learning process?
4. Did pupils have the ability to perform lesson evaluation tasks?
5. Which language was used by teachers and pupils to answer written tasks?