The Challenges of Teaching Reading in Uganda: Curriculum guidelines and language policy viewed from the classroom

Medadi E. Ssentanda, Stellenbosch University

The goal of this paper is to consider the challenges which Ugandan children experience in beginning to learn to read. The paper demonstrates that there are disparities between rural government and rural private school approaches to reading and between rural and urban schools. The disparities arise from the uneven ways in which the language-in-education policy is being implemented and the variation in the nature and quality of the reading pedagogy in the early years. Ugandan children are being taught to read in different circumstances: rural government schools use mother tongue (MT) from Primary (P) 1 to P3 while English and MT are taught as a subject; private schools use English and teach MTs as subject. In addition, some teachers offer pre-school provision in English, so learners start reading in English, have their first formal schooling from P1 in MT (if they move into a government school) and then need to switch back to English in P4. Learners in rural government schools do not attend pre-school and begin to learn to read in P1 through their MTs, with English being taught as subject. This paper presents classroom-based research which provides insights into the ways in which teachers and learners negotiate the challenges posed by these disparities and by the lack of joined-up thinking regarding early reading pedagogy for English and for MTs. The paper concludes with a discussion of the practical implications of these findings for curriculum development and for teacher education.

Keywords: teaching reading, mother tongue, English, language policy, Uganda

---

Luganda translation of the Abstract

Ebisoomoozo ebiri mu kusomesa okusoma mu Uganda: Ebigobererwa mu kusomesa n'Enkola ya gavuumenti ey'ebyennimi nga bwe birabibwa mu kibiina

Ekigendererwa ky'olupapula luno kwe kutunuulira ebisoomoozo abaana b'omu Uganda bye bayitamu nga batandika okuyiga okusoma. Olupapula luno lwoleka nti waliwo enjawulo mu njolekera y'okuyiga okusoma wakati w'amasomero g'omu byalo aga gavuumenti n'ag'obwannannyini, ne wakati w'amasomero g'omu byalo n'ag'omu bibuga. Enjawulo zino ziva mu ngeri ez'enjawulo ezitatuukana mu kugoberera enkola ya gavumenti ey'ebyennimi mu masomero wamu ne mu njawulo mu ngeri ne mu mutindo gw'okusomesa okusoma mu myaka egisooka. Abaana b'omu Uganda bayigirizibwa okusoma mu mbeera ez'enjawulo: amasomero ga gavuumenti ag'omu byalo gakozesa olulimi oluzaaliranwa okutandikira mu P1 okutuuka mu P3 so ng'ate Olungereza n'olulimi oluzaaliranwa bisomesebwa ng'amasomo; go amasomero ag'obwannannyini gakozesa Lungereza, bwe batyo abayizi batandikira mu Lungereza okuyiga okusoma, ate olwo mu P1 ne bayigira mu lulimi oluzaaliranwa (bwe baba nga bagenze mu somero erya gavuumenti) ate olwo ne baddayo mu Lungereza nga bagenze mu P4. Abayizi abasomera mu masomero ga gavuumenti tebasoma nnasale era bwe batyo batandikira mu lulimi luzaaliranwa okuyiga okusoma ng'Olungereza balusoma ng'essomo. Olupapula luno lwoleka okunoonyereza okwakolebwa mu kibiina era nga kulaga ebirowoozo eby'enjawulo mu ngeri abasomesa n'abayizi gye boolekeramu ebisoomoozo ebijjawo olw'enjawulo ezikooneddwako waggulu, wamu n'olw'obutaba na ndowooza ya ngeri y'emu ku ngeri y'okusomesa okusoma mu Lungereza ne mu nnimi enzaaliranwa. Olupapula luno lukubira n'okukubaganya ebirowoozo ku biva mu byazuulibwa nga bwe bikola ku nkulaakulanya y'ensomeserezo n'okutendeka abasomesa.

Ebigambo ebikulu: Okusomesa okusoma, olulimi oluzaaliranwa, Olungereza, enkola y'ebyennimi, Uganda

1 Introduction

"Of all the core competencies recognized to contribute to lifelong learning and sustainable development, none is quite as central as the ability to read and write" (Trudell, Dowd, Piper, & Bloch 2012:8). As these authors point out, learning to read is one of the literacy skills that children must acquire for them to progress well in their education career. This paper reports on how Ugandan children, in different schools, begin to learn to read. In the paper, I present evidence to indicate that, while children in Uganda find themselves in different types of learning environment, they all face considerable challenges in beginning to learn to read: those in rural government schools go through different challenges from those of rural private schools. In addition, children in urban schools also go through varied experiences which arise from the language backgrounds they have and the language(s) with which they begin to learn to read.

Since 2006/2007, there has been a language policy in Uganda which allows rural primary schools to select a dominant local language or learners' familiar language to use as a language of learning and teaching (LoLT) for the first three years of primary schooling. Primary (P) 4 is then transitional and P5 through P7 is English-only[1]. It is the responsibility of District Language Boards (DLBs) to

identify a dominant local language in a district and such a language should be used as LoLT in primary schools found in that district. By 2009, there were about 35 languages approved by National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) as LoLTs in primary schools (Kateeba 2009). Urban schools are assumed to have complex multilingualism so they use English as language of learning and teaching (LoLT) but they are required to teach MTs as subjects (Government of Uganda 1992; Kateeba 2009; Ministry of Education and Sports 2004; NCDC 2006a).

This paper draws on a larger doctoral study which focussed on teachers' understanding and management of the process of transition from MT education to English medium education in Uganda. Data for this wider study was collected in ten schools: two government-owned and two privately owned schools from Rakai, a rural district; four government schools from Oyam, another rural district and two schools (one government owned and one privately owned) from Kampala the capital of Uganda. The study involved use of document analysis, questionnaires, classroom observations and follow-up interviews. Data was analysed using a triangulation design, one in which insights gleaned from different sources are checked against each other, so as to build a fuller, richer and more accurate account (Creswell & Clark 2007; Denscombe 2008). Data for this study was collected between September and November 2012.

This paper is organised as follows: I shall begin by discussing literature related to how children learn to read. I then go on to focus on recent assessments of the overall performance of Ugandan children in reading and writing. After this, I present and discuss the findings of research with teachers and learners in a sub-sample of the schools in the wider doctoral study. This section is followed by a conclusion.

2   Learning to read in the global South: an overview

It is apparent in the literature that there is evidence of concern in many countries about children not being able to read or write in the early years of learning. The challenge becomes more serious when children come to a stage where they are completing primary schooling without the requisite standards of reading and writing. In a setting where this has been a challenge, many countries have adopted MT education policies with the objective of improving literacy skills (cf. Walter & Dekker 2011). This shift to MT-based educational policy is premised on research evidence that supports the view that learning is easier and faster in one's MT (e.g. Benson 2005; Cummins 1979, 2000, 2005; Klaus 2003; Walter & Chuo 2012; Woldemariam 2007). Reading is one of five skills (speaking, reading, writing, listening and comprehension). It is also a skill that must be purposefully acquired. Ball (2011:6) defines literacy as the "ability to read, write, calculate and otherwise use a language to do whatever is needed in life".

Trudell et al. (2012:7) state that

> Since reading and writing are meaning-filled activities, learning to read and write must also be meaning-based; this means, among other things, that it must be done in a language the students understand. Use of the child's language as the medium of instruction and the language of reading

accelerates learning, and allows the child to develop the skill and knowledge that will enhance his or her potential for lifelong learning.

Heugh (2011) has considered in detail how reading is handled, especially in early-exit programmes. She explains that children are usually exposed to literacy at their first encounter with the school where they are presented with simple stories that are written in a familiar genre. During the first three years of children's study, there is limited reading and writing. Through the simple stories that children are exposed to, they begin to recognize letters of the alphabet, simple vocabulary and simple sentences plus other orthographical symbols. These recognition skills typically develop by end of the second year. Heugh (2011:121-122) then points out that, at the beginning of fourth year, children are expected to read more fluently as they are exposed to more unfamiliar discourse.

However, researchers (e.g. Ball 2011; Dutcher 1997; McLaughlin 1992) have noted that educators often have a misconception that introducing a second language (e.g. English) as early as possible enhances its acquisition. Benson (2008:3) argues that it is "more effective to learn additional languages as subjects of study". As a result, a common practice now is to have children begin to read not only as early as possible but also to begin reading in English (cf. Almon 2013). This involves putting unjustifiable pressure on children, especially when they are still in the process of acquiring their MT and when they are just beginning to learn and acquire English. Almon (2013) observes that policy makers, teachers and parents are even under pressure to prepare children to be able to read in pre-school (pre-primary). However, Almon contends that there is evidence to suggest that a lot of play in pre-school and gradual introduction of the sounds of a language can be more beneficial.

In the next section, I describe the context in which debates about the teaching of reading, in different languages, are currently being played out in Uganda. I paint a picture of what the national curriculum guidelines recommend with regard to introducing children to reading in primary schools. I will also point to the complexity involved in the implementation of these curriculum guidelines due to the uneven nature of language policy and practice across different types of schools. At the end of the section, I will then discuss statistics related to the assessment of children's reading in the years after the nation-wide rollout of the MT programme in 2006/2007.

3 Variation in the implementation of language policy and curriculum guidelines for reading in Ugandan primary schools

The need to promote the development of literacy, numeracy and life skills in lower primary classes motivated the introduction of MT education in Uganda in 2006/2007 (Kateeba 2009; NCDC 2006b). Read and Enyutu (2004) reviewed the quality of education in Uganda and made recommendations, which, inter alia, required the revision of the curriculum and changing the LoLT particularly in the early primary school years. Following Read and Enyutu's (2004) recommendations, the subject curriculum for the lower classes was revised by NCDC and replaced with a thematically-organised curriculum (NCDC 2006a, 2006b). The new curriculum is supposed to be delivered through MT for the first

three years in rural (government and private) schools. Kateeba (2009) reasons that a thematically organised curriculum was preferred to subject-based curriculum because children at an early age cannot differentiate one subject from another and that through thematic curriculum children learn all the content in a holistic manner. Nevertheless, this curriculum[2] has been contested by teachers who argue that it is shallow, overloaded, poorly structured and that they received hurried and superficial training prior to its implementation (Altinyelken, 2010; Ssentanda, 2013).

The curriculum guidelines also stipulate that children should have an hour each day in which reading and writing is taught (for P1 to P3). This hour is divided up into two strands: "Literacy hour I and Literary hour II" (NCDC 2007:31). The guidelines for implementing these literacy hours are as follows: "The first hour focuses on reading, with presentations, practice, pre-reading activities and an emphasis on the sight words. The second-half focuses on pre-writing activities, drawing, labelling and developing handwriting". Teachers are asked to ensure that the last 20 minutes of every literacy hour is devoted to writing or what NCDC (2007:31) calls "pattern practice."

NCDC (2007:31-38) recommends six strategies or teaching procedures (TPs) for literacy development. For purposes of this paper, I focus just on the TP for reading. This strategy aims at helping learners to recognize sounds, letters and pictures. Children can do this by matching shapes or letters that are the same, finding the odd ones, and recognizing and describing pictures and shapes. Learners are also expected to match letters to words starting, for example, with the letter, writing that letter on a chalkboard, and saying the sound, then writing it out on their slates and drawing a picture of an object whose name starts with that letter. It is assumed that all these activities can enable learners to become fluent in reading in three years. In the next section of this paper, I will provide some examples of how these guidelines are actually translated into practice in different kinds of schools and classrooms.

Pre-primary education in Uganda is not compulsory (Ejuu 2012; Uganda Child Rights NGO Network 2006), but the elective nature of pre-school education has made the process of introducing children to reading rather complex. Government schools in rural areas do not have pre-primary classes while all private schools do. Children join government schools in P1 at the age of six (the official age for entry to P1) and they learn through MT for the first three years while those who attend private schools join school at the age of three or four in pre-primary. Children in private schools attend pre-primary for two or three years before they join P1 at the age of six. Learning in private schools is introduced in English in many pre-primary classes, while those in government schools are introduced to reading in P1, in their MT, and they learn English as subject. Private schools teach MT as subject in P1 to P3 and in these three years, reading in MT is also included. In short, there is considerable variation, across the public/private sectors of schooling and between rural and urban areas, with respect to the timing for the introduction of early reading and with respect to the language used for teaching and learning at this crucial stage in a child's education.

In the next few paragraphs, I take a brief look at the evidence currently available with regard to educational outcomes for Uganda as whole, since the introduction of MT education. I focus in particular on some of the national assessments for literacy development in the early years.

Piper (2010) reported on EGRA assessments (Early Grade Reading Assessment) involving both MT and English. The assessment covered, letter naming fluency, letter-sound fluency, syllable reading fluency, phonological awareness, oral reading, familiar word fluency, connected text oral reading fluency and reading comprehension in connected text. This report showed that children in the central region were quicker at identifying sounds in their MT than in English. However, when placed in an international context, the level of performance of learners' in Uganda was below the regional level for East Africa and below international levels. In addition, comprehension levels were reported to be close to zero in English.

Two reports produced by a private NGO (Uwezo 2010, 2011) presented a review of the English literacy skills of children in East Africa. It also revealed low levels of literacy in the Ugandan context: "Overall at least one out of every five (21%) of all the class P3 children sampled across the country could not even recognize letters of the English alphabet; and only 7% could read and understand an English story text of class P2 level difficulty. Almost one out of every five (17%) of all the class P7 children could not read and understand an English story text of class P2 level difficulty" (Uwezo 2011:14).

Yet another report by UNEB (Uganda National Examinations Board 2010) also confirmed the low levels of literacy acquisition among primary school children, not only in local languages but also in English. Similar findings were reported by the Mango Tree Laŋo Literacy Project (Mango Tree Laŋo Literacy Project 2010). This study was carried out in the Laŋo Sub-Region (Northern part of Uganda) in both urban and rural schools. The study found that, by end of P1, pupils were not able to identify the alphabet and neither could they read a simple text with minimal fluency. Looking at this situation, Uwezo (2011) asks: "Are our children learning?" Clearly, these data communicate that there is a problem with the teaching of reading in Uganda. It also appears that the situation is not getting better, even after introducing MT education.

In all four reports quoted above, emphasis was placed on children's reading and counting skills presumably because "reading and maths are normally considered the most fundamental of the basic skills to be taught and mastered in early basic education" (Walter & Dekker 2011). Wren (2000:7) stresses that "if children are still struggling with reading skills in the third grade, odds are, they will be struggling the rest of their lives." He goes on to refer to the 'Mathew effect' in reading (this term is adapted from The Bible, Mathew 25:29) which, when loosely paraphrased, means "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer" (Wren 2000:8). As is the case elsewhere, some children in Uganda join school with already developed skills depending on their parental economic and/or educational status while others, particularly those from rural areas, do not have any. Wren (2000:8) argues that:

> If children who lack the foundational skills do not develop those skills early on, their peers leave them behind. At kindergarten and first grade, the gap is surmountable, and teachers can help all children gain the necessary foundational skills for reading success. Beyond the first grade, however, the gap becomes increasingly larger. By fourth grade, helping children to gain these foundational skills is time-consuming and usually very frustrating for the child. Worse than that, however, it is also usually unsuccessful.

Wren's challenging remarks have particular resonance in the case of some rural children in Uganda who attend government schools and who do not have a chance to attend pre-school. Bridging the two-year-gap of their counterparts in private schools is very challenging and in many cases impossible. The assessments alluded to above usually indicate that children from private schools perform better than those in government schools.

The challenges related to reading are not only faced by learners but also by some teachers. In the 2011 assessment by the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB), teachers' reading skills were also assessed. UNEB (2011: xii) found that "pupils' weak performance in Literacy could have been due to the deficiency in the teachers' skills to teach, particularly reading, reflected by the teachers' weak performance in Oral Reading; implying that they themselves might not have been taught reading skills." This remark implies that there are teachers in Uganda who are not fully prepared to handle the challenges involved in the teaching of reading (cf. Kyeyune 2012). As the UNEB report suggests, it is difficult for the teachers to properly manage reading when they themselves have some difficulties with reading tests.

Having looked at some of the survey evidence and at some educational reports which focus on broad trends, I turn now to some of the insights gleaned from the classroom-based research I carried out for my doctoral level study. In the following section I draw on some classroom vignettes to demonstrate the challenges that some teachers and learners have in engaging with reading.

4   Insights from classroom-based research

The challenges related to reading reported here hinge on two critical issues: one is that of not making pre-primary schooling compulsory as pointed out earlier, and secondly, the language-in-education policy which is unevenly implemented. As indicated earlier, the MT policy of 2006/7 allowed rural schools to select a dominant local language in the community to be used as language of learning and teaching (LoLT). However, since then, private schools have created a problem of "complex multilingualism" within the educational system, in that they teach through English and teach MT as a subject, while government schools teach and use MT – in the first three years of primary schooling as required by the national policy (Ssentanda, 2013). Schools have found ways of manipulating policy by switching between languages (MTs and English) and, as I will show below, this has led to the development of different approaches to teaching reading. This variation in practice poses a considerable challenge for learners, especially when it comes to the learning of letter/sound correspondences. It is also possible that this challenge can spill over when it comes to reading words, sentences and, later on, whole texts.

4.1 The provenance of the classroom interactions

Before proceeding to the details of insights from the classroom, it is in order to show the provenance of the extracts of classroom interaction that I will be discussing. The classroom practices described and analysed here were observed and audio-recorded in three rural schools from Rakai district: school A and C

are government schools and school B is a private school. Private schools in this rural district have high learner:teacher ratios compared to government schools particularly because of dwindling quality of education in government schools after the introduction of Universal Primary Education in 1997 and the misconceptions around learning through MT (see Ssentanda 2013; World Bank 2002). In the paragraphs above, I have already pointed out the use of different LoLT in the two sets of schools. All three teachers who feature in these extracts of classroom interaction were female: all had a Grade III[3] certificate and had taught for between six to ten years. The LoLT in these lessons from which Extracts 1, 2, 5, 6, and 7 were taken was English, while that of Extracts 3 and 4 were taken from lessons conducted in Luganda (in P1). As mentioned earlier, this study employed triangulation; as such interviews were held with classroom teachers. These conversations were audio recorded to capture the details of teachers' insights about the language policy and curriculum (see footnote 4).

4.2 The challenge of letter naming

One of the first steps to reading is letter and sound identification and naming (cf. Hoover & Gough 2000). This is the point at which the challenge of teaching reading in Uganda starts. Traditionally, letters and sounds have been taught differently in Luganda and English. Luganda shares an alphabet with English except for two letters, /ŋ, ɲ/, which Luganda employs in its orthography. In English, sounds/letters have names e.g., [bi] for /b/, [em] for /m/, [ke] for /k/, etc. In Luganda similar sounds are assigned different names e.g., [ba] for /b/, [ma] for /m/, [ka] for /k/, etc. In sum, all letter names in Luganda have /a/ added on to every consonant. Therefore, as teachers teach Luganda and English, they need children to remember that the letters in each language have different names, even though the letter looks the same in the orthography.

The extract below comes from an English lesson in P1 in a government school (School A). There were 34 learners in this class. As the teacher[4] was teaching English, she expected learners to respond to questions "in English" not "in Luganda". In this lesson the teacher asked the learners to spell the words that they had been learning about that day. There were learners who pronounced the letter names "in Luganda" rather than "in English". The teacher's response to this is revealed in the following extract. The teacher turns are indicated with T and the learners' turns with L. A singular L shows a turn taken by one pupil and the plural form (Ls) shows a turn taken by several pupils. The Luganda text is in bold, the translation is in italics and the English text is in normal typeface.

Extract (1)

[1]T:		Ok, sit on your desk. Can you spell, let us spell this word. We are going to spell the word bananas. Let us spell it. Letterˆ...
[2]Ls:		b [bi] [Some learners say "ba"]
[3]T:		Letterˆ…
[4]Ls:		b [bi] [Some learners say "ba"]
[5]T:		This is letterˆ…?
[6]Ls:		b [b] [Some learners say ba]
[7]T:		**Bannange Kaweesi,** is this letter "ba"? We are in English. We are not in Luganda **Kaweesi. Owulidde Kaweesi**? This is letter b ["bi"]
		Friends, Kaweesi, is this letter "ba"? We are in English. We are not in Luganda Kaweesi. Have you heard, Kaweesi? This is letter b ["bi"]
[8]Ls:		b ["bi"] [there is one child who still says "ba"].

9T: **Kaweesi** come. **Kaweesi** come. Letter **"ba" yo gy'oyogerako, olwo Luganda, owulidde?** But now we are inˆ…? English. We are inˆ...? **Kaweesi** come. **Kaweesi** come. Your letter [ba] is in Luganda but we are now in English. Have you heard? But we are in....? English. We are in....?

10**Kaweesi**:   English.

11T: We call it letter "bi". Letterˆ…?

12**Kaweesi**:   "bi".

13T: Can you write it for me there? Write letter "bi" for me. Get this piece of chalk. **Kaweesi** is going to write letter "bi". Uhm, get a piece of chalk, write it there. Write letter "bi". Letter "bi". **Bannange Kaweesi** is that letter "bi"? **Nedda nedda, bannange Kaweesi** this is not letter "bi" Who can write for us letter "bi"? **Kaweesi** cannot. Uhm, **Kimera** get... That's why we call it letter "bi" when we are in English. **Wamma Kimera** help us. **Eeeh, bannange labayo akatwe kano, naye nki? Ntuufu.** Let us give him soda.
Can you write it for me there? Write letter "bi" for me. get this piece of chalk. Kaweesi is going to write letter "bi". Yes, get a piece of chalk, write it there. Write letter "b". Letter "bi". **Oh Kaweesi, is that letter "bi"? No, no Kaweesi this is not letter "bi".** *Who can write for us letter "bi"?* **Kimera** *get... That's why we call it letter "b" when we are in English.* **Please Kimera,** *help us.* **Look at this long stick, but is it what… it is right.** *Let us give him soda.*

14Ls: **Saanukula, saanukula omuwe**.
Open, open, give him.

15T: **Tanywedde soda waffe tumuddemu tumumuwe, yenna ayiise mu ttaka**! Let us give him a soda.
He has not drunk our soda, it all spilled on the floor! Let us give him a soda.

16Ls: **Saanukula, saanukula omuwe.**
Open, open, g ive him.

17T: So this is letter "bi". **Kaweesi** look this way. This is letter?

18T & Ls: "bi".

19T: This is letterˆ…?

20Ls: "bi".

21T: **Eno teriiyo Kaweesi, ddamu otuwandiikire entuufu tulabe oba ogitegedde. Kaweesi** is going to write now letter "bi". **Kaweesi bannange ka tulabe oba amaaso ge galaba. Ka tulabe. Kati ate kano kaki?** Ok thank you very much. Kaweesi has managed to write letter "bi". Let us clap for him now. Ok, we keep spelling, this letter?
We do not have this letter Kaweesi, rewrite it. Write the correct one so that we know you have understood it. *Kaweesi is now going to write letter "bi".* ***Let us see if Kaweesi's eyes see. Let's see. What is this now?*** *Okay, thank you very much.* **Kaweesi** *has managed to write letter "bi". Let us clap for him now. Ok, we keep spelling, this letter?*

In this extract, the teacher asked learners in turn 1 to spell the word 'banana'. In line 2, learners started to spell it. Some learners pronounced letter /b/ as [bi] and others [ba]. In line 7 the teacher identified one of the learners, Kaweesi, who pronounced /b/ as [ba]. As I indicated above, /b/ is pronounced as [ba] in Luganda. Clearly, Kaweesi and other learners were confused about the two "names" given to the same letter in the two different languages which they were in process of learning to read.

Kaweesi was reminded by his teacher that he was in an English lesson, not a Luganda one. When this "problem" persisted, Kaweesi was called out (see line 9) to the front of the class; he was asked to pronounce the letter "in English" not "in Luganda" (see turns 9 to 12). In addition, Kaweesi was asked to write the letter on the chalkboard, a task that was not easy for him (line 13) and when he succeeded he was given applause (turn 16). The applause is given in form of a gesture, opening a bottle of soda, and giving it to him to drink. In rural areas,

soda is a drink that people do not normally have and children love it so much. It is usually served at functions or to a visitor at home. So it is a gesture used here in class to thank the learner and to say that they deserve a "special drink".

I should also mention here that the curriculum and policy guidelines for P1 to P3 call for a one-teacher-one-classroom system. A teacher assigned to a class handles all the learning areas in the curriculum alone. This also adds to the challenge involved in creating learning environments conducive to learning: learners see the teacher calling /b/ [ba] in a Luganda lesson and after just an hour or less, in an English lesson, the same teacher tells them to call the same letter [bi]. This must be confusing for the learners, particularly those in government schools such as the one where the exchange in Extract 1 was recorded, who are coming into contact with letter/sound correspondences for the very first time in P1.

In the extract below, we return to the same class, in School A, and we see that the problem of letter naming has resurfaced. This time the problem came up when the pupils were attempting to read the word: "fish".

Extract (2)

₁Ls:	Fish.
₂T:	Uhm, letter?
₃Ls:	"f" *[others fish]*
₄T:	Letterˆ…?
₅Ls:	"f" *[others say fish and "fa"].*
₆T:	Letterˆ…?
₇Ls:	"f" *[others fish].*
₈T:	Who is saying letter "fa" **ajje agituwandiikire;** we are in English, **temuliimu** letter "fa". Who is saying letter "fa"? **Naye Kaweesi** my dear friend, again you are the one saying letter "fa"! Can you write for us your letter "fa"and we see. We are in English **tetugimanyi nayo. Wandiika "f" gye twagala. Wamma ani amanyi letter "fa" mu Luzungu? Gy'eri mu Luzungu? Teriiyo. Tekola ki?**
	Who is saying letter "fa"; **let him/her come and write it for us;** *we are in English,* **there is no** *letter "fa". Who is saying letter "fa"?* **But Kaweesi** *my dear friend, again you are the one saying letter "fa"! Can you write for us your letter "fa"and we see. We are in English* **we do not know of letter "fa". Write "f" "f", it is what we want. Class, who knows letter "fa" in English? Is it there in English? It is not there. It is not what…**
₉Ls:	**Teriiyo.**
	It is not there.
₁₀T:	**Mu Luzungu tekola kiˆ…?**
	In English it is notˆ…
₁₁Ls:	**Teriiyo.**
	It is not there.
₁₂T:	We have letter "f" [ef]. This is letter "f" [ef]. Letter…?
₁₃Ls:	"f" [ef]
₁₄T:	Write for us letter "f" and we see. **Wandiika eyiyo Kaweesi.** Letter "f". Uhm? Ahaa, **Kaweesi** what is this letter?
	Write for us letter "f" and we see. **Write your letter, Kaweesi.** *Letter "f". Uhm? Ahaa,* **Kaweesi** *what is this letter?*
₁₅Kaweesi:	"f" [ef].
₁₆T:	Good. Now **Kaweesi** is coming up. It is letter "f". Thank you **Kaweesi**. Uhm, letter…?

As in the previous instance, the teacher "cautions" learners that they are learning English and that in English letter [fa], as some learners pronounced it, is not known (see turn 8). The same learner, Kaweesi found this challenging. The

teacher wanted Kaweesi to pronounce /f/ as [ef] not as [fa] since this was an English reading lesson.

It is noteworthy that in extracts 1, 2 and 7, teachers employed learners' MT in various ways: to encourage learner participation [extract 1 turn 21; extract 3 turn 1); to attract all the learners' attention or that of a particular learner (such as Kaweesi) (e.g. Extract 1, turn 7 – the use of *bannange Kaweesi* **friends, Kaweesi** and Extract 2, turn 8 – the use of but Kaweesi); to distinguish between talk about lesson content and the giving of instructions or procedural utterances (e.g. Extract 1, turns 7, 8, 13, 15, 21; Extract 2, turns 8, 10 and 14 and Extract 7). Learner participation was also cued or prompted by a teacher's rising tone of voice. This is marked by (ˆ) in all extracts. Whenever the teacher changed the tone of their voice and used a question form, learners either completed their utterances (e.g. in Extract 1, turns 3, 4, 5, 6, 11 and 12) or repeated what they had said. This interactional routine has been identified in research in other multilingual school settings in countries in the global south where both teachers and learners are challenged by the constraints imposed by a particular LoLT (cf. Hornberger & Chick 2001).

Even the private school learners, who had attended pre-school, found these letter naming conventions confusing. In Extract 3 below, I show an example from an audio-recorded P2 class in a private school (School B). A letter naming problem, similar to that illustrated in Extracts 1 and 2), occurred in a Luganda lesson when a learner pronounced the name of a letter "in English". The teacher reminded the learner that it was a Luganda lesson, not English one and so the learners had to name the letters "in Luganda". In other words this teacher appeared to aim at keeping the two languages, Luganda and English separate. NCDC prohibits teachers from using MT in English lessons.

Extract (3)

T:	**Teyataddeyo katonnyeze? Uhm, Mawanda wamma ggwe olabyewo ki?**
	*Didn't he put a dot? Yes **Mawanda**, what do you see?*
Mawanda:	"y" [pronounces it as "wayi" instead of "ya" as is the case in Luganda].
T:	**Aaa, tuli mu Luganda**.
	No, we are in Luganda.

The main challenge illustrated here, and in Extracts (1) and (2), relates to the question of how to handle letter names: how should letter names be pronounced in the teaching of reading? As mentioned earlier, in the Ugandan context, there are two parallel systems for teaching sound/symbol correspondences and there is ample scope for confusion.

Yet more variation in practice derives from the co-existence of different methods for teaching reading, especially when English is the LoLT. There are schools which teach graphic symbols to represent sounds from an alphabetic point of view when teaching English, while others teach them from a phonics point of view. NCDC encourages teachers to use the phonics approach. The phonics approach is beginning to take hold in some urban schools in Uganda but as yet not many teachers are familiar with it. Before this practice, the teaching of sounds was handled from a purely alphabetical point of view, that is to say, English letters were pronounced differently from those in Luganda: e.g., English

letter names included /b/ as [bi]; /k/ as [ke]; /z/ as [zed], while Luganda letter names included /b/ as [ba]; /k/ as [ka]; /z/ as [za], etc.

When these two systems run concurrently, this presents difficulties for some learners, especially since they are also learning two languages at the same time. The fact that English and Luganda share the same alphabet should be an opportunity to find common ground for handling the teaching of these sound/symbol correspondences in a way that does not confuse learners. Hoover and Gough (2013) have observed that letter knowledge has been shown to be a predictor of later reading success. Therefore, the lack of a joined-up approach to the teaching of letters and sound/symbol correspondences could well have a substantial effect on the rate at which children acquire reading skills.

4.3 The challenge of teacher education

Putting aside the issues that arise as a result of the diverse ways of appropriating language policy, in public and private schools in Uganda, there is also a general problem related to teacher education and support with regard to the task of teaching reading in primary schools. Kyeyune (2012) states that: "trainees reproduce the tutors' approaches." Teachers will teach learners just as they were taught to do so at college. There has been little change in the content of the teacher education curriculum. In the extract that follows, I demonstrate how a P1 teacher, in a government school in a rural area (School C), handled reading in a Luganda lesson.

In this class, the teacher did not introduce the lesson, but simply titled this lesson Reading on the chalkboard. She then wrote letters, syllables and words on the blackboard. After writing the letters, syllables and the two syllable words shown in the extract, the teacher began to read the letters and learners, without any prompting from their teacher, repeated all that the teacher read out. From line 1 to 16, the teacher and learners repeated in turn the 5 Luganda vowels. The teacher followed this with syllables as shown in turns 17 to 30. Starting at line 31, the teacher began to make words out of syllables, e.g. sala 'cut' (turn 31). For every word to be pronounced, each syllable was first pronounced independently as in lines 39 to 44; 45 to 50, etc. In turn 62, the teacher asked learners to take the lead in the reading as she had done in the previous turns. Learners started to pronounce the individual letters in chorus, repeating each letter at least twice as instructed by the teacher in turn 64, 67 and 69. When the teacher realized that not all the learners were participating, she said: Tugendere wamu 'let us all go together' (see turn 71). There was a lot of repetition of sounds and syllables and a focus on language forms, as shown in Extract 4.

Extract (4)

₁T:	a			₄₁T:	na	
₂Ls:	a			₄₂Ls:	na	
₃T:	a			₄₃T:	sona	
₄Ls:	a			₄₄Ls:	sona	
₅T:	e			₄₅T:	so	
₆Ls:	e			₄₆Ls:	so	
₇T:	i			₄₇T:	ma	
₈Ls:	i			₄₈Ls:	ma	
₉T:	i			₄₉T:	soma	
₁₀Ls:	i			₅₀Ls:	soma	
₁₁T:	o			₅₁T:	se	
₁₂Ls:	o			Ls:	se	
₁₃T:	o			₅₂T:	ka	
₁₄Ls:	o			₅₃Ls:	ka	
₁₅T:	u			₅₄T:	seka	
₁₆Ls:	u			₅₅Ls:	seka	
₁₇T:	sa			₅₆T:	sa	
₁₈Ls:	sa			₅₇LS:	sa	
₁₉T:	se			₅₈T:	si	
₂₀Ls:	se			₅₉LS:	si	
₂₁T:	si			₆₀T:	sasi	
₂₂Ls:	si			₆₁Ls:	sasi	
₂₃T:	so					

(Continued reading, second column, turn 62 onwards:)

₆₂T: [Teacher gives instructions] **Kati mmwe mugenda okunsomera**
It is now your turn to read for me.
[Teacher begins to point at sounds and syllables]

₂₄Ls:	so
₂₅T:	su
₂₆Ls:	su
₂₇T:	sa
₂₈Ls:	sa
₂₉T:	la
₃₀Ls:	la
₃₁T:	sala
₃₂Ls:	sala
₃₃T:	su
₃₄Ls:	su
₃₅T:	la
₃₆Ls:	la
₃₇T:	Sula
₃₈Ls:	Sula
₃₉T:	So
₄₀Ls:	So

₆₃Ls: a, a, a
₆₄T: **Era**
Again.
₆₅Ls: a
₆₆Ls: e, e
₆₇T: **Era**.
Again.
₆₈Ls: e, i, i
₆₉T: **Era.**
Again.
₇₀Ls: I, o, o
₇₁T: **Tugendere kumu**
Let us go together.

Extract 5 below was taken from an English class at the same level (P1) in the same government school (School C). It was taught by the same teacher as in Extract 4. She called her lesson "revision of vocabulary". As soon as she entered the classroom, she wrote six words on the blackboard. After writing these words, she instructed the learners (in turn 1) to repeat after her as she read through "the vocabulary." She even expected the learners to repeat after her the title of the activity: "Revision of vocabulary" (turns 2 – 11). This part of the lesson went on for some time while learners repeated the six words turn after turn.

Extract (5)

₁T:	I'm going to read the vocabulary when you're repeating after me.		₃₅Ls:	Millet
₂T:	Revision of vocabulary. Repeat. Revision		₃₆T:	Millet
			₃₇Ls:	Millet
₃Ls:	Revision		₃₈T:	Beans
₄T:	Revision of vocabulary		₃₉Ls:	Beans
₅Ls:	Revision of vocabulary		₄₀T:	Beans
₆T:	Revision		₄₁Ls:	Beans
₇L:	Revision		₄₂T:	Beans
₈T:	Of vocabulary		₄₃Ls:	Beans
₉Ls:	Of vocabulary		₄₄T:	Again
₁₀T:	Revision of vocabulary		₄₅Ls:	Beans
₁₁Ls:	Revision of vocabulary		₄₆T:	Groundnut
₁₂T:	Potatoes		₄₇Ls:	Groundnut
₁₃Ls:	Potatoes		₄₈T:	Groundnut
₁₄T:	Potatoes		₄₉Ls:	Groundnut
₁₅Ls:	Potatoes		₅₀T:	Groundnut
₁₆T:	Potatoes		₅₁Ls:	Groundnut
₁₇Ls:	Potatoes		₅₂T:	Beans
₁₈T:	Fish		₅₃Ls:	Beans
₁₉L:	Fish		₅₄T:	Beans
₂₀T:	Fish		₅₅Ls:	Beans
₂₁Ls:	Fish		₅₆T:	Potatoes
₂₂T:	Potatoes		₅₇Ls:	Potatoes
₂₃L:	Potatoes [some learners are facing away from the chalkboard]		₅₈T:	Potatoes
			₅₉Ls:	Potatoes
₂₄T:	Fish		₆₀T:	Potatoes
₂₅Ls:	Fish		₆₁Ls:	Potatoes
₂₆T:	Bananas		₆₂T:	Fish
₂₇Ls:	Bananas		₆₃Ls:	Fish
₂₈T:	Bananas		₆₄T:	Fish
₂₉Ls:	Bananas		₆₅Ls:	Fish
₃₀T:	Bananas		₆₆T:	Fish
₃₁Ls:	Bananas		₆₇Ls:	Fish
₃₂T:	Millet		₆₈T:	Fish
₃₃L:	Millet		₆₉Ls:	Fish
₃₄T:	Millet		₇₀T:	Again

We see clearly from this extract that the teacher and the learners were just engaged in classroom exchanges involving simple teacher prompts and chorus repetition of English words. At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher gave no clue to learners as to how to read the words she wrote on the blackboard. When the teacher asked learners to read on their own (as shown in Extract 6 below) they found it difficult to do so because they had not understood how the teacher had sounded out the letters they saw on the blackboard to make the words which they had just been chanting. Also note, as given in turn 23, I observed that some learners repeated what the teacher sounded out as they faced away from the chalkboard. The learners' task in this class appears to be only repeating what the teacher said. The focus was not on getting learners to understand how to sound out the words.

In the next extract, we see what a challenge this posed for the learners. This time, learners were required to read aloud in a short sentence prefixed with "it is…" in response to the teacher's question: "What is this?" The learners were

required to answer the question with the appropriate word with "it is…" prefixed to the word to form a sentence.

Extract (6)

1T:	Look here. What is this?
2Ls:	[Learners are silent].
3T:	What is this?
4Ls:	It is a fish
5T:	No, it is beans
6Ls:	It is a bean
7T:	Not it is a bean; it is beans
8Ls:	It is beans
9T:	It is beans
10Ls:	It is beans
11T:	It is beans
12Ls:	It is beans
13T:	What is this?
14Ls:	It is fish
15T:	What is this?
16Ls:	It is fish
17T:	It is a fish
18Ls:	It is a fish
19T:	What is this?
20Ls:	It is a banana
21T:	It is bananas
22Ls:	It is bananas
23T:	It is bananas
24Ls:	It is a banana
25T:	It is bananas
26Ls:	It is a banana. [Other learners say, it is bananas]
27T:	What is this?
28Ls:	[Learners murmur – not sure of what to say].
29T:	It is po…
30Ls:	Potato
31T:	It is potatoes
32Ls:	It is potatoes
33T:	It is potatoes
34Ls:	It is potatoes

In the above example, turns 2 to 4 clearly show that learners had not actually learned how to read aloud some of the words in question (e.g. beans and potatoes). To begin with, the teacher pointed to the word "fish", but the learners read it as "beans". After further repetition in chorus (turns 7 to 12), the teacher then pointed to the word "fish" and this time they got it right. They also pronounced the word "bananas" correctly, but stumbled on "potatoes" (turn 27). It was only after the teacher's prompting in line 29 that they were able to read the word, after a clue based on the first syllable of the word had been given to them by the teacher. This classroom vignette is similar to those described by Horberger and Chick (2001), in their work in Peru and South Africa, where learners were doing a good deal of chanting in chorus after the teacher.

The exercise shown in Extract 5 and 6 could be described as a "guessing game" and the focus was primarily on the practice of language forms. Word recognition tasks such as this one are challenging for young learners, particularly for learners in rural government schools, such as this one, where they have no pre-

schooling (cf. Hoover & Gough 2013). Before tasks such as this, children should have a chance to learn what a word is and how letters are joined together to make one. What is happening in the above extract is similar to what Marrapodi (2013:13) has described in a study of the use of flashcards. The interactional routines captured in Extracts 5 and 6 are similar to those documented by Nyaga and Anthonissen (2012) and Bunyi (2001) in rural primary schools in Kenya, where teachers have rather little in-service support.

Another striking feature of Extracts (5) and (6), in comparison with the previous extracts (1 and 2) is that the teacher followed strict monolingual use of English as the LoLT throughout and avoided the use of the children's MT. This was constraining in terms of building classroom relationships, in the earlier extracts we saw that the teachers cajoled the children and encouraged participation by switching to their MT. Moreover, the sole use of English led here in Extract 6 to the production of rather odd, incorrect sentences in English such as "it is beans", "it is bananas" and "it is potatoes". There was also a mismatch between the teacher's prompts with words in the plural (e.g. "beans" turn 5; "bananas" turns 21, 23 and 25) and the learners' responses in the singular (e.g. "bean" turns 6; "banana" turns 22, 24 and 26). The teacher did not appear to notice this as there was no attempt to correct it. The teacher does however correct the absence of the indefinite article in the learners' responses in turns 14 and 16.

The teacher brought the lesson to a close by drawing pictures corresponding to each of the words they had covered. Since class time had already come to an end, she asked learners to continue with the work after break time (as seen in the following extract). She switched to the children's MT for the first time to accomplish this procedural move.

Extract (7)

> T: **Tukomye awo. Tujja kumala kuva mu break mulyoke muwandiike. Olyoke onkubire bulungi ebifaananyi ebyo bulungi mu kitabo kyo.**
> *We will end here today. You will go for break first and when you return you will write. You will then draw for me those pictures very well in your books.*

NCDC (2007:31) points out that the second half hour of the lesson should be dedicated to "…pre-writing activities, drawing, labelling and developing handwriting." Perhaps this teacher was trying to comply with the terms curricular guidelines on "drawing" when, in extract (7), she asked learners to draw the pictures in their books.

Marrapodi (2013:8) clarifies that there are five elements of reading: "phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency, with the vision of touching each area during reading lessons." In the lessons excerpted above, we have seen different teachers focusing on letter awareness and on vocabulary (sight word approach). Curriculum guidelines stipulate that teachers should introduce at least five words each day. Teachers are under pressure to follow what the curriculum guidelines recommend but many lack a clear sense of how to handle different elements of reading, not only in MT but also in English. Even if they use the sight word or word recognition method, there is no clearly organised lexicon from which to draw each day's vocabulary (cf. Marrapodi 2013).

Furthermore, as Marrapodi (2013:12) points out "the sight word approach is a step above the phonics approach because there is a one-to-one correspondence between a word and what it represents." But as in the last classroom vignette discussed here (in Extract 7), learners do not often have support from the teacher to help them to relate words to the pictures that they are asked to draw.

In the wider study from which the extracts in this paper were drawn, I indicate that teachers are under pressure to follow curriculum guidelines. However, I also show that there is a widespread view among teachers in this study that teaching MT as a subject hinders the acquisition of English (e.g. see teacher in footnote 4) (cf. Benson, 2008; Dutcher, 1997). Consequently, the time set aside for teaching MT is often used to teach other curriculum subjects including English (Ssentanda 2013). Some teachers also consider teaching in MTs such as Luganda to be difficult because they have had no specific training and experience and have fewer materials to handle the subject. But considering the advantages of beginning school in a familiar language and the phonic method that curriculum guidelines encourage to teach reading, the task should be relatively simple. For instance, if we take the case of Luganda, learning to read in this language should be easy as the sound/symbol correspondences are regular and transparent. Luganda has 23 phonemes and graphemes. There are few complex grapheme-phoneme relationships unlike the case of English.

5   Conclusion

The classroom-based research presented here underpins the need to find solutions and reduce the challenges learners face when they begin to learn to read. The challenge is evident in private schools as well as in government schools, despite the fact that learners in private schools have had two or three years in pre-school. Learners encounter difficulties when they are introduced to reading in two different languages (mostly in government schools) and also when they are introduced to reading first in English and later in MT and then again in English (as in private schools). Children are learning to read in highly varied learning environments. In a wider policy context where the LoLT varies significantly due to the gap between language-in-education policy and practice and to the discretionary pre-school provision that tends to be in English. The elective pre-school provision is currently creating a huge gap between learners within a single education system.

There are also other challenges. For instance, the national materials developed for use in P1 assume that learners have had pre-primary schooling. Therefore national assessments such as those alluded to earlier may not be justified when administered in rural government schools where learners have had no pre-school experience. This also impacts on national assessment results: a P1 learner in a government school should not be assessed in the same way as one in a private school.

The benefits that come with starting schooling in a child's MT are widely reported in the research literature (e.g. Cummins 2005; Benson 2008). In the Ugandan context, there clearly needs to be a more coordinated approach to language policy implementation so that all learners can have the opportunity to learn to read first in their MT and for reading to be beneficial and meaningful for them. Uwezo (2012:8) has observed that "Ugandan pupils perform

comparatively worse at lower grades, but demonstrate faster 'catch-up' at higher grades". So the laying of the foundations of learning in the early years needs to be more carefully planned and teachers working at this level need more support.

Finally, there are specific issues that need to be addressed with some urgency. When learners are first introduced to reading, the teaching of sound-letter correspondences in Luganda (and other local languages) and English needs to be harmonized. If the phonic method is to be taken on, both English and MTs should be taught with a similar method since Ugandan languages use a similar alphabet to that of English. In addition, the pre-school level should be made compulsory for all Ugandan children. As reading and writing are critical skills to master in the early years of learning and since they determine the progress of a child's educational life (Trudell et al. 2012; Walter and Dekker, 2011), this should be a priority area for investment in education. Furthermore, it would be worthwhile having more classroom-based studies so as to build a fuller understanding of current classroom practice with regard to the teaching of reading, in different kinds of learning environments. Such studies can help to inform the future development of teacher training.

Acknowledgements

Endnotes

1. English is the first official language in Uganda and Swahili is second.
2. In Ssentanda (2013) I demonstrate that private schools have disregarded the thematic curriculum in preference for a subject-based curriculum which was in place before 2006/2007 mainly because of the nature of this curriculum and the inadequate reference materials (in terms of quality of content) that come with it.
3. Grade III is attained after two years of training in a college. Candidates for this qualification are senior (form) four graduates.
4. On interviewing this teacher about her views on teaching learners through MT, she said that she felt "bad and sad about it" and she did not expect learners to properly acquire English unless they had it as LoLT. She herself had had all her schooling with English as the LoLT. This teacher shared her belief with many teachers who were interviewed in the wider study, parts of which are not reported here.

References

Almon, J. 2013. *Reading at five: why?* Retrieved October 11, 2013, from http://seenmagazine.us/articles/article-detail/articleid/3238/reading-at-five-why.aspx

Altinyelken, H. K. 2010. Curriculum change in Uganda: Teacher perspectives on the new Thematic Curriculum. *International Journal of Educational Development,* 30(2), 151–161.

Ball, J. 2011. *Enhancing Learning of Children from Diverse Language Backgrounds: Mother Tongue-based Bilingual or Multilingual Education in the Early years*. Analytical Review (Commissioned by the UNESCO Education Sector). Paris: UNESCO.

Benson, C. 2005. *The importance of Mother tongue based schooling for Educational quality.* Background paper for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2005. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/001460/001466/146632e.pdf

Benson, C. 2008. Mother tongue-based education in Multilingual contexts. In C. Haddad (Ed.), *Improving the quality of Mother tongue-based Literacy and Learning: Case studies from Asia, Africa and South America* (pp. 2–11). Bangkok: UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education.

Bunyi, G. 2001. Language and Educational Inequality in Primary Classrooms in Kenya. In Heller, M. & Martin-Jones, M. (2001) *Voices of authority: education and linguistic difference.* Westport: Ablex.

Creswell, J. W., & V. L. P. Clark 2007. Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 31(4), 388.

Cummins, J. 1979. Linguistic Interdependence and the Educational Development of Bilingual Children. *Review of Educational Research,* 49(2), 222–251.

Cummins, J. 2000. *Language, Power and Pedagogy: Bilingual children in the crossfire.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Cummins, J. 2005. Teaching for Cross-Language Transfer in Dual Language Education: Possibilities and Pitfalls. Paper delivered at the TESOL Symposium on Dual Language Education: Teaching and Learning Two Languages in the EFL Setting Bogazici University Istanbul, Turkey on Friday, September 23, 2005.

Denscombe, M. 2008. Communities of Practice: A Research Paradigm for the Mixed Methods Approach. *Mixed Methods Research*, 2(3), 270–283.

Dutcher, N. 1997. *The use of the First and Second languages in Education: A review of International Experience.* Pacific Islands Discussion paper series, No 1. East Asia and Pacific region. Washington: World Bank.

Ejuu, G. 2012. *The Status of Implementation of the Education Sector Early Childhod Development Policy in Uganda*. Kampala: Uganda Government.

Government of Uganda 1992. *Government White Paper on the Implementation of the Recommendation of the Report of Education Review Commission.* (Education, Ed.). Kampala: Uganda Government.

Heugh, K. 2011. Theory and practice - language Education Models in Africa: Research, design, Decision-making and Outcomes. In A. Ouane & C. Glanz (Eds.), *Optimizing Learning, Education and Publishing in Africa: The Language factor.* (A Review and Analysis of Theory and Practice in Mother-Tongue and Bilingual Education in sub-Saharan Africa) (pp. 103–156). Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) and Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) / African Development Bank.

Hoover, W. A., & P. B. Gough 2013. *The Reading Acquisition Framework - An Overview.* Retrieved October 10, 2012, from http://www.sedl.org/reading/framework/overview.html

Hornberger, N. & K. Chick 2001. Co-Constructing School Safetime: Safetalk Practices in Peruvian and South African Classrooms. In Heller, M. & Martin-Jones, M. (2001) *Voices of authority: education and linguistic difference*. Westport: Ablex.

Kateeba, C. 2009. *Thematic curriculum; implications for Mother Tongue Education in Uganda. Mother Tongue Day Conference*. Makerere University, Institute of Languages: National Curriculum Development Centre.

Klaus, D. 2003. The Use of Indigenous Languages in Early Basic Education in Papua New Guinea: A Model for Elsewhere? *Language and Education* 14(2), 105–111.

Kyeyune, R. 2012. Teacher Preparation and Continuous Professional development in Africa (TPA): How Teachers are Prepared to Teach Reading and Mathematics in Lower Grades and how their Preparation Influences their Practice. Paper presented at the Multilingual Education Network, Kampala, Uganda.

Mango Tree Laŋo Literacy Project 2010. *Mango Tree Laŋo Literacy Project: Early Grade Reading Assessment P1 Baseline Survey 2010*. (pp. 1–21). Kampala: Uganda.

Marrapodi, J. 2013. What Doesn't Work for the Lowest Level Literacy Learners and Why? *Apples – Journal of Applied Language Studies*, 7(1), 7–23.

McLaughlin, B. 1992. Myths and Misconceptions about Second Language Learning: What every teacher needs to unlearn. University of of California, Santa Cruz. Retrieved November 16, 2013, from http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/myths.html

Ministry of Education and Sports 2004. Ministry of Education and Sports Education Sector Strategic Plan 2004-2015 Education. Kampala: Ministry of Education and Sports.

NCDC. 2006a. The National Primary School Curriculum for Uganda, Primary 1. Kampala: The National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC).

NCDC. 2006b. Primary School Curriculum Primary 2. Kampala: National Curriculum Development Centre.

NCDC. 2007. The National Primary School Curriculum for Uganda: Teachers' Guide P2, Terms I, II & III. Kampala: National Curriculum Development Centre.

Nyaga, S., & C. Anthonissen 2012. Teaching in linguistically diverse classrooms: Difficulties in the implementation of the Language-in-education policy in Mulitingual Kenyan primary school classrooms. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 42(6), 863–879.

Piper, B. 2010. *Uganda Early Grade Reading Assessment Findings Report: Literacy Acquisition and Mother Tongue.* Makerere University Institute for Social Research and RTI International. Retrieved March 20, 2013 from : https://www.eddataglobal.org/documents/index.cfm?fuseaction=pubDetail&ID=293.

Read, T., & S. Enyutu 2004. The Uganda Primary Curriculum Review Road Map: For the Implementation of the Curriculum Reforms Recommended by the Primary Curriculum (Review Report, approved by the Ministry of of Education and Sports).

Ssentanda, M. E. 2013. Exploring connections: Reflections on Mother-tongue education in Postcolonial Uganda. *Stellenbosch Papers in Linguistics Plus*, 32, 281-296.

Trudell, B., A. J. Dowd, B. Piper & C. Bloch 2012. Early grade literacy in African classrooms: Lessons learned and future directions. A working document to serve as a basis for discussions at the Triennale Meeting of Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA). Retrieved October 20, 2013 from www.africanstorybookproject.pwias.ubc.ca

Uganda Child Rights NGO Network. 2006. Hope amidst Obstacles: The State of Nursery Education in Uganda. The Neglected Critical First Step in Broader Development (pp. 1–14). Kampala: Uganda Child Rights NGO Network.

Uganda National Examinations Board. 2010. The Achievement of primary school pupils in Uganda in numeracy, Literacy in English and local Languages: National Assessment of Progress in Education (NAPE). Kampala: Uganda National Examinations Board.

Uganda National Examinations Board. 2011. The achievement of Primary school pupils in Uganda in Numeracy, Literacy and oral reading: National Assessment of Progress in Education (NAPE). Kampala: Uganda National Examinations Board.

Uwezo. 2010. *Are Our Children Learning? Annual Learning Assessment Report 2010.* Kampala: Uwezo

Uwezo. 2011. *Are Our Children Learning? Annual Learning Assessment Report 2011.* Kampala: Uwezo

Uwezo. 2012. *Are Our Children Learning? Literacy and Numeracy across East Africa.* Nairobi: Uwezo

Walter, S. L., & K. G. Chuo 2012. The Kom experimental Mother tongue education pilot project report for 2012. Cameroon: MTB-MLE Network.

Walter, S. L., & D. E. Dekker 2011. Mother tongue instruction in Lubuagan: A case study from Philippines. *International Review of Education*, 57, 667–683.

Woldemariam, H. 2007. The challenges of Mother-tongue education in Ethiopia: The case of North Omo area. *Language Matters*, 38(2), 210–235. World Bank 2002. *Education Notes*. World Bank. Retrieved January 20, 2014 from: https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/10412

Wren, S. 2000. *The Cognitive Foundations of Learning to Read*. Retrieved on October 10, 2013 from http://www.sedl.org/reading/framework/framework.pdf

Appendix 1

Transcription key
   T   teachers
   L(s) Learner(s)
   (^) This symbol is used to mark rising tone.
   Bold font is used in the extracts for stretches of speech occurring in Luganda.
Bold font has also been used to show the translation of these stretches of speech.
Italics are used for English translations.