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## Multilingual classrooms: opportunities and challenges for English medium instruction in low and middle income contexts

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Supported by Kimberly Safford, Fritz Makafui Tugli, Snehal Shah, Sarah Jane Mukherjee, Subhi Ashour, Mark Mukorera, Alison Buckler

September 2017

# Multilingual classrooms: opportunities and challenges for English medium instruction in low and middle income contexts





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Our work involves school improvement through inspection, school workforce development and curriculum design for the UK's Department for Education, local authorities and an increasing number of independent and state schools, free schools and academies. We provide services direct to learners in our schools.

Internationally we have successfully implemented education programmes for governments in the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa and South East Asia, and work on projects funded by donors such as the Department for International Development, the European Commission, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the World Bank and the US Agency for International Development, in low- and middle-income countries.

Surpluses generated by our operations are reinvested in our educational research programme. Please visit [www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com](http://www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com) for more information.

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**Dr Elizabeth J Erling** was a senior lecturer in English Language Teaching, International Development and Teacher Education at the Open University, UK for the duration of this project. She is now Professor of ELT Methodology at the University of Graz, Austria. Her research focuses on the perceived impact that English language education has on individuals' lives in terms of their identity and social, economic and cultural capital, both contexts where English is medium of instruction (e.g. India, Ghana, Germany), and where it is taught as an additional language (Bangladesh). She is particularly interested English and ideologies of value. Elizabeth led the Open University team.



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Dr Lina Adinolfi

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Dr Anna Kristina Hultgren

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## Definition of terms used in the report

<b>English Medium Instruction (EMI)</b>	refers to 'the use of the English language to teach academic subjects in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English'. <sup>1</sup>
<b>Lower middle income countries (LMICs)</b>	is one of the four categories of classification for national economies developed by the World Bank – the others being low income countries (LICs); upper middle income countries (UMICs); and high income countries (HICs). Income is measured using gross national income per capital. Both Ghana and India are classified as LMICs.
<b>Language policy</b>	describes the decisions that people make about languages and their use in society.
<b>Language-in-education policy (LEP)</b>	refers to the carrying out of language policy decisions in 'the specific contexts of schools and universities in relation to home languages and to foreign and second languages'. <sup>2</sup> Language-in-education policies may be formulated at a national, state or school level.
<b>Local languages</b>	refers to the languages spoken 'in the homes and marketplaces of a community, as distinguished from a regional, national or international language'. <sup>3</sup>
<b>Mother tongue</b>	is broadly understood to refer to the language or languages that individuals are most familiar with and proficient in using: 'a child's first language, the language(s) learned in the home from older family members'. <sup>4</sup> The term 'local languages', however, is preferred out of recognition that some individuals might have difficulty naming a single mother tongue.
<b>Codeswitching</b>	The term refers to the common communicative practice among multilinguals of alternating between their languages within and across sentences. In the context of both multilingual and foreign language classrooms, such practice – be this on the part of teachers or students – has often been viewed negatively, due to misguided beliefs about language and learning. However, consciously or unconsciously, it very often occurs in teacher talk, when translating, paraphrasing, clarifying, explaining and giving examples (all with the aim of facilitating student understanding), and in connection with various classroom management transactions. The extent to which students also codeswitch in the classroom depends very much on whether it is enabled and encouraged.
<b>Translanguaging</b>	Insofar as codeswitching refers only to the alternation of languages in speech and writing, it is more limited in scope than translanguaging, which refers the natural, dynamic movement among multilinguals between different features of their linguistic resources (lexical, phonological, morphological, etc.) and modes of communication (speaking, writing, gesturing etc.) to make meaning'. <sup>5</sup> Translanguaging thus challenges the notion of multilinguals drawing on separate 'named languages'. <sup>6</sup> The promotion of translanguaging in multilingual classrooms (pedagogic translanguaging) is concerned with encouraging students to draw on these fluid communicative practices, in order to enhance cognitive processing, cross-linguistic transfer, inclusion, engagement, and the validation of all their linguistic resources.
<b>Language supportive pedagogies</b>	Both codeswitching and translanguaging can be considered language supportive pedagogies, i.e. classroom strategies that can be used to support the learning of content through an additional language. <sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Dearden, 2014: 2 <sup>2</sup>Shohamy, 2003: 79 <sup>3</sup>UNESCO, 2008: 6 <sup>4</sup>UNESCO, 2008: 6 <sup>5</sup>García, 2009 <sup>6</sup>Otheguy, García and Reid, 2015 <sup>7</sup>Clegg, 2010

# RULES OF CLASS 6B

- Do not chew gum in class - Offenders will sweep the classroom for a day.
- Do not go out without permission - Offenders will pick thirty sachets of water rubbers.
- Do not speak local languages in class unless Ghanaian language is in progress - Offenders will pay 20 pesewas.
- Do not eat/ drink water in class - Offenders will fetch water to the teacher's washroom.
- Fighting must not be tolerated in the class - Offenders will kneel down for half an hour (30 minutes).
- Playing/talking when lessons are in progress is not accepted - Offenders will fetch water to the student's washroom.
- You must not jump on the desks - Offenders will bring a marker when they come to the classroom.



Convert:

(a) 4 years into months

(c) 4 years 8 months into months

Convert:

(a) 137 minutes into hours and minutes

(b) 365 minutes into hours and minutes

(c) 1023 minutes into hours and minutes

(d) 2008 minutes into hours and minutes

Convert:

(a) 1354 seconds into minutes and seconds

(b) 2106 seconds into minutes and seconds

(c) 3268 seconds into minutes and seconds

Handwritten notes in a notebook:

24 hours  $\times$  60 minutes = 1440 minutes

360 minutes = 6 hours

2007 minutes = 33 hours 27 minutes

3 days 22 hours 25 minutes into minutes

3 days  $\times$  1440 minutes = 4320 minutes

+ 22 hours  $\times$  60 minutes = 1320 minutes

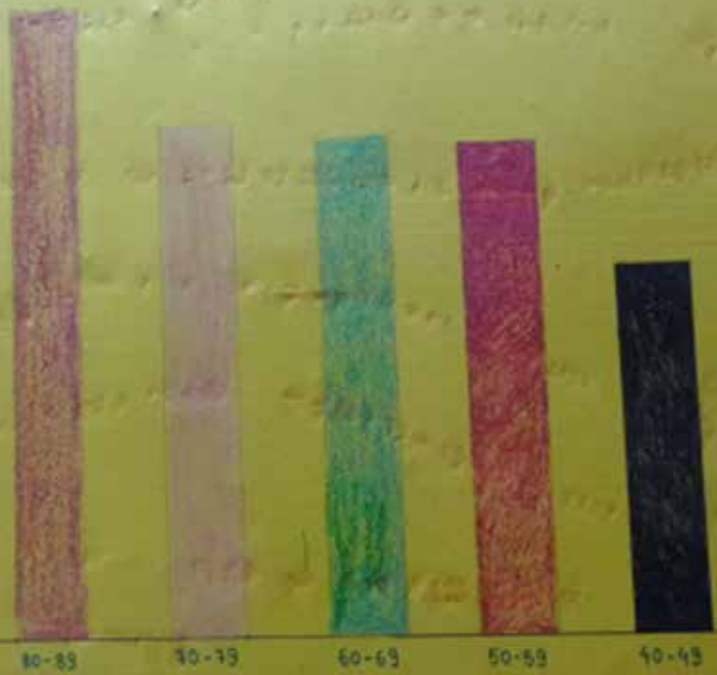
+ 25 minutes

Convert:

1 minute = 60 seconds

## GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION

### RESULT OF SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT - I 2016



Write the missing words

1) A cat and a rat on a mat

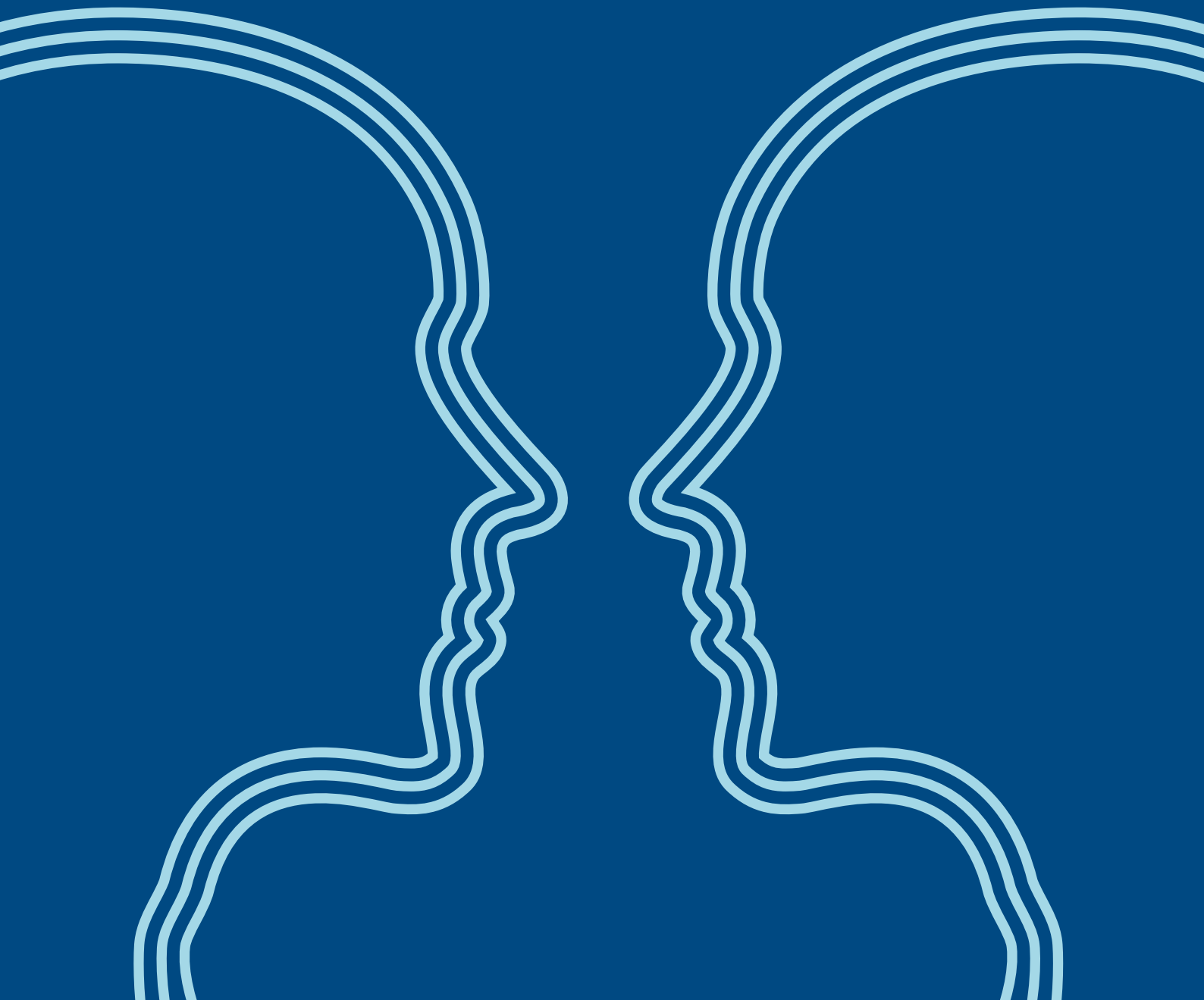
2) A pen and a hen in a den

3) A pin and tin in a bin

4) A pot and a dot on a cot

5) A mug and a jug on a rug

# Executive summary



# This report is the product of a research collaboration between Education Development Trust, the British Council and The Open University.

Its starting point was to consider the complex field of English Medium Instruction (EMI) policies in low and middle income countries (LMICs). Its purpose is to provide insight and support to those responsible for setting policy or enacting it in complex language environments around the world.

The work recognises the importance given to English language by governments in the future development of intellectual and economic capital, and to accessing opportunity in an increasingly global world. It also recognises and respects the strong argument calling for education and learning to be conducted in a language spoken by learners and teachers. Navigating these two influences can appear impossible at times as they can be unhelpfully positioned as opposites. This research study set out to do two things:

- Look at the global literature and draw on the lessons from existing research.
- Focus on illustrating the operational enactment and levels of understanding of EMI policies in schools in two primary school contexts – Ghana and Bihar, India. These very different contexts provide valuable lessons that will help policy makers, educators, teacher trainers and schools to navigate the complexities of multilingual EMI environments.

Ghana and India provide an interesting comparison in terms of the models of education that have been put forward to serve their diverse and multilingual societies, and to promote the use of the mother tongue in early primary education. Ghana promotes an early exit, transitional bilingual education model, in which children are required to switch from learning through a government-supported Ghanaian language at the lower primary level, to learning through English at the upper primary level. India recommends that the state language be used as the medium of instruction (MOI) in government schools, with another modern Indian language and English being taught as curricular subjects. However, in response to dissatisfaction with the quality of government educational provision, low-cost private schools, which do not follow the government language policy and instead use EMI, are growing in popularity. These two models represent two rather typical contexts in which EMI is used in primary education – those, often in contexts in Sub-Saharan Africa where there is often a transition to EMI in government schools at the upper primary level, and those in contexts in South Asia and beyond where EMI is increasingly being used in low-cost private schools, often against national language-in-education policy (LEP) recommendations. The LEPs in both contexts have been fraught with difficulties in implementation, and evidence suggests that there continues to be difficulties in improving educational quality despite them.

Ghana and India provide an interesting comparison in terms of the models of education that have been put forward to serve their diverse and multilingual societies, and to promote the use of the mother tongue in early primary education

The fact that the majority of children have to learn the language of instruction (whether English or the state or regional language) while also learning curriculum content contributes to low levels of achievement and progression through the education system in both contexts.

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## Findings

Since the formulation of the Millennium Development Goals, there has been increasing attention paid to the quality of teaching and learning in schools, with the result being that Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals ensures inclusive and equitable *quality* education, and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all. It is increasingly recognised that medium of instruction is a key aspect of improving the quality of education. Findings from this study suggest that the LEP and its enactment can present a range of challenges to realising improvement in educational quality, and this might be contributing to the rise of low-cost private schools outside the government sector.


### **Pedagogy – the language of instruction can constitute a barrier to good pedagogic practice**

The classroom observations undertaken in Ghana and Bihar revealed similar practices in terms of the teacher-dominated pedagogy observed. In both contexts, despite evidence of low learning outcomes and insufficient levels of English among students, there was a low occurrence of student-centred, active learning practices that supported the development of content and language learning. Lessons in both contexts were highly teacher dominant and textbook focused, with the teacher being the only one to speak for the majority of the lesson time. The most striking factor in both contexts was that students had very limited opportunities to speak. In both contexts, the focus was on students' memorisation of content knowledge and the majority of questions addressed to students were 'closed' and sought a 'correct' answer.

In Ghana, teachers were confident in basic aspects of effective classroom teaching, and in some cases a number of interactive strategies were used. Teachers attempted to build rapport and create an inclusive learning environment by drawing on local knowledge, making jokes, and responding to students individually. Their main strategies for supporting the development of spoken English were immersion and correction, two practices that might actually work against allowing students to practice new languages. In India, however, where the majority of teachers were untrained, the atmosphere in the classrooms observed was very disciplined and controlled. The purposes of the teacher strategies employed were sometimes difficult to determine. Mostly the teacher just read out of the book whilst the students listened. Teachers spoke little and did not explain what they were doing in the lesson and why.

### **Teacher language – competence in language of instruction is vital, as is valuing of a flexible approach to language use to enable learning**

Previous research has shown how teachers' competence in English can impact on their ability to teach in EMI contexts. In Ghana, the teachers' competence in



In Ghana, teachers were confident in basic aspects of effective classroom teaching, and in some cases a number of interactive strategies were used

English was reasonably high, where in India it was quite low. In Ghana, the teachers spoke almost exclusively in English, whether to discuss the curriculum, to explain, for affective purposes or for classroom management. Teachers only offered brief explanations or translations of single words or phrases in the local languages. This is despite research that shows that judicious and strategic use of codeswitching can enable students to understand concepts in both languages and to participate actively during lessons.

In India, however, the facilitative use of codeswitching between English and Hindi – to translate and occasionally explain or give an example – was common among all teachers, and classroom codeswitching was openly recognised as a legitimate and necessary pedagogic strategy, since the students' English-language competence was developing. The labelling of these schools as 'EMI' could therefore be seen as a misnomer. Classroom codeswitching was also a commonly observed teacher practice in the English classes in the Hindi-medium government school. While it was recognised that students required the extra support of Hindi, there was no use of other local languages in the classes observed.

#### **Student language – the language of instruction can limit opportunities for communication**

In both contexts, it was overwhelmingly the case that the students spoke very little in the lessons, and when they did, it was almost always limited to choral responses or reading aloud.

In Ghana, students' responses to teacher-directed activities were almost always in English. In some classes, they were asked a number of questions, both individually and as a group, but their responses tended to be limited to a single word or short phrase. Students used the local language with the teacher only rarely, when, for example, they could not produce a response to a question in English or if they sought clarification on an item. They used the local language fleetingly and informally with each other in class, for example when passing out books. In India, when students spoke it was primarily limited to choral chanting of English from their textbooks, or the production of a Hindi translation of an English word. Students were not involved in any structured speaking activities in English in either Ghana or India, not even in the English lessons, nor were they encouraged to codeswitch, or ask questions and discuss content in the local language. Opportunities for students to communicate in any language were very limited in all of the schools visited, and students were virtually silenced in the classroom in both contexts. Thus, while teachers' competence in English may be an issue, the almost complete absence of student talk observed in lessons in both contexts seems to be a significant factor contributing to low learning outcomes.

#### **Multilingual strategies to support EMI – opportunities and challenges**

While the classroom observation data provides an impression of the teaching and learning practices going on in primary schools in Ghana and India, the interview data provided insight into the attitudes and beliefs underlying those practices. Our research confirms that there are attitudinal as well as practical factors that constrain teachers' abilities to use active, student-centred, language supportive pedagogies.

**In both contexts, it was overwhelmingly the case that the students spoke very little in the lessons, and when they did, it was almost always limited to choral responses or reading aloud**



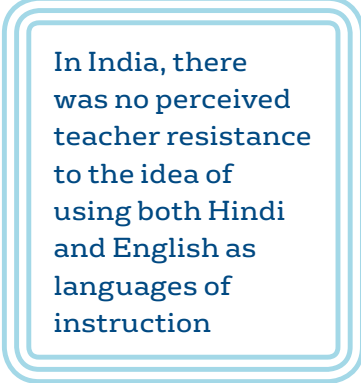
Previous research suggested that attitudinal factors play a key role in sustaining EMI practices in the face of evidence that students learn better in their mother tongue. In both contexts, English continues to be associated with being educated and the elite, and these perceptions clearly influence the attractiveness of EMI.

In Ghana, the interview data reflected a general awareness of the value of learning through local languages, particularly at early levels of schooling, and that the use of local languages in schooling can support English language learning. This awareness and positive stance towards the use of local languages at the lower primary level, however, has not yet translated into a complete shift in practices.

In India, there was no perceived teacher resistance to the idea of using both Hindi and English as languages of instruction. Hindi was routinely and openly used to mediate and support the study of the English textbooks, and classroom codeswitching was viewed as a legitimate pedagogic strategy for the teaching of content and the teaching of English. The teacher participants seemed to have received no formal guidelines regarding the use of language in this type of school, and very little pedagogic training in general. The strategies used, however, were extremely limited in that they focused primarily on the repetition and translation of single words and phrases, instead of focusing on communicating content and mobilising discussion. Importantly, however, at no point was the teachers' facilitative use of translation accompanied by the highlighting or explanation of any aspects of the English encountered in the textbooks. The fact that classroom codeswitching is commonly practised by teachers and that there are positive attitudes towards it suggests ripe ground for promoting the use of bilingual classroom strategies among students, and for elevating current practice from mere repetition and translation to more cognitively challenging and productive multilingual education strategies.

Key practical obstacles were reported regarding implementing EMI and high quality bilingual education in both contexts:

- Lack of shared understanding of the LEP and how it should be implemented (particularly relevant for government schools).
- Broader issues within the education system that were perceived as hindering the provision of quality bilingual education (for example, assessment systems).
- A dearth of resources.
- Urgent need for clarification about classroom practices that teachers can adopt to support EMI and the development of English language competence.
- Lack of appropriate teacher training and professional development.



**In India, there was no perceived teacher resistance to the idea of using both Hindi and English as languages of instruction**

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## Recommendations

The LEPs in both Ghana and India are commendable for their intention to implement UNESCO's 1953 recommendation that 'every effort should be made to provide education in the mother tongue', while also aiming to ensure universal access to English. Our study confirms other research investigating the

implementation of the use of local languages in education, finding that this is fraught with difficulties. However, the use of English as medium of instruction also poses significant challenges.

The following set of recommendations are made with different stakeholders in mind. A full set of recommendations are presented at the end of the full report.

- It is important at the level of policy making and educational decision making to consider multilingual realities by formulating LEPs that are more flexible and that promote positive attitudes to multilingualism in education.
- It is important that, at national, regional and school levels, stakeholders are encouraged and supported to embrace a change of attitude towards the use of language in schools. It is important to enhance the understanding of all stakeholders in education (education officials, headteachers, teachers, parents and students) about the ways in which language can inhibit or promote learning so they support schools to adopt effective practices. It is also important that English only is not used as the language of examinations or as a gatekeeper for jobs or higher education.
- It is important at national, regional and local school level to focus efforts on teacher professional development to support their use of flexible multilingual approaches in classrooms. Integration of good pedagogical practices and flexible approaches to language use within a EMI language context will better enable learning.
- It is important for teacher training and professional development organisations to consider how they can adapt teacher education programmes for both English language teachers and other subject teachers to support the use of flexible multilingual approaches in classrooms.
- It is important for materials and curriculum developers to focus on appropriate resource development. The English curriculum should align with the content curriculum to support learning through English.
- It is important for the academic community to support by furthering relevant research. Of particular importance are explorations about how to change perceptions of language and language use so that flexible multilingual education policies are embraced by all relevant stakeholders. It is also important to better understand the potential of local language use, classroom codeswitching and translanguaging in supporting learning in LMICs.

Chapter 1

# Introduction



# The research was commissioned by Education Development Trust and British Council, and conducted by The Open University.

Its starting point was to consider the complex field of English Medium Instruction (EMI) policies in low and middle income contexts (LMICs) and the ways in which they are enacted in schools. Its purpose is to provide insight and support to those responsible for setting policy or enacting it in complex language environments around the world.

The work recognises the importance given to English language by governments in the future development of intellectual and economic capital, and to accessing educational opportunity in an increasingly global higher education market. It also recognises and respects the strong argument calling for education and learning to be conducted in a language spoken by teachers and learners. In multilingual contexts, finding a common language can be hard. Navigating these two influences can appear impossible at times as they are frequently, and unhelpfully, positioned as opposites. This research study sets out to do two things:

- Look at the global literature
- Focus on illustrating the operational enactment and levels of understanding of EMI policies in schools in two contexts – Ghana and Bihar, India

These two very different contexts provide valuable lessons that will help policy makers, educators, teacher trainers and schools to navigate the complexities of multilingual EMI environments.

The research recognises the importance given to English language by governments in the future development of intellectual and economic capital, and to accessing educational opportunity in an increasingly global higher education market

## Context

Multilingualism in low and middle income countries (LMICs) poses ongoing challenges for language-in-education (LEP) policy makers and educators. These countries need to ensure that their citizens have equal access to schooling and receive a high-quality education. Mother tongue education has been regularly promoted for early schooling by UNESCO (1953, 2008, 2016), and endorsed by the most recent Global Education Monitoring Report (2016), a practice supported by research on its pedagogic value.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, there is a demand for English, as it is used as the global lingua franca and associated with economic and social opportunities both nationally and individually.<sup>9</sup> For this reason, models of multilingual education are becoming increasingly common, particularly those which eventually transition to using English as a medium of instruction (EMI).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> e.g. Alidou et al., 2006; Cummins, 2000; Kosonen, 2005; Pinnock, 2009; Trudell, 2016 <sup>9</sup> Erling and Seargeant, 2013; Erling, 2014 <sup>10</sup> Dearden, 2014

This report presents the findings from a research project that explored the phenomenon of EMI in two very distinct lower middle income countries (LMICs) – Ghana and India. The research sought evidence of the effectiveness of the multilingual education policies and classroom practices in these two contexts, and provides detailed insight into interpretations, actions and attitudes to LEP. The research data presents contrasting paradigms where solutions are being sought for demands to improve the quality of education as well as to increase access to English in low-resource, multilingual contexts.

Despite many differences, Ghana and India share similarities common to many LMICs. Both have been re-classified from lower-middle income to middle-income countries by the World Bank in the last ten years, having made substantial gains in terms of their national economies. Both countries need to make significant efforts to sustain growth and further address the challenges that limit their further development, which include enhancing educational outcomes.

Both Ghana and India are extremely diverse ethno-linguistically, with high levels of societal multilingualism and individual plurilingualism. In both countries, English has an official status and plays an important role in their education systems as a legacy of British colonialism. Despite these similarities, different policies operate in the two contexts with regard to the use of local, national and international languages in education. In Ghana, like many other Sub-Saharan African countries, English has long functioned as the main medium of instruction at most levels of schooling. As is the case in several other contexts in the region, policy guidance now stipulates that local languages are to be used as the medium of instruction at the lower primary levels (Grades 1-3), with English being taught as a subject, and that there is a transition to EMI at the upper primary level (from Grade 4), where English and a local language are also taught as subjects.

The national policy for medium of instruction in government schools is markedly different in India, where the medium of instruction corresponds to the official language of each state (e.g. Hindi, Bengali), with English being taught as a curricular subject. However, having long been the preserve of the privately educated elite, EMI is now increasingly becoming widespread in the low-cost private school sector in India, a practice mirrored in many other countries in the region and beyond. While in India the state language is prescribed as the medium of instruction in schools, it is often the case that this language does not match the language used by a large number of students at home and in their communities. This means that in both Ghana and India, the medium of instruction – whether English in government schools in Ghana, Hindi in government schools in many states in India (e.g. Bihar), or English in the low-cost private schools in India – is a language that a large number of students do not have full proficiency in. This mismatch between students' school and home languages indicates a strong likelihood of educational failure for many, as well as exclusion from education for those from rural areas, whose languages are most often not used at school.<sup>11</sup>

Like all LMICs, Ghana and India are committed to achieving universal primary education and to improving the outcomes of their national education systems in order to further bolster economic growth, national stability and equity and social

**In both countries, English has an official status and plays an important role in their education systems as a legacy of British colonialism**

<sup>11</sup>Pinnock, 2009

justice among the countries' diverse populations - through the Education for All initiative, the Millennium Development Goals, and, more recently, Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Education 2030 Agenda. Both countries have also witnessed progress at all levels of education since 2000, particularly in terms of enrolment. In Ghana, primary school enrolments have almost doubled since the introduction of Free and Compulsory Universal Basic Education, or FCUBE, with an increase from 2.5 million in 1999/2000 to 4.3 million in 2013/2014. In India, the 2009 Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE) has had success in terms of achieving near universal primary education, with enrolment at 96% or above since its introduction.<sup>12</sup>

Despite these gains in terms of improving access to education, both countries remain challenged with regard to ensuring retention and progression throughout schooling. Data from 2010-2015 reveal that, while 64.6% of the population in Ghana complete primary school, only 54.3% complete lower secondary school, dropping to 20.5% for those who complete upper secondary school.<sup>13</sup> The statistics from India are no more encouraging: USI data from 2010-2015 reveal that only 51.4% of the population complete primary school, with the percentage dropping to 37.5% for completing lower secondary school and 26.8% for completing upper secondary school.<sup>14</sup> Evidence suggests that language in school and medium of instruction are significantly contributing to such low levels of retention and progression<sup>15</sup> as well as general low performance across the curriculum.<sup>16</sup> The majority of students who complete primary school in both nations are doing so without having attained the levels of home language literacy, core subject knowledge and English language ability, which restricts their abilities to succeed in further education, a situation common to a large number of countries across Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

Evidence suggests that a large number of students are failing to learn in these contexts. Research conducted in Ghana in the 1990s found that primary school children had achieved only limited functional literacy in both English and the local language, and that a substantial proportion of children displayed severe reading comprehension difficulties in English.<sup>17</sup> More recent research continues to suggest that for many students, levels of English are not high enough for them to be able to learn through the language when it becomes the medium of instruction in primary Grade 4. The most recent National Education Assessment (NEA) in Ghana indicated that primary school students had low performance in both mathematics and English (the language of instruction at the upper primary level), with no more than 37% of students achieving the appropriate proficiency levels for their level of schooling.<sup>18</sup> Performance for mathematics was even lower than for English, as low literacy skills prevent students from fully understanding the questions. The results of this assessment were confirmed by the 2013 and 2015 National Early Grade Reading and Mathematics Assessments (EGRA and EGMA) undertaken in the country, which indicated that the majority of children in their second year of primary school lacked the foundational skills that they need to succeed at the upper primary level.<sup>19</sup> Outcomes on these assessments were significantly worse in rural and economically deprived areas of the country.

The most recent National Education Assessment (NEA) in Ghana indicated that primary school students had low performance in both mathematics and English

<sup>12</sup> ASER, 2016 <sup>13</sup> UNESCO UIS stats, 2017 <sup>14</sup> UNESCO UIS stats, 2017 <sup>15</sup> Smits, Huisman and Kruijff, 2008 <sup>16</sup> e.g. Alidou et al., 2006; Pinnock, 2009 <sup>17</sup> Akrofi, 2003 <sup>18</sup> Ministry of Education (MoE) Ghana, 2016 <sup>19</sup> Darvas and Balwanz, 2013; UNESCO, 2014

Low student achievement is also a chronic issue in India, with recent statistics showing that although there have been incremental improvements since 2014, a large number of students are radically behind in terms of reading the language of schooling, English and mathematics. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) has been tracking the ability of children from around the country – in both public and private schools – to read in the language of schooling and do basic arithmetic since 2005. The most recent findings show that of all children enrolled in primary Class 5, about half cannot read at a Class 2 level. Reading levels in private schools are slightly higher at 63%.<sup>20</sup> The level of arithmetic, as measured by students' ability to do a 2-digit subtraction in the third level of primary school, is 27.7%, and for their ability to do simple division problems at Grade 5 is 26%. While the role of the medium of instruction (MOI) in low attainment levels is still relatively underexplored in India,<sup>21</sup> unsatisfactory learning outcomes may be attributed to the fact that, in many cases, the highly multilingual nature of many Indian states means that the school language does not in fact correspond to the mother tongue of many of its children. This is particularly applicable to first generation students, contributing to their disadvantage from the start of their education.

Given the low learning outcomes in both contexts, it has been recommended that these countries prioritise issues around medium of instruction as a major factor in contributing to improvements in primary education.<sup>22</sup> MOI is considered a key issue that countries and regions need to tackle head-on in order to achieve Goal 4 of the SDGs, which entails ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.<sup>23</sup>

This report therefore examines the phenomenon of EMI in Ghana and India, and illustrates the complexities and challenges of implementing language-in-education policies that contribute to providing equitable, quality education. The report explores these issues by presenting the findings from fieldwork exploring how medium of instruction policies are enacted in Ghana and India. The fieldwork involved visits to nine schools, classroom observations and interviews with teachers, headteachers and education officials. The report is also informed by an extensive literature review focusing in particular on MOI issues in LMICs, with specific reference to Ghana and India.

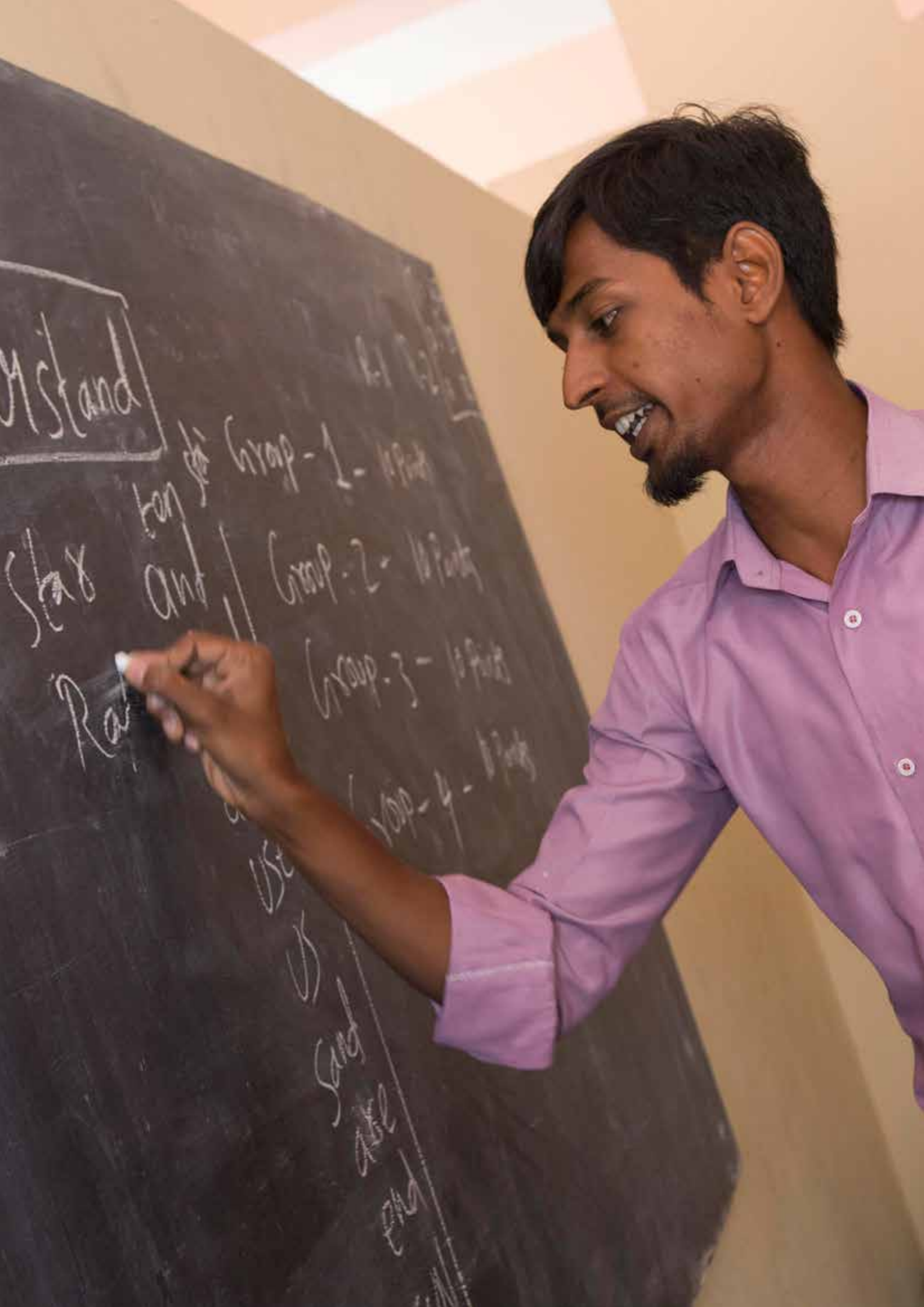
Before describing these two aspects of the research in detail, we distinguish various models of multilingual education and introduce the two contexts of investigation.

## Models of multilingual education and EMI

While it is often not conceived as such, EMI is a form of multilingual education, as English is not usually the home language of students or teachers in such settings. This leads to a recognition that there needs to be support or transition for students and teachers to the use of EMI. In the following, we distinguish several models of multilingual language education, and consider which might best describe the current and future contexts of EMI in Ghana and India. It should be recognised that the boundaries between the various models presented are porous.

**The highly multilingual nature of many Indian states means that the school language does not in fact correspond to the mother tongue of many of its children**

<sup>20</sup> ASER, 2016 <sup>21</sup> Jhingran, 2009 <sup>22</sup> Pinnock, 2009 <sup>23</sup> GEMR, 2016: 270



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In its simplest definition, **bilingual education** is 'the use of two languages for learning and teaching in an instructional setting and, by extension, multilingual education would be the use of three languages or more'.<sup>24</sup> **Multilingual education** usually refers to the use of the mother tongue, a regional or national language and an international language, which is often English. According to its 2003 Resolution:

*UNESCO supports bilingual and/or multilingual education at all levels of education as a means of promoting both social and gender equality and as a key element of linguistically diverse societies.*<sup>25</sup>

Multilingual education models are often referred to as being either **additive** or **subtractive**. **Subtractive bilingual education** moves students out of the local language and into English as quickly as possible, often with little scaffolding and short transition periods. This model is called subtractive because it does not validate and support the development of the local language in education, potentially leading to the loss of or limited capacity of this language.

More common than subtractive models are **transition models** in which students begin learning through local languages in the early years of primary school but then gradually move to EMI. As with subtractive education models, there is an eventual shift to EMI as the single MOI. If the transition to EMI takes place at the lower primary level, usually within one to three years of schooling, it is often called an **early exit transition model**. If the transition takes place at the upper primary level, Grade 5-6, or beyond, it is usually called a **late exit transition model**. In transition models, local languages may continue to be taught as subjects, but this is not necessarily the case.

**Additive (bilingual) education models** aim to foster multilingualism in students.<sup>26</sup>

The target is a high level of proficiency in a local or heritage language plus a high level of proficiency in the dominant language, commonly English.<sup>27</sup> In these programmes, the non-dominant languages are consistently used throughout schooling, and ideally continue to be used in at least 50% of the curriculum. An additive bilingual education model that has been attracting increasing interest is **mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE)**.<sup>28</sup> MTB-MLE is an educational model which typically refers to 'first-language-first' education, that is, schooling which begins in the mother tongue/local language and entails guided scaffolding from learning through the mother tongue to learning through another language, or languages.<sup>29</sup> Students gain the ability to move back and forth between their mother tongue and other languages, rather than a transitional program where the mother tongue is abandoned at some stage. Implicit in the MTB-MLE approach is that, in addition to valuing students' languages in schools, their cultural and/or ethnic identities are valued and seen as resources. Moreover, this approach recognises the possibilities to enhance the sustainability of local languages by using them in education.

**Flexible multilingual education** refers to additive multilingual models of education that build on students' actual linguistic resources, including non-standard varieties, in a positive and additive way in order to provide high-quality access to local, national and global languages.<sup>30</sup> Implicit in this model is a recognition that the mother tongue may be mobilised in the teaching of additional

Implicit in the MTB-MLE approach is that, in addition to valuing students' languages in schools, their cultural and/or ethnic identities are valued and seen as resources

<sup>24</sup>Wright et al., 2015 <sup>25</sup>UNESCO, 2003: 32 <sup>26</sup>Weber, 2014: 2 <sup>27</sup>Alidou et al., 2006 <sup>28</sup>Tupus, 2015 <sup>29</sup>Chumbow, 2013; Mackenzie and Walker, 2013; UNESCO, 2005 <sup>30</sup>Weber, 2014

languages, such as English. However, this term has been put forward in response to critique that many additive bilingual education models are underpinned by a 'monolingual mind-set' and conceive of languages as fixed and separate. Flexible multilingual education, in contrast, is underpinned by a 'multilingual mind-set' in which linguistic diversity is viewed as the norm and as a valuable resource. It developed out of a need to transcend arguments framed in terms of *either-or* a particular language and to move towards a discourse of *both-and*.<sup>31</sup> Flexible multilingual education can be used to describe some examples of MTB-MLE in that it refers to a situation in which the mother tongue is used throughout the educational system. It would, however, differentiate itself from mother tongue programmes which promote idealised notions of languages instead of making use of students' *actual* linguistic resources.<sup>32</sup> Finally, flexible multilingual education recognises that translanguaging is commonplace in many multilingual contexts, and thus can be used strategically and systematically as a legitimate pedagogical resource.

In all the multilingual education models reviewed above, classroom codeswitching is likely to be practised by teachers. As Ferguson (2003) has noted, classroom codeswitching seems to arise naturally, perhaps inevitably, not only because it is ubiquitous in multilingual societies, but also as a response to the difficulties of teaching in a language in which students do not have full proficiency. There is now a sizeable literature on the pedagogic value of classroom codeswitching in multilingual contexts,<sup>33</sup> though classroom codeswitching still tends to be discouraged. There are also a growing number of studies that explore the pedagogic value of student translanguaging. To date, however, the majority of contexts in which such practices have been promoted and researched are multilingual educational programmes in high-income countries, where the target language is either the majority language or official minority language of the environment.<sup>34</sup>

**Flexible multilingual education recognises that translanguaging is commonplace in many multilingual contexts, and thus can be used strategically and systematically as a legitimate pedagogical resource**

## The countries of focus

This research focused its data collection activity on two countries: Ghana and India, but has a relevance beyond those borders. These country contexts are described in terms of the linguistic landscape, the educational context and the different national LEPs that have emerged. The challenges of improving education in these contexts, as well as language-related interventions that have been designed to improve teaching and learning are described.

## Ghana

Ghana is a West African country with a population of around 27 million, accommodating a variety of ethnic, linguistic and religious groups. Following relative stability and good governance since 1992, Ghana's economy has become one of the strongest and most diversified in Africa. Its growing economic prosperity and democratic political system have made it a regional power, and,

<sup>31</sup>Weber, 2014: 1 <sup>32</sup>Tupas, 2015 <sup>33</sup>Clegg and Afitska, 2011; Ferguson, 2003; Probyn, 2009; 2015 <sup>34</sup>García and Li Wei, 2014

reclassified by the World Bank, it became a middle-income country in 2011. With many development indicators still at the level of a low-income country, there are a number of challenges to meet in order to sustain growth and make development more inclusive.

### The linguistic landscape

Made up of approximately nine ethnic groups, the number of languages recognised by the government is commonly cited as 79.<sup>35</sup> Eleven of these have the status of government-sponsored languages, four are Akan ethnic languages (Asante Twi, Akuapem Twi, Mfantse and Nzema), two are Mole-Dagbani ethnic languages (Dagaare and Dagbanli). The rest are Ewe, Dangme, Ga, Gonja, and Kasem. English is the country's official language and is used by government, the law courts, the press and commerce. Most people regularly use two or more indigenous Ghanaian languages, and English functions as a major lingua franca alongside Ghanaian Pidgin English, Hausa (a trade and military language which is also the language of the Hausa in Nigeria), and the Akan languages (mutually comprehensible varieties spoken by around half the population).<sup>36</sup>

English was maintained as Ghana's official language when the country became independent from Britain in 1957. This decision was spurred by the ideology of 'one language, one nation', i.e. the belief that using one language would bind the nation state together and accelerate economic and human development.<sup>37</sup> In addition to the nation-building goal, perceptions abounded that no indigenous 'Ghanaian language [was] sufficiently 'developed' in terms of technical or scientific precision to play an important role in official communication'.<sup>38</sup> Recent calls for the use of Ghanaian languages in education as a means of strengthening 'national unity and patriotism' suggest that such attitudes are changing.<sup>39</sup>

### The educational context

In Ghana, the basic education system spans Grades 1-6 (ages 6-11). Within basic education is lower primary (Grades 1-3) and upper primary (Grades 4-6). The main subjects taught at this level are mathematics, science, social studies, cultural studies, agriculture, life skills and physical education, English and Ghanaian languages. The Ghanaian language taught in schools depends on the majority language spoken in the region. Often, an additional language, which may be a foreign language (e.g. French) or another local language is also taught. Basic education can be followed by junior and senior high school, both of which are required for entry into higher education, which has always been delivered primarily through English. The studying of Ghanaian languages is only required until the end of junior high school, although recent proposals have been made to extend this throughout senior high school.

In Ghana, as in India, there has been a recent increase in the number of low-cost private schools.<sup>40</sup> Almost three out of ten primary schools, 29%, are now private, with about one in four, 23%, of all primary school children enrolled in private schools.<sup>41</sup> While private schools in Ghana are under-researched, there is evidence to suggest that they are opting to ignore the government policy guidance to use local languages at the lower primary level.<sup>42</sup>

Made up of approximately nine ethnic groups, the number of languages recognised by the government is commonly cited as 79

<sup>35</sup> Opoku-Amankwa et al., 2015 <sup>36</sup> Kerswill, 2017 <sup>37</sup> Djité, 2008 <sup>38</sup> Laitin, 1994: 627 <sup>39</sup> Diesob, 2017 <sup>40</sup> Goldstein, 2013 <sup>41</sup> MoE Ghana, 2016 <sup>42</sup> Diesob, 2017

### The national language-in-education policy in Ghana

English has long been an official language of education in Ghana. While secondary and tertiary education in Ghana have always been in English, with regional Ghanaian majority languages studied as a subject, there has been much fluctuation in the policy for primary education since independence.<sup>43</sup>

TABLE 1: NATIONAL LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION POLICY IN GHANA OVER TIME <sup>44</sup>

Period	National language-in-education policy
1957–1966	English only
1967–1969	Mother tongue instruction in lower primary level
1970–1973	English only
1974–2002	Mother tongue instruction in lower primary
2002–2005	English only
Since 2008	Mother tongue instruction in lower primary

In 2007, the English only policy was reversed to using mother tongue instruction at the lower primary level, and since then 11 government-sponsored Ghanaian languages have been stipulated for use as the medium of instruction in pre-school and lower primary.

The LEP currently recommends that students' mother tongue should be the main language used at the lower primary level (80% of instructional time in primary Grade 1), with English used the remainder of the time.<sup>45</sup> According to the policy, the percentage of instructional time to take place in English should gradually increase to 50% by Grade 3. After Grade 3 and the completion of lower primary, English is the only recognised medium of instruction at the upper primary level and beyond.<sup>46</sup> English is taught as a subject at the lower primary level, and the Ghanaian language of the area is taught as a subject at the upper primary level, after the transition to EMI. To summarise, the policy recommends that:

The LEP currently recommends that the students' mother tongue should be the main language used at the lower primary level

- Teaching and learning should be in the local language at the lower primary level (Grades 1-3).
- English should be taught as a subject at the lower primary level.
- The ratio of local language to English should decrease in Grades 1-3, with English incrementally increasing from 20-50% over time, to prepare for its use as the medium of instruction from Grade 4.
- English should be used as the medium of instruction at the upper primary level (Grades 4-6) and beyond.
- A Ghanaian language should be taught as a subject at the upper primary level and beyond.

This policy was introduced with the intention to ensure that primary school students are functionally literate and numerate, and have reading fluency in the mother tongue and in English upon completion of basic schooling. It could be

<sup>43</sup>Rosekrans et al., 2012 <sup>44</sup>Ansah, 2014; Mfum-Mensah, 2005; Owu-Ewie, 2006 <sup>45</sup>MoE Ghana, 2003 <sup>46</sup>Davis and Agbenyega, 2012

described as an early exit, transitional bilingual education model, in which children are required to switch to learning through the language of wider communication at an early age (at Grade 4, when they are around 9 or 10 years old).

### Low learning outcomes in Ghana

Like all LMICs, Ghana committed to achieving universal primary education and to improving the outcomes of the national education systems in order to further bolster economic growth, national stability and equity and social justice among the countries' diverse populations through the Education for All initiative, the Millennium Development Goals, and now also the Sustainable Development Goals. Primary school enrolments have almost doubled since the introduction of Free and Compulsory Universal Basic Education, or FCUBE, with an increase from 2.5 million in 1999/2000 to 4.3 million in 2013/2014.

Despite these gains in terms of improving access to education, the country remains challenged with regard to ensuring retention and progression through schooling. Data from 2010-2015 reveal that while 64.6% of the population in Ghana complete primary school, only 54.3% complete lower secondary school, dropping to 20.5% for those who complete upper secondary school.<sup>47</sup> Evidence suggests that issues around language and medium of instruction in school are significantly contributing to low levels of attendance and attainment<sup>48</sup> as well as low performance across the curriculum.<sup>49</sup> The majority of students who complete primary school are doing so without having attained the levels of literacy, English language ability and foundation in core subject areas to succeed in higher levels of schooling.

Recent statistics emphasise the large number of students who are failing to learn in these contexts, with low student achievement contributing to high dropout rates. The most recent National Education Assessment in Ghana indicated that primary school students were challenged by both English and mathematics, with no more than 37% of students achieving the appropriate proficiency levels for their level of schooling.<sup>50</sup> Performance for mathematics was even lower than for English, as low literacy skills prevent students from fully understanding the questions. The results of this assessment were confirmed by the 2013 and 2015 EGRA and EGMA undertaken in the country, which indicated that the majority of children in their second year of primary school lacked the foundational skills that they need to succeed at the upper primary level.<sup>51</sup> Outcomes on these assessments were significantly worse in rural and economically deprived areas of the country.

### Language-related initiatives to improve education

Partly due to international and national pressure to improve learning among primary school children, especially in reading and mathematics, there have been attempts to design and expand mother tongue education in Ghana and strengthen the quality of education. In 2007, Ghana launched the National Literacy Acceleration Program (NALAP), which was based on various research projects undertaken in Ghana, showing that acquiring literacy skills in the mother tongue benefited students when they transitioned to EMI.<sup>52</sup> NALAP was designed to support the implementation of the LEP and provide a bilingual transitional literacy programme to children in the first three grades of primary school across the country. As part of it, materials were produced in 11 Ghanaian languages which

Evidence suggests that issues around language and medium of instruction in school are significantly contributing to low levels of attendance and attainment

<sup>47</sup> UNESCO UIS stats, 2017 <sup>48</sup> Smits, Huisman and Kruijff, 2008 <sup>49</sup> Alidou et al., 2006; Pinnock, 2009 <sup>50</sup> MoE Ghana, 2016 <sup>51</sup> Darvas and Balwanz, 2013; UNESCO, 2014 <sup>52</sup> Rosekrans, 2012

emphasised interactive student learning. In-service and pre-service training in the new approach and use of the materials was offered to about 70,000 headteachers and teachers, and teacher trainees at colleges of education.<sup>53</sup> However, this training programme, was not able to reach a large pool of untrained teachers, particularly in the economically disadvantaged northern regions of Ghana. In addition, in many schools, particularly in northern Ghana, neither teachers nor students know or understand any of the 11 Ghanaian languages that the materials are offered in, and in some situations, teachers are not fluent in the local language proposed as the medium of instruction.<sup>54</sup> There therefore continues to be significant challenges in implementing the LEP which promotes the use of local languages at the lower primary level. Recent projects, such as **Ghana Learning and Transforming Teacher Education and Learning (T-TEL)**, Ghana, continue to work towards improving the quality of teaching and learning across the country.

The promotion of local languages in education seems to be gaining ground in Ghana, as well as in other Sub-Saharan African contexts, where the use of local languages in schools is rising.<sup>55</sup> This can be seen both among externally funded education projects (e.g. **the Complementary Basic Education (CBE) in Ghana**) and among Ghanaian academics and education officials, as there have been recent proposals for extending the use of local languages beyond the lower primary level and for extending the number of languages officially supported by the GES.<sup>56</sup>

## India

With its population of 1.2 billion accommodating multiple religious, linguistic and economic groupings across its 35 states and union territories, India is one of the most diverse nations in the world. In combination with its British colonial legacy and its shift to a modern market-driven economy over the last two decades, it represents a particularly engaging context in which to explore language-in-education in general and EMI in particular.

### The linguistic landscape

Estimates of the number of languages spoken in India vary hugely. While about 1600 were entered in the 2001 census, **Ethnologue** recently distinguished 448. Levels of adult plurilingualism in this highly multilingual country are particularly notable. A total of 25 unique writing systems are in use but rates of literacy vary considerably from state to state and between men and women, with a national average of 74% (2011 census).

Language-related tensions are in evidence, an example being southern India's opposition to the proposal to replace English with Hindi – primarily spoken in the north – as the national language following Independence in 1947. This resulted in compromise, with Hindi representing India's official language and English an 'associate' language.

Most states have as their official language one of the 22 listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. However, where none of these corresponds to the linguistic majority, one or more of 100 recognised 'non-scheduled' languages – including English – has this status instead. Estimates vary as to the proportion

Language-related tensions are in evidence, an example being southern India's opposition to the proposal to replace English with Hindi as the national language following independence

<sup>53</sup>Opoku-Amankwa et al., 2015 <sup>54</sup>Opoku-Amankwa et al., 2015 <sup>55</sup>GEMR, 2016 <sup>56</sup>Diesob, 2017

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CAPITAL LETTERS

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O P Q R S T U  
V W X Y Z

Subject: English <sup>oral</sup>

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg  
Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo  
Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv  
Ww Xx Yy Zz  
/ / / / /

of Indians who can understand or communicate in English to any degree, but it remains the home language of a very small percentage of the population.

### The educational context

India has long recognised a divide between the elite private education sector on the one hand and the lower prestige government sector on the other, the former often being English medium and the latter state language medium. Most states follow the nationally recommended 10+2 educational structure. This comprises 10 years basic education, composed of primary and upper primary levels, referred to as Classes 1-5 and 6-8, equivalent to ages 6-10 and 12-14 respectively, plus two years of secondary education, corresponding to Classes 9-10, equivalent to ages 15-16. Following an exam, students may continue to upper secondary schooling, corresponding to Classes 11-12 and ages 17-18. Higher education has been almost a uniquely English medium, the proposal to replace this with Indian languages over a 15 year post-independence transitional period having been unsuccessful.

### The national language-in-education policy

Formalised in 1968, the country's *three language formula* is intended to guide state school LEPs. This recommends the mother tongue (generally presumed to correspond to the state language) as the medium of instruction, with both an additional modern Indian language (specifically Hindi where this is not the state language, or that of another state if it is) and English to be taught subsequently as curricular subjects.<sup>57</sup> This model of education is thus primarily monolingual. However, the intention is that every child enters secondary education with competence in at least three languages, including English.

The application of India's LEP nevertheless varies enormously across states, with very few implementing it as prescribed. One obstacle is the lack of intrinsic motivation to learn an additional Indian language, particularly within the Hindi-speaking areas. A further complicating factor is that the official language of individual states does not necessarily correspond to the mother tongue of all its school children.

The fact that English tends to be viewed as the language of opportunity has led to growing pressure to introduce the language at earlier levels, with many government schools responding to this demand by introducing it as a subject at Class 3 and, increasingly, at Class 1, rather than the recommended Classes 5 or 6.<sup>58</sup> Yet in most cases, there are insufficient teachers with proficiency in English or appropriate pedagogic skills. Concern as to such developments is reflected in the observation that 'English needs to find its place along with other Indian languages in different states, where children's other languages strengthen English teaching and learning'.<sup>59</sup>

### Low learning outcomes in India

In achieving the goal of near universal school enrolment across the country, the 2009 RTE represents a significant recent national development, with enrolment increasing to over 96% since its introduction.<sup>60</sup> However, while the Act has created the possibility for large numbers of first generation students to attend primary school, attendance and retention rates are often low, with only a small proportion of children continuing to secondary and higher secondary education, and still fewer entering university. While levels vary from state to state, student progress

The fact that English tends to be viewed as the language of opportunity has led to growing pressure to introduce the language at earlier levels

<sup>57</sup> NCERT, 2005: 2006 <sup>58</sup> Annamalai, 2013; Meganathan, 2011 <sup>59</sup> NCF, 2005 <sup>60</sup> ASER, 2016



and attainment is frequently poor. USI data from 2010-2015 reveal that only 51.4% of the population complete primary education, with the percentage dropping to 37.5% for the completion of lower secondary and 26.8% for upper secondary.<sup>61</sup>

Low student achievement is also a chronic issue in India, although the most recent results of the country-wide assessment show that there have been incremental improvements since 2014. ASER has been tracking children's ability to read and do basic arithmetic around the country since 2005. The most recent findings report that the proportion of children in the third year of primary school who are able to read at least first-year level text is 42.5%, with 73.1% of students being able to read at this level by Class 8. Similarly, the level of arithmetic as measured by children's ability to do a 2-digit subtraction in Class 3 of primary school is 27.7%, and for their ability to do simple division problems in Class 5, it is 26%.<sup>62</sup>

Many factors contribute to the challenges in respect of provision of mass scale quality state education, among these, a legacy of lack of accountability, poorly resourced schools, large class sizes, inadequate provision of pre- and in-service training, and outmoded and often discriminatory pedagogic practices. The need for some children to contribute to the family income and the inability of some parents to support their children with their studies pose additional challenges. There are nevertheless notable differences between states in terms of quality of educational provision and levels of student achievement, with particular variation the north and the south of the country.

#### **Language-related initiatives to improve education**

A programme of reform led by the National Council for Education, Research and Training (NCERT) and other government bodies is starting to address these issues, with the production of a National Curriculum Framework<sup>63</sup> and a National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education<sup>64</sup> providing standardised teaching and learning objectives for all subjects. Within each state, a State Council for Education, Research and Training (SCERT) is responsible for the implementation and adaption of the national educational policy and the approval of specific teaching syllabi and exam boards across its divisions and sub-divisions (districts, blocks and clusters). Several programmes have been introduced to enhance classroom pedagogy in general – among them Activity Based Learning and Joyful Learning. However, a lack of recognition of linguistic diversity continues to be commonplace in such programmes.<sup>65</sup> A limited number of programmes have been developed in support of mother-tongue-based multilingual education, particularly in rural, tribal and disadvantaged areas in an attempt to offer an improved quality of education.<sup>66</sup>

#### **Growth in low-cost private schooling**

A recent wide scale development has been the migration of children from poor families away from state education to newly established low-cost private schools, many of which are English medium.<sup>67</sup> Registrations at such schools are reported to have doubled in India over the last five years,<sup>68</sup> with sons tending to be prioritised over daughters where family finances are limited.

The prestige attached to private education for the Indian elite, which is usually in English, means that English medium schooling is assumed to be of better quality

The need for some children to contribute to the family income and the inability of some parents to support their children with their studies pose additional challenges

<sup>61</sup> UNESCO UIS stats, 2017 <sup>62</sup> ASER, 2016 <sup>63</sup> NCF, 2005 <sup>64</sup> NCFTE, 2009 <sup>65</sup> Jhingran, 2009 <sup>66</sup> MacKenzie, 2009; Mohanty, 2015 <sup>67</sup> James and Woodhead, 2014; Singh and Bangay, 2014 <sup>68</sup> Nagarajan, 2015

than the state equivalent. Much variation exists, however, in respect of the level of education provided by many low-cost private schools, which are frequently established by individuals with no educational background, and very often employ untrained teachers. In some cases, most teaching occurs in the state language, meaning that these schools are English medium only by name.<sup>69</sup>

While the majority of these establishments are unregulated, there is a measure of accountability between those who run them and the parents who pay their fees. Such schools nevertheless require government recognition in order for their students to be eligible to sit state or national exams. This has resulted in the not uncommon practice of students being enrolled in state schools as well as unrecognised low-cost private ones, even though they never attend the former.

A parallel phenomenon has been the provision of, and increasing demand for, low-cost supplementary individual or group lessons in private homes or 'coaching centres' after school or at the weekend. These tend to focus on specific subjects, such as English or mathematics, often in relation to exam preparation. Such coaching is availed of by both privately and state educated children, the demands of combining these classes and the associated homework with regular schooling being considerable.

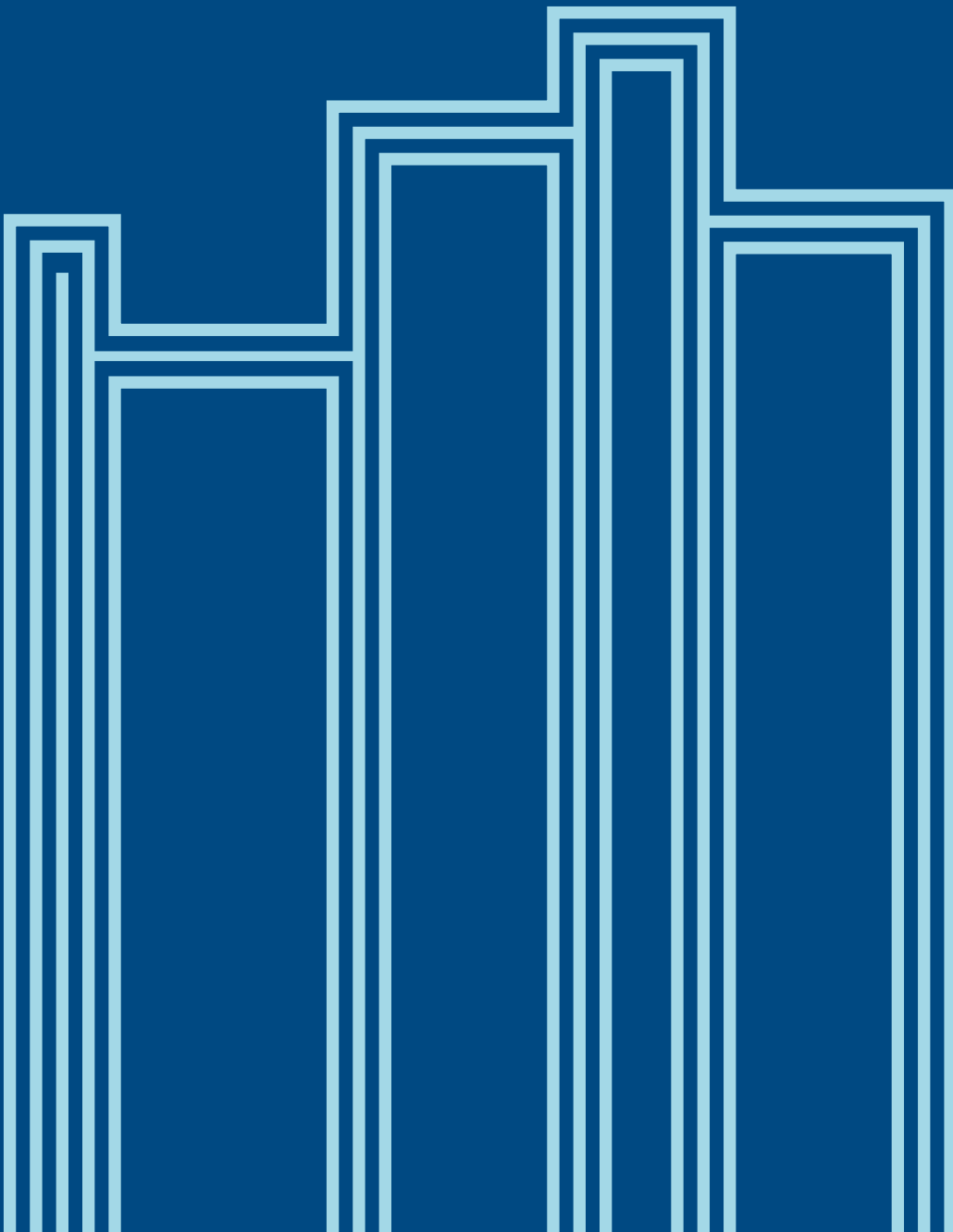
Private coaching commonly represents a supplementary form of income to teachers of low-cost private schools. The involvement of state school teachers in such practices is becoming increasingly regulated, however.

**While the majority of these establishments are unregulated, there is a measure of accountability between those who run them and the parents who pay their fees**

<sup>69</sup> Annamalai, 2005; Mohanty et al., 2010

Chapter 2

# The literature review



# This literature review draws on studies investigating language-in-education policies and practices in Ghana and India.

It focuses on key issues explored in previous research, which then framed the fieldwork we undertook for this project. Issues explored in previous research include how the use of EMI hampers learning outcomes in education, as well as its impact on issues of equity and inclusion. Studies have also explored how EMI impacts on teacher practices, limiting the language and pedagogic strategies that they use in the classroom. All of this research points to EMI as a barrier to improving classroom teaching methodologies and learning outcomes, and it therefore overwhelmingly recommends the use of local languages in education, particularly at the early stages of learning. However, previous research also identifies a number of challenges in implementing the use of local languages as the MOI. These challenges are both practical and attitudinal, and require shifts in systems and attitudes to support the use of local languages in improving the quality of education in these contexts.

One of the main issues explored in the literature is the role of the medium of instruction in learning, and the extent to which learning is hampered by the use of EMI

## EMI and learning outcomes

One of the main issues explored in the literature is the role of the medium of instruction in learning, and the extent to which learning is hampered by the use of EMI. Studies conducted in Ghana, and other contexts in Sub-Saharan Africa, compare outcomes of learning through the local language and English, and regularly find evidence of higher learning outcomes when the local language is used.<sup>70</sup> In Ghana, Davis et al. found that students are significantly hindered by the use of English in solving mathematical word problems, even when they have demonstrated that they understand the underlying concepts in the local language.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, Ngwaru and Opoku-Amankwa (2010) and Opoku-Amankwa (2009a) found that the introduction of EMI from primary Grade 4 creates anxiety for students, due to their lack of ability in the language, and stalls effective classroom participation. Studies conducted in Malawi, Zambia and Rwanda found that students who had scored poorly in English reading assessments achieved much higher grades on similar reading tasks in the local language.<sup>72</sup> These findings reinforce research conducted in other contexts which has consistently demonstrated that mother tongue based instruction in early years' education results in higher levels of achievement with regards to subject learning, as well as more rapid and successful mastery of other languages, even if acquired considerably later.<sup>73</sup>

Studies investigating learning outcomes in low-cost English medium private schools (LCEMs) in India suggest that EMI is inhibiting attainment, debunking perceptions of it offering higher quality education and success.<sup>74</sup> Singh and Bangay

<sup>70</sup> Alidou et al., 2006; Ankamah et al., 2012; Benson, 2010; Brock-Utne et al., 2010; Heugh et al., 2007; UNESCO, 2016 <sup>71</sup> Davis et al., 2013; Andoh-Kumi, 1998 <sup>72</sup> Williams, 2014; Rea-Dickens et al., 2013 <sup>73</sup> Cummins, 2000; Kosonen, 2005; Thomas and Collier, 2002 <sup>74</sup> James and Woodhead, 2014; Nair, 2015; Singh, 2015; Singh and Bangay, 2014; Singh and Sarkar, 2012

argue that any evidence that low-cost private schooling is resulting in better student learning outcomes is only slight, and those outcomes still remain dismal. They attribute any difference in outcome to more regular teacher attendance, homework correction and student feedback – rather than the language of instruction.<sup>75</sup> Using scores in mathematics as a proxy for student achievement, Nair found that Telugu- (mother tongue) medium students perform significantly better on average than their English medium counterparts.<sup>76</sup> There is also evidence that English language outcomes are no better at English medium schools than they are at Telugu-medium private schools.<sup>77</sup> Thus, EMI is found to be creating barriers to learning and academic success.

It has also been found that the English curriculum and textbooks in both contexts are at a level far beyond students' existing competences and realistic achievement levels.<sup>78</sup> Importantly, the English language teaching curriculum is not designed to support the delivery of the curriculum through English.<sup>79</sup>

**English curriculum and textbooks in both contexts are at a level far beyond students' existing competences and realistic achievement levels**

## EMI and social justice

The focus of much literature negatively positions EMI and social justice.<sup>80</sup> An example of this is the large-scale quantitative study into the relationship between inequality and language use in 33 African countries. Coyne (2015) shows that in countries where ex-colonial languages like English are the MOI, income inequality is significantly higher than in countries where it is taught as a subject. The study concludes that ex-colonial languages used as the MOI impede progress through school, particularly for marginalised groups.

Opoku-Amankwa (2009b) explores social justice issues through a qualitative study in the context of Ghana, pointing to how medium of instruction relates to social, historical, economic, and political forces, embedded within the broader social context both inside and outside the classroom. In this way, a student who is less capable in English is more likely to come from less privileged linguistic and ethnic background, having fewer resources to engage with English outside the classroom. This student is therefore less likely to participate and succeed in classroom activities, and more likely to be reprimanded and to face punishment as a result. This can lead to a student further disengaging from classroom activities and school, which contributes to a negative cycle which reinforces deeply embedded inequalities.

Studies conducted in India also suggest that EMI policies are working to keep the poorest and the most disadvantaged students from learning English, as students with limited resources do not have access to the language beyond the classroom – and the classroom does not offer sufficient opportunities for the language to be learned.<sup>81</sup> Ramanathan (2014) also shows how in India there are different expectations of students at English medium and local language schools, with only those attending English medium schools being prepared for further education – itself largely English medium. Particularly in rural areas, where English is often taught with the intention of providing equal access to economic opportunities,

<sup>75</sup> Singh and Bangay, 2014; Singh and Sarkar, 2012 <sup>76</sup> Nair, 2015; Singh, 2015 <sup>77</sup> Singh, 2015 <sup>78</sup> Ankohmah et al., 2012; Milligan et al., 2016; Pritchett and Beatty, 2012 <sup>79</sup> Clegg and Afitska, 2011; Owu-Ewie and Eshun, 2015 <sup>80</sup> Tikly, 2016 <sup>81</sup> Bhattacharya, 2013; Ramanathan, 1999; 2005; 2014

there is concern that it ends up instead expanding existing gaps in English proficiency.<sup>82</sup> In such contexts, there is often a shortage of qualified teachers, a lack of materials and very limited or no English available outside the school environment. Despite this, some have argued that English abilities among the non-elite have enabled, to some extent, social mobility, wider job choice, and, to some extent, equality opportunity.<sup>83</sup> Indeed, Vaish (2008) suggests that access to English in India has led to class and economic restructuring.

Others have suggested that in both contexts, mastery of English relates to mastery of subjects such as mathematics and science, which in turn leads to better economic prospects and improved social mobility.<sup>84</sup> Those who are not able to learn English are relegated to the non-English, 'non-science' educated masses, who are at a clear disadvantage with regard to future opportunities. Here too, then, access to English contributes to life chances and outcomes.

On the other hand, there have been studies that explore how the use of local languages in education can contribute to social justice and community development. For example, local languages have been found to be more effective in creating bridges between home and school and allowing parents to be more involved in their children's education.<sup>85</sup> The use of local languages in education can also reinforce traditional practices, community values and the relevance of the curriculum.<sup>86</sup>

## EMI and classroom practice

Studies have also explored the relationship between medium of instruction and teachers' classroom practices, finding that using English can make it difficult for teachers to use active, student-centred strategies. Research conducted in Ghana found that teacher practices are more effective when teachers use their mother tongue.<sup>87</sup> Similarly, those teachers whose training makes use of teachers' mother tongue are more likely to have the technical and pedagogical vocabulary needed to teach curricular subjects, and the necessary confidence in their own language ability.<sup>88</sup> This is due in part to the teachers' level of competence in English being low – particularly in communities where the language is not widely used.<sup>89</sup> Related to this, studies suggest that EMI increases the likelihood of teachers' reliance on traditional classroom practices and 'safe talk' – classroom talk that allows participation without any risk of loss of face for the teacher and the students, and maintains an appearance of 'doing the lesson', while little learning is actually taking place.<sup>90</sup> Teachers who are not confident in English have been found to rely more on drilling and memorisation, while using a wider range of teaching strategies when using their mother tongue.<sup>91</sup> The use of an increased range of teaching strategies can result in more animated teaching, with the effect that students are more motivated and understand more.

Also in India, English language teaching has been found to unintentionally discourage communicative competence and increase focus on rote-learning for exams.<sup>92</sup>

**Teachers who are not confident in English have been found to rely more on drilling and memorisation, while using a wider range of teaching strategies when using their mother tongue**

<sup>82</sup> Annamalai, 2013; Rao, 2013 <sup>83</sup> D'Souza, 2006 <sup>84</sup> Brock-Utne, 2003; Ramanathan, 2005 <sup>85</sup> Benson, 2004; Thomson and Stakhnevich, 2010; Truong, 2012 <sup>86</sup> Probyn, 2005, Trudell, 2007 <sup>87</sup> Alidou et al., 2006 <sup>88</sup> Ankohmah et al., 2012 <sup>89</sup> Heugh et al., 2007 <sup>90</sup> Ankohmah et al., 2012 <sup>91</sup> Chick, 1996; Williams, 2014 <sup>92</sup> Ankohmah et al., 2012; Opoku-Amankwa, 2009a <sup>93</sup> Annamalai, 2013

Interestingly, there is a sizeable literature on the pedagogic value of classroom codeswitching<sup>93</sup> and translanguaging<sup>94</sup> that is relevant to educational contexts in LMICs. Studies conducted in LMICs where English is used as the medium of instruction have found that due to students' low proficiency in English, teachers often switch to the local language for a variety of cognitive and affective reasons.<sup>95</sup> In many such classrooms, there may be multilingual spoken language use, while textbooks are in English, and reading, writing and assessments are conducted solely in English. While attitudes to classroom codeswitching are often negative, recent research findings from Ghana suggest that judicious and strategic use of teacher codeswitching can enable students to participate actively during lessons.<sup>96</sup> Further exploring practices of classroom codeswitching and the potential of translanguaging to enhance learning would also be beneficial in the contexts of Ghana and India.

### Practical challenges in implementing local language medium instruction policies that reinforce EMI

Although it is widely recognised that teaching and learning in a language in which teacher and learner are proficient is more conducive to learning, previous research has established several challenges to implementing local language education policies, and this contributes to a reliance on EMI.

In Ghana, there have been notable challenges in implementing the use of local languages at the lower primary level.<sup>97</sup> For example, in some contexts the home language of the majority of students is not one of the 11 languages supported in the government policy, and there are no associated teaching resources available in that language.<sup>98</sup> This means that English remains the main language used at the lower primary level. Lack of teaching resources has also been identified as problematic, even in schools that use one of the government-sponsored languages. Few resources exist beyond those created through the NALAP project in 2007.<sup>99</sup> Apart from textbooks for the teaching of Ghanaian languages, all the teaching syllabuses and teaching materials created for use in primary schools are in English. This means that teachers at the lower primary level have to translate the lessons from English to the local language. Some teachers, however, do not have competence in the local language and therefore cannot do this translation.<sup>100</sup> Even when teachers do speak the local language, they may not have the literacy or pedagogic skills to support students' reading and writing in the local language.<sup>101</sup>

Another complicating factor documented at the lower primary level in Ghana is multilingual school populations. There are schools where students come from a wide range of ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, having migrated from rural areas to larger urban centres like Accra.<sup>102</sup> For many children, particularly those children of migrants, it can be difficult to identify a single mother tongue. Take as an example a Ghanaian child whose parents are from an Ewe-speaking area and they use that language at home, but the family moved to a Twi-speaking community in Accra. The child attends a primary school in which Ga is the local language designated for use at the lower primary level; English is also used as a medium of

In some contexts the home language of the majority of students is not one of the 11 languages supported in the government policy

<sup>93</sup>Ferguson, 2003; Macaro, 2005 <sup>94</sup>Garcia and Wei, 2014 <sup>95</sup>Clegg and Afitska, 2011; Probyn, 2009; 2015; Setati et al., 2002 <sup>96</sup>Yevudey, 2013 <sup>97</sup>Davis and Agbenyega, 2012; Trudell, 2016 <sup>98</sup>Ansah and Agyeman, 2015; Opoku-Amankwa et al., 2015 <sup>99</sup>Ankohmah et al., 2012; IEQ, 2000; Yiboe, 2012 <sup>100</sup>Ansah, 2014; Ansah and Agyeman, 2015; IEQ, 2000; Yiboe, 2012 <sup>101</sup>Yiboe, 2012 <sup>102</sup>Mfum-Mensah, 2005

instruction. The child is likely to have some proficiency in all four languages, but what is the child's 'mother tongue'? In which language is the child going to be most comfortable with for acquiring literacy and for learning the content of the national curriculum?

Some research has also found that national policy is not being implemented in Ghana because of a lack of awareness of the policy in schools.<sup>103</sup> Even in cases where there is awareness, there were no measures to monitor or enforce the implementation of policy.<sup>104</sup> Studies uncovered examples of schools instituting practices that were in violation of the policy, such as prohibiting the use of local languages in classrooms and in the school compound, even during play or break time<sup>105</sup> and instituting various forms of punishment to students for not speaking the *right* language.<sup>106</sup> The punishments include washing dining-hall plates, weeding, scrubbing, writing lines and wearing labels that say 'I will not speak vernacular in school again'. Examples were also found of schools holding back students at the lower primary level due to low levels of English,<sup>107</sup> a practice which strictly goes against the policy.

Finally, there were examples of local language policies not being implemented because of resistance, either from parents or from education officials.<sup>108</sup> Often such resistance was based on a misunderstanding of the policy as disregarding the importance of English. A further prominent reason for not using local languages at the lower primary level is that English is the language of assessment at the end of upper primary, and teachers felt obliged to prepare their students for this assessment in English – assuming that using EMI was the most effective way of doing this.<sup>109</sup>

Similar issues were reported in India, it is often assumed that the state language which serves as the MOI in government schools (e.g. Hindi in schools in Bihar) is the home language of students. However, students come from a wide range of linguistic backgrounds, many of them speaking languages that are quite distant from the state language.<sup>110</sup> In such cases, learning through Hindi (or whatever the state language of schooling is) can be just as challenging as learning through English. Students come from a variety of linguistic backgrounds and may not share a common language, while teachers may not know the children's home languages.<sup>111</sup> Even when the language of the school is the student's mother tongue, the language used at school may be a very different form of that language. For example, a highly Sanskritised versions of Hindi might be used in school, and this is often considerably different from varieties spoken in students' homes and environments.<sup>112</sup> There can also be sharp contrasts between textbook contents and the reality of students' lives, with unfamiliar words and worlds exacerbating the language difficulties that students face.<sup>113</sup> In some contexts, resources have been created where minority languages are being used as the MOI in schools, and in support of learning the state language and English.<sup>114</sup> However, such initiatives tend to be carried out on a small scale, while large numbers of children continue to attend primary school in a language far different to the ones they use in the home and local community. The distance between the languages used at school and students' actual language competencies may contribute to parents opting for EMI for their children's education.

There were examples of local language policies not being implemented because of resistance, either from parents or from education officials

<sup>103</sup> IEQ, 2000 Yibo, 2012 <sup>104</sup> Davis and Agbenyega, 2012; IEQ, 2000 <sup>105</sup> Ansah and Agyeman, 2015 <sup>106</sup> Edu-Buandoh and Otchere, 2012 <sup>107</sup> IEQ, 2000 <sup>108</sup> IEQ, 2000 <sup>109</sup> Yibo, 2012 <sup>110</sup> Mohanty, 2010; Singh and Bengay, 2014; Woodhead et al., 2013; cf. Mackenzie and Walker, 2013 <sup>111</sup> D'Souza, 2006; Jhingran, 2009 <sup>112</sup> D'Souza, 2006: 162; Dyer, 2008 <sup>113</sup> Bhattacharya, 2013; Ramanathan, 2002; 2003, cf. Milligan et al., 2016 <sup>114</sup> Mohanty, 2010



## Attitudes towards language

Research has established that local language education may not be supported because such languages are associated with ‘powerlessness and insufficiency’, both in Ghana,<sup>115</sup> and in India, where such attitudes can be witnessed among children as young as seven.<sup>116</sup> There are examples in both contexts of local language education being perceived as a means of perpetuating marginalisation.<sup>117</sup> Importantly, though, there is also some evidence that attitudes towards the use of local languages in education are starting to change – particularly with regards to their use in early schooling. Local languages are increasingly perceived as important for enhancing understanding and communication, and promoting cultural identity.<sup>118</sup>

Findings also report strong ideologies of English as a language of education, economic development and social mobility,<sup>119</sup> as well as assumptions regarding the value of English in the labour market<sup>120</sup> and as the language of opportunity.<sup>121</sup> The language is often strongly associated with education and literacy, with local language literacy scarcely seen as relevant.<sup>122</sup> Davis et al (2013), for example, show how Ghanaian students prefer being taught mathematics through English, despite difficulties in speaking, reading and understanding the language because they feel that this will help them to succeed in the world.<sup>123</sup> There is also significant pressure from parents, who generally want their children to speak English, on the assumption that this will provide them with greater opportunities for the future, as the language often functions as a gatekeeper to higher education and higher paying jobs.<sup>124</sup> There are perceptions that education will not be taken seriously if not in a ‘world language’.<sup>125</sup>

Strong beliefs about language learning in general have also been found to fuel the promotion of EMI. One perception is that the earlier a child begins to learn English, the better,<sup>126</sup> related to the much debated notion of the ‘critical period hypothesis’ and the belief that additional language learning is only likely to be successful within a limited period in early childhood.<sup>127</sup> Fears of introducing languages ‘too late’ partly explain the shift from introducing English at primary Grade 4 to primary Grade 1 in government schools worldwide in recent years. Such perceptions fail to recognise that language learning at a young age can only be successful if students are provided with plentiful rich input and regular opportunities to use language in meaningful ways within and outside the classroom over an extended period of time. In many cases, the policies which promise to provide access to English do not match the resources available for the materials and the teaching capacity that would be needed to achieve this.<sup>128</sup>

Second, there are strong beliefs about the need for ‘maximum exposure’ to the language – that the more time students spend engaging with English and the more subjects one teaches in English, the more success students will have in learning it.<sup>129</sup> However, such perceptions do not recognise that, until students have achieved a certain level of competence in English, and unless they are supported to access content through English, they will experience obstacles in learning it.

**In many cases, the policies which promise to provide access to English do not match the resources available**

<sup>115</sup>Albaugh, 2007; Djité, 2008; Mfum-Mensah, 2005; Opoku-Amankwa, 2009a; Williams, 2014 <sup>116</sup>Mohanty, 2009 <sup>117</sup>Lee, 2014 for Ghana; cf. Kamwangamala, 2013 and Truong, 2012 for Africa; D’Souza, 2006 for India <sup>118</sup>Tackie-Ofusu et al., 2015 <sup>119</sup>James and Woodhead, 2014; Woodhead et al., 2012; see also Seargeant and Erling, 2011 <sup>120</sup>Erling, 2014; Roy, 2014 <sup>121</sup>Davis and Agbenyega, 2012; Davis et al., 2013; Trudell, 2007 <sup>122</sup>Opoku-Amankwa and Brew-Hammond, 2011; Makoni and Trudell, 2009 <sup>123</sup>See also Brock-Utne, 2005; Edu-Buandoh and Otchere, 2012; Yiboe, 2012 <sup>124</sup>James and Woodhead, 2013 for India; Gandolfo, 2009; Laitin, 1994; Mfum-Mensah, 2005; Norton, 2012; Probyn, 2009; Tembe and Norton, 2011; Trudell, 2007 for Africa <sup>125</sup>Truong, 2012:9 <sup>126</sup>Clegg, 2005; Eapen, 2011; Graddol, 2010; Rao, 2013 <sup>127</sup>Lenneberg, 1967, Singleton and Lengyel, 1995 <sup>128</sup>cf. Hamid and Erling, 2016 <sup>129</sup>Rao, 2013: 275

Related to attitudes about ‘maximum exposure’ to English are negative attitudes towards classroom codeswitching, which have been consistently identified in the research.<sup>130</sup> While not every instance of codeswitching is necessarily supportive of learning (for example the simple translation of explanations that are cognitively too demanding for students), evidence suggests that local languages can be effectively used to reinforce learning and to build competence in English. This, however, is often not recognised or exploited by teachers, and classroom use of local languages is seen as an obstacle to the successful learning of English.<sup>131</sup> It has been found that many teachers are indeed able to comfortably shift between languages in the classroom, often using them effectively and responsively to support students’ learning. Despite this, use of local languages is not generally accepted as a legitimate classroom strategy by teachers or school officials.<sup>132</sup> While the practices of translanguaging is relatively unexplored in the contexts of Ghana and India (where discussions tend to focus on using either one language or the other), the potential of translanguaging for effective language and content learning in EMI contexts is increasingly being explored.<sup>133</sup>

While many of these perceptions about language learning and language may be misguided, in Ghana they contribute to reinforcing English as the main medium of instruction throughout schooling. In India, they are helping to fuel the migration of rural and poor students from government schools to low-cost private schools, where English is often the purported MOI. A more informed understanding of the role of language in learning in general, and of language learning in particular (as provided in this report), might help to shift these perceptions, and contribute to the acceptance of using local languages and translanguaging to support learning and the learning of English.

**Evidence suggests that local languages can be effectively used to reinforce learning and to build competence in English**

<sup>130</sup> Ferguson, 2003 <sup>131</sup> Clegg and Afitska, 2011; Probyn, 2009 <sup>132</sup> Brock-Utne, 2004; Probyn, 2009 <sup>133</sup> e.g. Clegg and Simpson, 2016; Milligan et al., 2016; Probyn, 2015; Tikly, 2016

Chapter 3

# Approach and methods



# The study adopted a mixed methods approach combining a literature review with case study visits to nine schools across two research sites.

## The literature review

As there are relatively few large-scale empirical studies into the effectiveness of MOI policies in LMICs in general, and in Ghana and India in particular, the literature review for this research demanded a rigorous but flexible and inclusive approach. It thus drew on Hagen-Zanker and Mallett's guidelines for conducting rigorous literature reviews within the field of international development to enable reviewers to 'take empirical evidence seriously, to minimise retrieval bias and to ensure relevance and utility of the final product, while also allowing for flexibility in the retrieval process.'<sup>134</sup> The team collaboratively conducted a search for literature related to MOI in the contexts of Ghana and India in an extensive collection of over 900,000 full-text journals and over 500 databases, using a variety of key terms associated with the field (e.g. 'language policy', 'language of instruction', 'medium of instruction', etc.). The search was limited to peer-reviewed articles published between 2000 and 2015, thereby covering the most recent developments in LEP and issues arising due to increased access to school since the formulation of the Millennium Development Goals.

The initial searches brought up over 600 results. After which exclusion criteria were applied to ensure that the studies were published in a peer-reviewed journal, as this was taken as a sign that they were sufficiently relevant, valid and reliable. The titles and abstracts from the peer-reviewed articles were then independently screened by two members of the team to verify that they were directly concerned with MOI-related issues. This resulted in 64 articles being selected for review (36 relating to India and 28 to Ghana). Each of these articles were read independently in full by two team members, with pairs being assigned to each of the contexts. To ensure a comparable approach, a template was designed to capture and categorise the content of the articles according to the theoretical and methodological framework they employed, evidence of the reliability of that methodology, the key findings of that study, and any recommendations made in terms of language policy and practice. Each reader completed this template independently and then met with the other team member to compare their results and find consensus on any differences.

On completion of this formal search and review process, the research team felt that some key publications investigating issues in MOI had not been uncovered. This was attributed to the diversity of the field and the large number of key terms

The team collaboratively conducted a search for literature related to MOI in the contexts of Ghana and India in an extensive collection of over 900,000 full-text journals and over 500 databases

<sup>134</sup> Hagan-Zanker and Mallett, 2013: 1

identified in the studies – including some that were not in our initial search, e.g. ‘codeswitching’ or ‘English language teaching’. Moreover, several relevant studies featured in edited volumes, which were not readily available as digital files, or took the form of grey literature such as project reports, and therefore did not fit the original search criteria. The team therefore identified any additional studies cited in the original selection of articles which they thought should be included in the review – what Hagen-Zanker and Mallett term a ‘snowball’<sup>135</sup> process. This led us to the inclusion of a further 13 relevant studies, which brought the total number to 77.

A ‘strength of evidence’ matrix was then applied to each of these publications using codes to indicate the robustness of the study and the level of relevance. This process was undertaken independently by pairs of researchers, who then discussed any differences in ratings and came to a consensus. Only seven of the MOI studies were ranked as being ‘very strong’ in terms of the methodology reported, and the size and length of the study reported on (five related to Ghana and two to India). Around half of the studies (33) were ranked as being ‘moderately strong’, which meant that they were ranked as being rooted in empirical work (either primary or secondary), with some reporting on the methodology (the majority of these being small-scale qualitative studies). Another large group of studies (25) were ranked as ‘other’, as they were conceptual pieces and/or had weak or no reported methodology. This report does not attempt to include all of the study, but relies primarily on a selection ranked as ‘very strong’ or ‘moderately strong’. The conceptual studies, and related studies undertaken in other contexts, have been drawn on to provide background information and add strength to the arguments put forward in the empirical studies.<sup>136</sup>

This report does not attempt to include all of the study, but relies primarily on a selection ranked as ‘very strong’ or ‘moderately strong’

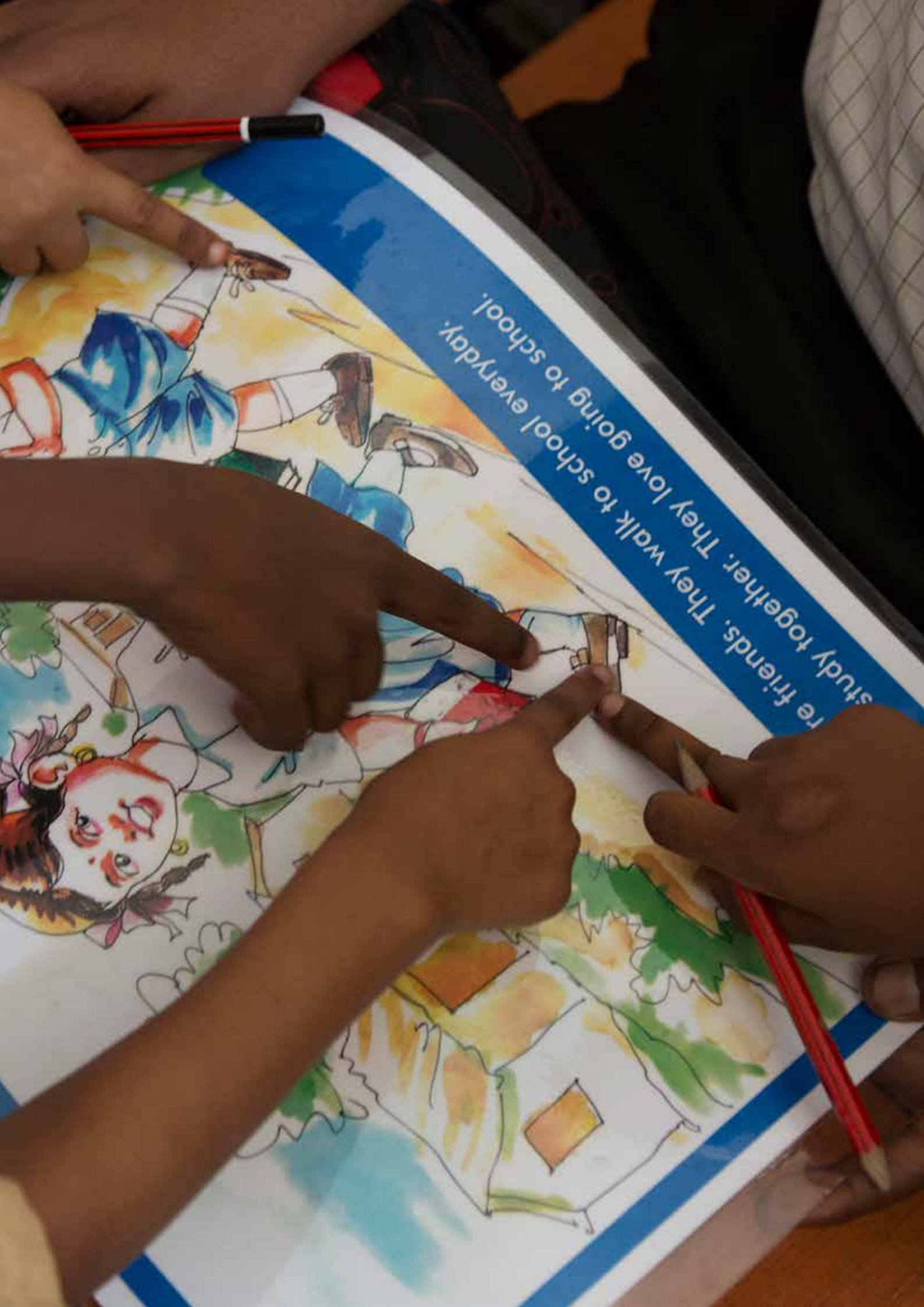
## The fieldwork

The fieldwork consisted of visits to schools in which the implementation of EMI policies was captured through classroom observation. Attitudes to the policy and its effectiveness were discussed in interviews with education officials, headteachers and teachers.

The fieldwork sought to explore the following research questions:

1. What are the practices in state and low-cost private English medium schools which aim to support the learning of English and learning through English, at both an institutional and classroom level?
2. To what extent is there an awareness in schools of the national language-in-education policy? What are the perceptions of this policy?
3. To what extent does the school language policy mirror the national language-in-education policy? Where are there variances in national policy and school policies?
4. To what extent is there an awareness of recommendations from international research about multilingual education and English language teaching and learning? What are the perceptions of this research? What are the perceptions of the practicality of implementing such findings in this context?

<sup>135</sup> Hagan-Zanker and Mallett, 2013 <sup>136</sup> See further Erling, E.J., Adinolfi, L., Hultgren, A.K., Buckler, A. and Mukorera, M. (2016). Medium of Instruction (MOI) policies in Ghanaian and Indian primary schools: An overview of key issues and recommendations. *Comparative Education*, 53, 3: 294-310



re friends. They walk to school everyday.  
study together. They love going to school.

The choice of contexts for this research was influenced by the fact that all three research partners had an established track record of working in both Ghana and India, and ongoing organisational interest in the broader geographic areas of Sub-Saharan Africa and India.

The fieldwork was conducted in two sites: the Greater Accra Region of Ghana and the state of Bihar, India. In Ghana, the research focused on the use of EMI in government primary schools, while in India, it investigated the use of English, primarily in low-cost private primary schools. While the contexts of investigation vary considerably, the same methodology was applied for the fieldwork in both of these sites.<sup>137</sup>

In total, nine different schools were visited in urban, peri-urban and rural areas: four in Greater Accra, Ghana, and five in the state of Bihar, India. From these schools, a combination of 26 different classroom lessons were formally observed (15 in Ghana and 11 in India). Interviews were carried out with 46 participants (in Ghana, 25 participants in 20 interviews; in India, 21 participants in 18 interviews).

### The classroom observations

The classroom observations were designed to gain insight into how teachers and students enact national, state or school language policies in the classroom, and the extent to which classroom practice aligns with language policy objectives. They focused on the upper level of primary school, as at this level students had already transitioned to EMI in Ghana and had had time to adjust to schooling in English in India. Students at this level could be expected to be sufficiently proficient in English to access increasingly difficult curriculum content.

To conduct the classroom observations, we developed an observation schedule that would capture effective multilingual practices for language learning and language-supportive pedagogies. This instrument was based on previous studies that had investigated codeswitching in LMICs, such as Arthur, 1996; Bunyi, 2005; Ferguson, 2003; Hornberger and Vaish, 2009; Inbar-Lourie, 2010; Macaro, 2005; and Probyn 2005; 2009; 2015. The observation schedule also focused on recognised aspects of dialogic learning and student-centred pedagogy, such as asking open questions, using activities like pair and group work to engage students in discussions and dialogue, and drawing on students' previous knowledge and experience<sup>138</sup> (a separate appendix to this report is available on request from Education Development Trust for the observation schedule and guidance). The observation schedule had four sub-sections:

To conduct the classroom observations, we developed an observation schedule that would capture effective multilingual practices for language learning and language-supportive pedagogies

- **Classroom talk:** the amount of talking time that the teacher and the students do, the percentage of that talk that is in English, the level of English, and the number of students talking in class.
- **Teacher's classroom practices:** student-centred active learning practices that might support the development of learning and language, such as the use of resources, drawing on students' background, questioning, correcting and creating an inclusive environment.

<sup>137</sup> Because some of the private schools visited in India were not officially recognised, great persistence and sensitivity was needed to gain access to these schools, and not all of the planned interview questions were possible to broach with the participants. This, combined with the fact that all interviews conducted in India had to be mediated and translated, meant that the data from the two contexts are quite varied. <sup>138</sup> cf. Alexander, 2008; Schweisfurth, 2015 Please contact [research@educationdevelopmenttrust.com](mailto:research@educationdevelopmenttrust.com)

- **Teacher's use of language:** the language teachers used for various classroom practices (e.g. classroom management, explaining the curriculum, and affective purposes).
  - **Student activities:** the type of activities that students are involved in (e.g. reading, writing, speaking and listening), and the use of any language-supportive activities.
- 

## The interviews

Interviews were designed to explore participants' perceptions of the language policy, barriers to implementation of the policy, perceptions of success of the policy and perceptions of students and their language abilities and their learning (a separate appendix is available on request from Education Development Trust for the interview schedules).

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## Ethics and consent

This research was undertaken within a structured framework which included assessment by the Open University (OU's) Human Participants and Material Ethics Committee (HPMEC).<sup>139</sup> It also followed the British Association for Applied Linguistics Recommendations for Good Practice in Applied Linguistics,<sup>140</sup> recognising also the complexity of conducting research in LMICs.<sup>141</sup> Participation was treated in strict confidence in accordance with the OU's Data Protection Act.

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<sup>139</sup> These documents are available on the OU's Research website: <http://www.open.ac.uk/research/research-school/resources/policy-information-governance.php>

<sup>140</sup> [http://www.baal.org.uk/about\\_goodpractice\\_full.pdf](http://www.baal.org.uk/about_goodpractice_full.pdf) <sup>141</sup> See Hultgren et al., 2016 Please contact [research@educationdevelopmenttrust.com](mailto:research@educationdevelopmenttrust.com)



Chapter 4

# Fieldwork in Greater Accra Region (GAR), Ghana



# In Ghana, the fieldwork focused on the Greater Accra Region, in particular two districts within this region: District 1 (primarily urban district) and District 2 (more rural and on the outskirts of Greater Accra).

## District 1: Urban GAR

District 1 is a cosmopolitan multilingual district. The two schools in this district are within a densely populated and busy trading area. The official language of this part of the district is Ga, as this is the language spoken by the people indigenous to the area. Chiefs and elders with traditional influence in this community (including the school) promote this language for use in education. However, in many regions (including those of School 1 and 2), due to vast migration from other areas of Ghana, the majority of teachers and students do not speak Ga. Instead, the Ghanaian language Twi is widely used. Teachers in schools in this district come from all over the country and therefore speak a number of Ghanaian languages: primarily Twi and Ewe, but also Ga. Students have many different languages: primarily Twi (both varieties Akuapem and Asante Twi), Ewe and Ga, but also Hausa, Dagomba, Dagbani and Krobo. Although the education officials report that they try to match teachers' languages with the dominant languages in the community, this is not always possible due to teacher supply and deployment practices. Moreover, not all students have teachers in their school who speak their language (particularly those from migrant and ethnic minority families). For all of these reasons, selecting a Ghanaian language as a medium of instruction at the lower primary level can be a problem. In School 1, both Ga and Twi are the local languages used at the lower primary level (although there is no specific Ga teacher). In School 2, Twi is recognised as the main local language used at the lower primary level. However, in both schools English can become the de facto language of instruction.

Teachers in schools in this district come from all over the country and therefore speak a number of Ghanaian languages

## District 2: Peri-urban GAR

This rural district is quite linguistically homogeneous. However, the region produces very few teachers and most come from other parts of the country, where other languages are dominant (e.g. Twi and Ewe). There are around 700 teachers in the District, but only around 200 of them speak the local language, which is the Ghanaian language of instruction at the lower primary level (Dangme). NALAP materials in Dangme are not used at the lower primary level where teachers cannot

read them. This means that in some cases here too, English becomes the de facto language of instruction at the lower primary level in many schools. Attendance and punctuality are poor across the district, because many students help their families with farming or nomadic livestock.

## The schools

The fieldwork took place in four schools, two in each district. The schools are for students from kindergarten to the end of upper primary (Grade 6). The schools sampled represented a range of urban and peri-urban areas on a spectrum from very multilingual student populations, to primarily monolingual student populations. In each District, a 'model school' was visited as well as a school that was less well resourced. The model schools tend to be more closely supported by the district education administration and parents. The other two schools were among the lowest performing schools in their respective districts. Among the key differences between the four schools visited were their status in the community, their locale, the structure and arrangement of school buildings, the student population, and access to funding and support.

### Basic School 1, District 1

School 1 was within a very large cluster of four schools, each with its own headteacher, on one huge site, with over 2,000 students. A large private nursery was also attached to the schools. School 1 was a Mission School, which attracts additional resources from the church. It was also a model school which meets specific standards for the school environment and qualifications of teachers. An energetic and charismatic headteacher leads from the front. Parents and the community were continually in the school and in the headteacher's office. Parents were active and supportive, buying extra books and resources for their children. A library was being built with funds from a German charity. Attendance and punctuality were good. Classes were large, with more than 70 students. There were daily required remedial classes for all students from 2-3pm, in all subjects. Academic results were above average, and morale was high. The school participated in EGRA, EMGA and related evaluations of these. NALAP resources are in two Ghanaian languages (Ga and Twi), and the Ghanaian language of instruction at the lower primary level was these two languages. English, however, was emphasised from the start in kindergarten.

### Basic School 2, District 1

School 2 was a poorly resourced school which is not in the school feeding programme. The headteacher managed with limited support and resources. There were around 600 students on roll on a small site which was being developed to build more classrooms. There was a shift system with two sets of teachers for each shift. Students came from 7am-12noon, and 12.30-5pm. Enrolment and/or attendance were low, with classes of 13 and 20. Afternoon classes were especially small, where students did not come or arrived late (often because of the afternoon heat). Many students had migrated from distant villages to live with uncles and aunts in the area. Some were looked after by guardians or even lived on their own. There were older students (ages 13-14) in primary classes who were repeating years or who arrived from villages and were assessed as not ready for Junior High School (JHS). There was

The schools sampled represented a range of urban and peri-urban areas on a spectrum from very multilingual student populations, to primarily monolingual student populations

student mobility: some go away for up to a year and return. NALAP resources in the official language of the region (Ga) were not used; teachers and students did not use this language, and the school used a different Ghanaian language for instruction (Twi). The headteacher had made several requests for NALAP resources in Twi but had not received them.

### **Basic School 3, District 2**

School 3 was a remote rural school on the border with the Eastern Region. It was not in the school feeding programme (although participants mentioned that many students came from very poor backgrounds and came to school hungry). The school can be inaccessible in the rainy season. 245 students were on roll, and 10 of the 16 teachers lodged in a separate building on the school grounds. Classes were small (20-25). The school and the community were linguistically homogenous. The headteacher, all the lower primary teachers, and one of the upper primary teachers, were speakers of the Ghanaian language of instruction (Dangme), and there were two specialists in this language. There were many students who began school late; we observed a 20-year-old in the JHS, and 17 and 18 year-olds in Grades 5 and 6. Attendance was poor. Students helped their families on farms and with livestock, especially at certain times of the year when children act as live scarecrows in the fields or travel with their family herds. The nomadic children may not return to school for several months. Many students lived with their grandparents and looked after them, working on the farm or at the local market before or after school, and doing chores around the house. As part of a district-wide initiative, there was a daily required reading lesson from 7.30-8.00am for all primary school students in every classroom. Teachers and the headteacher explained that this daily lesson focused on English letters, sounds and words. The headteacher provided in-service training for teachers by giving demonstration lessons. The school received NALAP materials in Dangme and training. However, during the school visit, these materials were not in evidence, and the Grade 1 teacher did not know about them. There was no school library.

### **Basic School 4, District 2**

School 4 was in the centre of a busy township in a rural region. There were around 650 students on roll and attendance was good. The school was a Mission School, which benefits from additional resources from the church. It was also a Model School which meets specific standards for the learning environment and teacher qualifications. The headteacher had an MA. Lower primary teachers were all speakers of the Ghanaian language of instruction (Dangme). The kindergarten teacher had a classroom assistant who translated into the Ghanaian language of instruction. There was one specialist of the Ghanaian instructional language. At the upper primary level, all teachers were specialist subject teachers and did not teach the whole curriculum. There was a Special Needs teacher. The school had adjutants (classroom assistants), National Service assistant teachers and student teachers. Adjutants have been with the school for many years. There was a small staff common room. Teachers clubbed together to purchase a photocopier which was in the headteacher's office, where there was also a computer. The school had a library of educational videos, books and some offline computers. In one classroom there was a projector, speakers and an offline computer.

The kindergarten teacher had a classroom assistant who translated into the Ghanaian language of instruction

## Participants

A total of 15 lessons led by 14 teachers were formally observed in the study. Interviews were carried out with 25 participants in 20 interviews. All the teachers observed were interviewed individually following the lesson observed. The headteachers and circuit supervisors of each of the schools were also interviewed. In addition, the District Directors of each district were interviewed, plus one Human Resources Director from District 2. The school officials took part in group interviews.

TABLE 2: GHANA FIELDWORK PARTICIPANTS

Participants	Interviews	Observations
Ghana Teachers	14	15
Ghana Headteachers	4	
Ghana State / District Officials	7	
<b>Total</b>	<b>25 participants; 20 interviews</b>	<b>15</b>

## Classroom observations findings, Ghana

In the following, the findings of the classroom observation from the schools in Ghana are discussed. The team observed 15 classroom lessons by 14 different teachers. All classes observed were at the upper primary level (Grades 4-6). Four lessons from all of the schools were visited apart from one (School 3), where three lessons were observed. At least one class was observed from each of the three upper primary levels (Grades 4-6). All the classes observed were single-grade classes, though in School 3, some of the students were much older, e.g. 17/18. Teachers were encouraged not to prepare anything special, to teach their lessons as they always do, and to use any languages that they regularly draw on in teaching. There was, however, some indication that a few of the lessons observed had been taught before, as the activities had already been completed in students' textbooks.

English lessons accounted for 40% (six) of the lessons observed, mathematics and science lessons accounting for another 20% (three). The other lessons observed were in Creative Arts, Citizenship Education, and Religious and Moral Education. See Table 3.

The English lessons included four Grammar lessons (over a quarter of the lessons observed).

Teachers were encouraged not to prepare anything special, to teach their lessons as they always do, and to use any languages that they regularly draw on in teaching

TABLE 3: FREQUENCY TABLE OF LESSONS OBSERVED IN GHANA (BY SUBJECT AREA)

Subject	Frequency	Percent
English	6	40%
Mathematics	2	13.3%
Science	1	6.7%
Creative Arts	2	13.3%
Citizenship Education	3	20%
Religious and Moral Education	1	6.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>

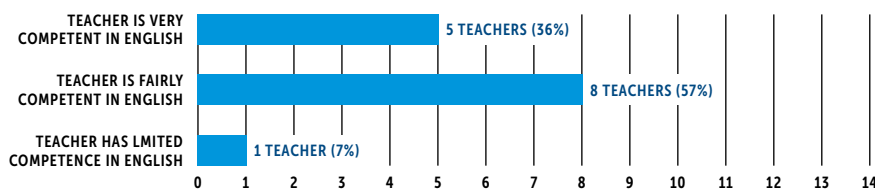
The number of students in the classes observed ranged from 20-75, with an average of 45. There was an equal number of girls and boys, on average.

The observation sought to confirm what had been asserted in other research – that many teachers and students have low levels of English

## Language competence

The observations sought to confirm what had been asserted in other research – that many teachers and students have low levels of English. A needs analysis carried out by the British Council, Ghana, in 2012 found that 56% of teachers did not consider their English language ability to be sufficient for teaching, and 26% of headteachers reported that teachers' ability in English was a challenge to the teaching of English.<sup>142</sup> In contrast, the levels of English among the teachers participating in this study was perceived to be fairly high, based on the observations of teaching and from interviews. The majority of teachers (93%) were estimated to be at least 'fairly competent' in spoken English, with 36% (five) of the teachers being deemed as 'very competent'. Only one (7%) was considered to have limited competence in spoken English, based on the interview and the classroom observation. Teachers at School 1, the diverse, urban setting, were perceived to be the most competent in English: three of the four teachers observed there were rated as 'very competent' in spoken English.

FIGURE 1: TEACHERS' COMPETENCE IN SPOKEN ENGLISH

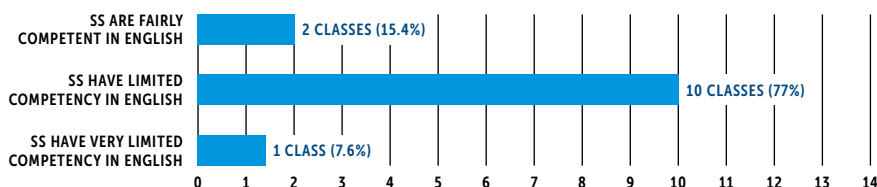


<sup>142</sup>Simpson, 2014

Based on classroom observations, the majority of classes (85%), and the students within them, were perceived to have 'limited competence' in spoken English at best (see Figure 2). In only 15.4% (two) of the classrooms were students estimated to be fairly competent in spoken English: this was in Grade 5 and Grade 6 classes in School 1. This finding supports previous research in which no more than 37% of students achieve the appropriate proficiency levels in English for their level of schooling.<sup>143</sup>

In only 15.4%  
(two) of the  
classrooms  
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fairly competent  
in spoken English

FIGURE 2: STUDENTS' (SS) COMPETENCE IN SPOKEN ENGLISH



This data suggests that by the end of upper primary school, student competence in English has not improved over time, at least in Schools 3 and 4, or at least they do not have opportunities to show their improvements/competences (see Table 4). This finding can be substantiated by the findings from the National Assessment, which found no difference in English test attainment between Grade 4 and Grade 6.<sup>144</sup>

TABLE 4: STUDENTS' COMPETENCE IN SPOKEN ENGLISH BY SCHOOL AND CLASS (WITHIN GHANA)

Level of competence	School	Class P4	Class P5	Class P6	Total
Fairly	1	0	1	1	2
Limited	1	1	0	0	1
Limited	2	0	2	1	3
Limited	3	1	1	1	3
Limited	4	1	1	1	3
Very limited	2	1	0	0	1

Teachers' and students' competence in the local languages could not be adequately estimated in the observation because none of the teachers spoke more than a word or two in the local languages inside or outside the classroom. Some teachers reported in the interview that they do not share a local language with the students in the classes. Others only used the local language very minimally to translate words or phrases, when speaking to students individually or, in one case, as a joke. Students spoke local languages quietly amongst themselves, but very rarely loudly, or when addressing the teacher.

<sup>143</sup> MoE Ghana, 2016 <sup>144</sup> NEA, 2014

## Classroom talk

The extent to which teaching is student-centred and participatory can be assessed by looking at the amount of talk the teacher is doing – with less teacher talk usually indicating more student talk, and hence more participatory practices. During the classroom observations in Ghana, however, all of the lessons were held in lecture format with the teacher doing most of the talking and directing students. Teachers talked no less than 60% of the time in all of the lessons observed. In 12 of the 15 lessons observed, teachers talked for more than 80% of the lesson time; in one lesson, the teacher talked for over 95% of the time. Teachers were observed as using English for 100% of the time that they were speaking.

TABLE 5: FREQUENCY TABLE OF ESTIMATED TEACHERS' TALKING TIME (%) IN GHANA (IN ENGLISH)

Teacher talking time	Frequency	Percent
60 - 64	3	20%
80 - 84	5	33.3%
90 - 94	6	40%
95+	1	6.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>

In as many as fourteen of the lessons (93.3% of lessons observed), students spent effectively all their time listening to the teacher in English, and had limited talking time responding to the teacher in English. Some students were observed speaking fleetingly and informally to each other in the local language as, for instance, when reading books were distributed or writing books were taken out. Students used the local language with the teacher only rarely, when, for example, they could not produce a response to a question in English or if they sought clarification on an item. This was observed, for example, during a Science lesson taught by Teacher 2 at School 4, when a student responded to a question about metals with the word 'Zingiri' (Dangme for "aluminium roofing sheets").

In nine of the lessons (64.3%), some of the students responded in English individually to the teacher; a wide range of individual responses was observed in only three of the lessons (21.4%) see Table 6. In a third of the lessons, only a limited range of students responded to the teacher. In one case, this behaviour could not be observed at all. This was a Creative Arts lesson at School 1 where students produced drawings based on the teacher's directions. Students chatted quietly and informally to each other in the local language as the teacher circulated and commented on their work in English.

Students used the local language with the teacher only rarely, when, for example, they could not produce a response to a question in English or if they sought clarification on an item



TABLE 6: FREQUENCY TABLE OF RANGE OF STUDENTS RESPONDING TO TEACHER (IN GHANA)

Range of students responding to teacher		Frequency	Percent
Valid	A wide range respond individually	3	20%
Valid	Some students respond individually	6	40%
Valid	A limited range respond individually	5	33.3%
<b>Total</b>		<b>14</b>	<b>93.3%</b>
Missing	(N/A)	1	6.7%
<b>Total</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>

There were no observable instances of students talking in pairs or groups. There were no group activities and students' lesson-based talk was limited to responses to the teacher.

### Teachers' use of active learning strategies

With regard to the teacher using active learning strategies, these were rather limited (see Table 7). Only one teacher encouraged questioning and discussion, and two used resources beyond the textbook. The one example of a teacher encouraging questioning and discussion came in a Citizenship lesson delivered by Teacher 2 at School 1. The teacher also used a resource beyond the textbook, which was his own drawing. The only other lesson where additional resources were used was the Science lesson by Teacher 2 in School 4, described in detail in Sketch B (page 62), where she brought a hammer, a pair of scissors, a metal cup and a spoon to class.

Only one teacher encouraged questioning and discussion, and two used resources beyond the textbook

TABLE 7: FREQUENCY OF ACTIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES USED BY TEACHERS IN LESSONS (CONDUCTED IN ENGLISH)

Teacher practice	Frequency	Percentage of lessons
Encourage questioning and discussion	1	7%
Using resources beyond the school textbook	2	14%
Teachers correcting students' use of language (English only)	6	40%
Teachers related the teaching material to the students' background and experiences	6	40%
Creating an inclusive environment for the students	7	47%

In almost half of the lessons (seven), teachers were deemed to be creating an inclusive environment. The ways in which teachers created an inclusive environment for students were by using students' names, calling on all students, chatting one-on-one with students, joking with students and tolerating some noise. Six of the teachers related the teaching material to the students' background and experiences. Six of the teachers corrected students' English, though this was usually limited to a single word or phrase.

Table 8 shows that in a third of the lessons (five), none of the strategies on the observation schedule were observed. There was at least one such lesson in each of the four schools. Of these, two were English lessons and two were Mathematics lessons. Two of the five lessons were taught by teachers who were considered to be very competent in spoken English.

**TABLE 8: FREQUENCY OF LESSONS (IN GHANA) FEATURING TEACHER ACTIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES (CONDUCTED IN ENGLISH)**

Number of teacher active learning strategies	Frequency	Percent
0	5	33.3%
1	3	20%
2	4	26.7%
3	1	6.7%
4	2	13.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>

The observation data suggests that some important features of student-centred, active learning were present in some of the lessons; like creating an inclusive atmosphere and drawing on students' background experience and knowledge. However, the opportunities for students to speak and develop their language were rare. Only one teacher was observed encouraging questioning and discussion. Students were rarely corrected or prompted to expand their responses.

### Teacher's use of language for classroom management

The classroom observation instrument was designed to capture aspects of teachers' language use that could enhance students' understanding of the curriculum, and also to capture the use of different languages in various classroom management activities. Previous research identified a number of classroom management activities in which teachers are likely to make use of local languages or codeswitch. These include explaining, checking understanding, for interpersonal relations and to humanise the classroom climate.<sup>145</sup> In this sample, however, we found only minimal use of local languages; in the majority of cases, English was the sole language used for all of these activities.

With regard to supporting access to the curriculum, in all 15 lessons observed, teachers delivered all of their explanations of concepts or content solely in English (see Table 8). In only one of the lessons observed – a Grade 6 Mathematics lesson – did a teacher use a local language (Twi) to translate an English term, but this was in feedback to an individual student. When asked in the interview about this use of Twi, the teacher explained:

*'... we asked for the common – the least – value... and the child who [answered had] given a wrong answer. I was trying to explain to him what "...the least" ...or when you say the lowest, what you're referring to.'* Teacher 3, School 1, Ghana

Previous research identified a number of classroom management activities in which teachers are likely to make use of local languages or codeswitch. These include explaining, checking understanding, for interpersonal relations and to humanise the classroom climate

<sup>145</sup> cf. Ferguson, 2003

In 10 lessons (67%), teachers were observed checking students' understanding of the material. They primarily used English to do this, apart from in two lessons in District 2 where teachers also used a local language. In the 40% (six) of lessons that teachers were observed to be paraphrasing some elements of the lesson from the textbook, all such paraphrasing was done solely in English.

TABLE 9: CURRICULAR ACCESS SUPPORT (CONDUCTED IN ENGLISH)

Curricular access support	Number of lessons	Percentage of lessons
Explaining	15	100%
Checking students' understanding	10	66.7%
Giving examples	13	86.7%
Paraphrasing	6	40%
Translating individual words/etc.	1	6.7%

With regard to classroom management practices, all teachers were observed to introduce and close the lessons, and give instructions in English (see Table 10). In 40% (six) of the lessons, teachers did not check students' attention using either English or the local language. In the nine lessons that teachers did check students' attention, the majority of the teachers (and all teachers in District 1) used English to do this. In District 2, the more linguistically homogenous region, two teachers used Dangme to do this.

All teachers were observed to introduce and close the lessons, and give instructions in English

TABLE 10: CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (CONDUCTED IN ENGLISH)

Classroom management purposes	Number of lessons	Percentage of lessons
Introducing/closing lessons	15	100%
Giving instructions	15	100%
Selecting/inviting students to contribute	15	100%
Checking attention	9	60%
Giving homework	2	13.3%

Teachers also primarily used English for interpersonal relationships, e.g. establishing rapport and enhancing motivation (see Table 11). In the lessons where teachers were found to be praising students' efforts, encouraging them, making links to students' experiences or even disciplining them, they always used English to do this. There was a single case when a teacher joked in English and two local languages (Twi and Ga).

TABLE 11: TEACHER PRACTICES WITH AFFECTIVE PURPOSES (CONDUCTED IN ENGLISH)

Teacher practices	Number of lessons	Percentage of lessons
Encouraging their students	11	73%
Disciplining the students	10	67%
Praising the students	8	53%
Making links to students' experiences	2	13%

## Activity types featured

Inclusive, participatory learning can also be evidenced by the variety of activities that students are engaged in. Students might be expected to be engaged in activities that involve reading, writing, listening and speaking, as each of these can contribute in different ways to learning content and English.

While discrete listening activities were also observed, the fact that the classes observed were dominated by teacher talk means that the entire lesson functioned more or less as an English listening activity. In addition, the following types of student activities were observed in classrooms (see Table 12):

TABLE 12: TYPES OF ACTIVITIES OBSERVED IN LESSONS (CONDUCTED IN ENGLISH)

Activity type	Number	Percentage of lessons
Writing	12	80%
Reading aloud	12	80%
Listening	10	67%
Reading to themselves	3	20%
Speaking	2	13%

With regard to the number of different types of student activities present in each lesson, 27% had at most two types (e.g. reading and writing), while 60% had at least four (see Table 13):

Interestingly, no relationship can be seen in this sample between teachers' perceived English language competence and the number of teacher and student activities featured in the lesson. Furthermore, there seemed to be a somewhat surprising relationship where a teacher's lower level of English competence produced a more student-active lesson.

There seemed to be a somewhat surprising relationship where a teacher's lower level of English competence produced a more student-active lesson

TABLE 13: NUMBER OF DIFFERENT ACTIVITY TYPES OBSERVED IN LESSONS (DELIVERED IN ENGLISH)

Number of activities	Number of lessons	Percentage of lessons
At most 2	4	27%
At least 4	9	60%

With regard to activities that support learning in multilingual education, students did not have the opportunity to read, write or talk in the local language before moving to English, nor did they take part in class activities that involved translation between the local language and English.

## Summary

Impressions created through the classroom observation and interviews with teachers suggest that teachers' spoken competencies in English were reasonably high. Only one teacher was considered to have limited competence in spoken English, though he demonstrated no reservations in using the language, and he also used the most activity types in his lesson.

Teachers were confident in basic aspects of effective classroom teaching, with all of them opening and closing their lessons, explaining content, giving examples and calling on a number of individual students to answer questions. However, there was a low occurrence of student-centred active learning practices observed in all the schools, which limits the development of learning and language learning. Particularly obvious was that students had limited talking time, mostly responding to closed questions posed by teachers. Such findings corroborate a study conducted by the British Council, Ghana, in 2014, which found that the majority of teachers surveyed still rely mainly on traditional teaching methods, among these having students copy from the board (80%), reading (75%) and dictation (68%).<sup>146</sup>

The language used by the teacher in almost every situation, whether to discuss the curriculum, to explain, for affective purposes or for classroom management, was English. There was hardly any evidence of classroom codeswitching observed, even in District 2 where the majority of students share a local language. There were less than five observed instances of a teacher using a local language, and, when this was done, it was usually reserved for single words or phrases. Students spoke fleetingly and informally to each other in the local language in class, but they used the local language with the teacher only rarely, when, for example, they could not produce a response to a question in English or if they sought clarification on an item. It could be the case that teachers and students relied more heavily on English than they normally would because of the presence of an observer in the classroom, but the ubiquity of English observed in almost all classes makes this unlikely.

No relationship could be detected between teachers' observed English language competence, the school and the number of teacher and student activities featured in the lesson. For example, the lessons observed at model schools were just as likely to be teacher-dominant as those at the lower performing schools. The limited sample suggests that the less competent the teacher is in English, the more opportunities that teacher creates for students to use English.

Little can be concluded about student competences in spoken English, nor about their grasping of the content covered, because they had such restricted opportunities to talk during the lessons, in all of the schools and classes. Only two of the lessons featured any speaking activities and there was only a single instance of a teacher encouraging questioning and discussion. No pair or group work was

**Students spoke fleetingly and informally to each other in the local language in class, but they used the local language with the teacher only rarely**

<sup>146</sup>Simpson, 2014



observed, and there were no opportunities for students to engage in discussion and scaffolded dialogue, or to develop and pose their own questions. In at least two schools (School 2 and School 3), the students in the higher grades were not perceived as having higher English competence than those in the lower grades, suggesting that they do not get better or that they do not have opportunities to show their improvements and competences.<sup>147</sup> As the students used very little of the local language and were not involved in any speaking activities in English, they were virtually silenced in the lesson.

**The students in the higher grades were not perceived as having higher English competence than those in the lower grades**

### Observational sketches, Ghana

While the results of the classroom observations discussed above provide a general picture of classroom practices and language use within the schools visited in GAR, the following sketches provide a more detailed picture of the practices observed in lessons, and provide more detailed glimpses of moments when good practice was observed. These descriptions are followed by comments on the use of language and pedagogic strategies employed in the lessons. The first sketch describes a Mathematics lesson, the second a Science lesson and the third an English grammar lesson. In each of these lessons, while teachers are attempting to engage students in meaningful learning, this is done primarily through lecture-style teacher talk. The students are for the most part passive and hardly speak at all.

<sup>147</sup> Cf. UNESCO Ghana, 2014

## Sketch A: A mathematics lesson in P6, Teacher 9, School 3

This is a young teacher and a mathematics specialist. She shares the local language (Dangme) with students, and uses it in her lessons occasionally. She sometimes uses her phone to find a definition in English when she needs to explain a concept to students, using an offline dictionary app as there is no connectivity in the area. In this lesson, she seemed confident about teaching mathematics and the girls in the class also appeared to be confident, answering questions and participating in the activity. She had to speak loudly and clearly over the chanting of a class on the other side of the partition wall, and the variety of people and animals passing outside the breeze block window. There were 20 students in the class: eight boys and 12 girls. Two of the boys were 17 and 18 years old (age group for P6 is theoretically 11-12).

The teacher encouraged students to respond to her in the local language if they wish to, but none did in the lesson. She asked students to explain why a number is a prime number and called on individual girls and boys who gave short correct answers in English. When she asked an open question, 'What comes into your mind when you hear the word 'factor'?' there was no response. But students were honest with her:

**Teacher 9:** *If you don't know [what a factor tree is], talk!*

**Students:** *We don't know!*

When the teacher drew a factor tree on the board, students quickly understood the topic. She used the local language very briefly, twice, during the lesson to check students' understanding of mathematics vocabulary (product, factor, prime) and processes (factor trees). She asked the class, 'Do you understand?' and they responded 'Yes' in English.

She called on individual students to come to the board to complete a set of factors up to 25. The difficulty of the task increased, because she modelled with low numbers to start and students had to complete higher number factors. She set an activity on the board, to be finished as homework, and students copied it into their books.

**COMPLETE THE TABLE BELOW BY FINDING FACTORS OF THE COUNTING NUMBERS:**

Number	Factors
17	
18	
19	
20	
21	
22	
23	
24	
25	

She told them to show their work in their notebooks.

While student talk was limited in the class, the teacher engaged them in meaningful and increasingly challenging activities to support their development of mathematics knowledge, having modelled initial activities. This activity, however, required students to supply factual information and 'correct' answers, rather than demonstrating conceptual understanding. The teacher checked understanding, rather cursorily and was encouraging, and attempted to call on a number of students. Although the teacher invited them to use the local language in the classroom, she rarely did this herself and no students took her up on this offer.



## Sketch B: Integrated Science lesson in P4, Teacher 13, School 4

This lesson was held by an experienced teacher. It was a large class with 69 students in the lesson: 35 boys and 34 girls, and their ages ranged from 7 to 12.

The teacher involved the whole class at the start of her lesson, asking them:

*'Where do we find metals in the classroom, outside the classroom, in the home and on the farm?'*

The teacher drew on students' previous knowledge by asking them to think of metals they see in their everyday environment. They responded individually as she called on them around the room, and she extended or recast their answers, sometimes involving individual students in a brief exchange. She and the students used only English throughout the lesson.

**Student:** Cup

**Teacher:** A metal cup, where do you find it?

**Student:** At home.

**Teacher:** Where at home?

**Student:** In the kitchen.

**Teacher:** Yes? [calling on another student]

**Student:** Scissors.

**Teacher:** A pair of scissors. Who uses scissors?

**Student:** Dressmaker.

**Teacher:** Where do you find metal?

**Student:** Coins.

**Teacher:** Do you have coins in your pockets? [Students look in their pockets] Where do you find metal, inside and outside the classroom?

**Student:** Gates / Cupboard / Roofing sheets.

**Teacher:** Roofing sheets – what do you call it?

**Student:** Zinc.

**Student:** Iron rod / Earrings.

The teacher drew on students' previous knowledge by asking them to think of metals they see in their everyday environment. They responded individually as she called on them around the room...

**Teacher:** Which part of the earrings is metal?  
The hoop! Now let's go outside the school and into the house.

**Student:** Saucepan.

**Teacher:** Why do we use a saucepan to cook?  
[does not ask students to elaborate.]

**Student:** Knife / Iron / Spoon / Wheelbarrow.

**Teacher:** Is a wheelbarrow inside the house?  
No. Outside, like a ladder. OK. Check your schoolbags. The zip is metal. What about the bell that is rung for break time?

The teacher used real objects in the lesson. She showed the class a hammer, a pair of scissors, a metal cup and a spoon. She briefly allowed some students to handle the objects. She continued to ask students questions and recast their answers.

**Teacher:** How do you know it is metal?

**Student:** It is strong.

**Teacher:** It cannot be broken.

**Student:** Rust. [the teacher does not correct or elaborate]

**Teacher:** Who uses a hammer?

**Student:** Carpenter.

**Teacher:** To do what?

**Student:** Benches.

**Teacher:** To make benches, tables, beds, with the nails. What does a farmer use metal for?

**Student:** *Axe / pickaxe / cutlass / hoe / tractor / combine harvester [they seem very knowledgeable about this].*

**Teacher:** *To harvest rice, maize.*

She distributed textbooks and selected students to read from a passage; there were three students per textbook. As individual students read aloud, she called the class's attention to the photographs in the book.

The teacher told students to put the textbooks away. She wrote three long passages on the board about the uses of metal, and told students not to copy them. She had them read the passages aloud together. Then she erased the passages on the board and asked students to recount to her what they learned about metals. She modelled a sentence orally: 'Metals are used in...' and called on students to complete the sentence. They suggested brief responses: 'Building, the cooking industry, the agricultural industry, metals are hard, cars, trains, motorbikes, wheels, ships, aeroplanes'.

The teacher tolerated some noise and students who shouted out the answers. She corrected their pronunciation from the reading passage on the board, such as 'cookware' and 'cutlery', and from the textbook readings, such as 'Manganese' and 'industry'. She encouraged students to produce their own English. She accepted all their suggestions and responses, which were, however, usually brief, and limited to a word or phrase.

The teacher had students take out their notebooks and told them to write three uses of metals in everyday life, without looking at their

textbooks and with only a few clues left on the board. As they did this, to the end of the lesson, she checked their writing in their notebooks.

**This teacher exhibited a range of teaching strategies, but a fuller command of language supportive pedagogic strategies may have allowed the teacher to extend students' responses and discussion.**

This was the fullest use of instructional time in all of the lessons observed and integrated reading, writing, listening and some speaking for students. The teacher started by getting the students to activate their background knowledge by thinking of metals in their environment. She brought in real objects and involved students in a range of activities throughout the lesson. The teacher asked a series of open questions and built on students' responses – though these responses were primarily limited to a few words or phrases. There were, however, no opportunities for students to engage in discussion and scaffolded dialogue, or to develop and pose their own questions. This teacher exhibited a range of teaching strategies, but a fuller command of language supportive pedagogic strategies may have allowed the teacher to extend students' responses and discussion, thus further enhancing their use of English and their understanding of the scientific content.

## Sketch C: English grammar lesson in P4, Teacher 7, School 2

**This was a young, smartly dressed teacher. She did not share a local language with her students. The only language she used for teaching is English. Her policy was to allow students to chat quietly to each other in the local language, but she insisted that they use only English with her. When she needed to explain a concept in the local language, she called in students from other classes who shared her language to come and help. She referred to this as 'Calling in a lawyer'. In the lesson observed, there were 23 students: 12 girls and 11 boys. It was an afternoon split session and several students arrived late.**

As the teacher handed out students' writing books, she called each student by name. At the beginning of the lesson, she had the class chant the days of the week and the months of the year in English, emphasising 'and' before the last day or month in each list.

She wrote out sentences on the board which she had students copy into their books. She asked them to solve the problem: 'How many proper nouns are in this sentence?' and she told them to give reasons for their choices. She called on students to come to the board: 'Can you underline the proper nouns? Why are they proper nouns?' As students worked on the board she explained her marking criteria to them: 'For that, I give you one mark. For that, I give ½ mark.'

The teacher encouraged students to use their own words to answer her questions. She waited for students to form words and sentences in

English, however small. She corrected their pronunciation, vocabulary, word order and their expression. She had one student repeat 'I go there often' or 'I go there severally' and asked another student to give reasons why Kumasi (a proper noun) is not a country. She joked with students: 'We're all going to America tomorrow!' and told them that with practise 'English must come'.

Though not able to use the local language, this teacher has developed strategies for explaining concepts that students are unfamiliar with. She used humour and a personal touch to develop rapport with students.

Though not able to use the local language, this teacher developed strategies for explaining concepts that students are unfamiliar with. She used humour and a personal touch to develop rapport with students. She aimed to correct and develop students' language use, but the majority of students' use of English in the lesson was through repetition and closed questions about grammatical structures. The English grammar activities she taught involved no meaningful communication and were not related to the curriculum in which the students were learning other subjects through English.

## Interview findings, Ghana

In addition to the results of the classroom observation, the fieldwork was informed by insights gained through interviews with 25 participants from the four schools visited. These participants included 14 teachers, four headteachers, four Circuit Supervisors, two District Directors and one Human Resources (HR) Director. The interviews explored the following themes:

1. Participants' awareness and perceptions of the national LEP.
2. Variances in national LEP, school LEP and school practices.
3. Practical obstacles to the implementation of the national LEP.
4. Attitudinal factors hindering the implementation of the LEP.

### 1. Participants' awareness and perceptions of the national LEP

The interviews explored participants' awareness and perceptions of the national LEP, both in terms of the use of local languages at the lower primary level and the use of EMI at the upper primary level. Participants were all aware of the policy and they also were generally in favour of it, though they were all quick to point out the challenges of implementing the policy.

#### Awareness of the LEP

There appears to be widespread awareness of the national LEP among educational officials and teachers in this sample. Every participant in the sample was familiar with the policy's recommendations that:

- Teaching and learning should be in the local language at the lower primary level (Grades 1-3).
- English should be taught as a subject at the lower primary level.
- The ratio of local language to English should decrease in Grades 1-3, with English incrementally increasing so that it can be used as the medium of instruction from Grade 4.
- English should be used as the MOI at the upper primary level (Grades 4-6) and beyond.
- A Ghanaian language should be taught as a subject at the upper primary level and beyond.

This was true for both the higher level education officials (the District Directors, Circuit Supervisors and headteachers), and the 14 classroom teachers that we observed in all four schools. Many of the participants (particularly the higher level officials) recalled the policy in detail.

#### Perceptions of the national LEP

Amongst the participants in this sample, it was relatively common to find generally positive attitudes towards the LEP in Ghana, both in terms of the use of local languages at the lower primary level and the use of EMI at the upper primary level and beyond. Positive comments included:

The interviews explored participants' awareness and perceptions of the national LEP, both in terms of the use of local languages at the lower primary level and the use of EMI at the upper primary level

*'Yes, yes. It's very, very effective. It's very, very effective.'* Headteacher, School 3, Ghana

*'It's good and we, actually, as a district, we are actually in full support of it. ... [It's] just that the challenges with it...'* District 2 Human Resources Director, Ghana

However, participants also immediately pointed to potential challenges and problems in implementing the LEP. While many participants were enthusiastic about the theory and principles behind the policy, many noted that it only worked under certain conditions, and that some schools might benefit from it more than others. Using local languages at the lower primary level and learning them as subjects was perceived as being more effective in relatively monolingual areas of Ghana, and where there are large numbers of speakers of a language. Using EMI was perceived as being more effective in urban areas, where English has a stronger presence in the local environment.

#### **Positive views about the use of local languages at the lower primary level**

Excerpts, such as the following, suggest that there is, at least theoretically, a general acceptance of the idea of using local languages as a MOI at the lower primary level:

*'Ah, it's good – for us to use the local language.'* Headteacher, School 1, Ghana

Positive perceptions of using local languages at the lower primary level were also expressed in an excerpt from a teacher who had been teaching for over 18 years. She noted that using local languages supported students' learning, and that there had been an improvement since the policy had been introduced in 2008:

*'Mm... effective. It's helping. Yes. ... It's better than before. ... Because, now, children understand better when you're teaching... yes... blending the two languages, especially at the early... ages. Yes. It helps them to understand whatever you're teaching faster.'* Teacher 11, School 3, Ghana

The benefits of using local languages to support learning seem to have been addressed in at least one of the participant's teacher training courses:

*'[...] Yes, [for] my first degree, I was in [University of Cape Coast]. As part of our course work, we did language, the impact of ...local language on children's ability to learn. And in one of the research [readings], there was research among the Punjabis – Punjabis in India – and they saw how, the impact... teaching local language has on the academic performance of students; and other places too. So, in [the] actual sense, we've been groomed, a long time ago, even before this [policy] came, that language – the local language – is a plus for learning.'* Circuit supervisor, School 2, Ghana

Some teachers recognised the value of using the local language for making connections between home and school in early learning, e.g.:

*'[It's good] up to P3... Because children must learn from the known to the unknown. So, if the local language is what they are conversant with, in the house, if they come to the school, they manage it alongside until they push in and [get the English]...'* Teacher 14, School 4, Ghana

Using EMI was perceived as being more effective in urban areas, where English has a stronger presence in the local environment

Some participants acknowledged the role of a strong foundation in the local language in supporting the learning of English, with at least seven participants noting this:

*'Er... I think there is some researchers came out to say that they have... done their research and they think that a child – you know, a child – who is able to communicate in her mother tongue is able to understand the English language when they get to the upper class. That was their – what – outcome. So... it was a policy that, [in] lower primary – [in] all government schools, lower primary – they should use the Ghanaian language as a medium of instruction but when they get to – what – P4, then...'* Teacher 4, School 1, Ghana

Other respondents valued the use of local languages at the lower primary level, as they perceived it as helping to sustain Ghanaian languages and cultures. One teacher mentioned how she informed parents of the value of students using their local language:

*'at the end of the day, she's learning your language. So, you still have that; you'll be able to preserve that.'* Teacher 12, School 4, Ghana

These extracts show that there was significant understanding of the reasoning behind promoting the use of local languages at the lower primary level, and that there was an acceptance of that policy, particularly amongst the education officials. It must be noted, however, that the policy may only be viewed as positive because English is taught as a subject at the lower primary level and there is an eventual switch to English medium instruction at the upper primary level. There is no evidence to suggest that any of the participants would have preferred the sole use of local languages at the lower primary level.

#### **Negative views about the use of local languages at the lower primary level**

While many participants saw the value of using local languages at the lower primary level, there were a few who reported that it would be better for students to be taught in English from the beginning of lower primary, as was the policy from 2000-2008. These participants' preference for EMI is based on a view that students find it difficult to transition from an environment, in which local languages are used in the classroom, to an English-only environment when they get to Grade 4:

*'No, it doesn't help them... this thing... it doesn't help them. Yes. Because, they become used to the local language in such a way that it's very difficult for them, switching from the local language to the English language. It becomes difficult for them.'* Teacher 11, School 3, Ghana

Instead of arguing that the local language should continue to be used alongside English at the upper primary level, these participants recommended further use of English at the lower levels.

#### **Positive views about the use of EMI at the upper primary level**

The majority of respondents replied that the policy was good as it is, with the transition to EMI occurring at Grade 4 (when students are aged around 9 or 10). Many noted that by this age, students should have had enough time to adapt to schooling through use of the local language, and to learn enough English to carry on with the curriculum in English. Some participants explained that the transition

Instead of arguing that the local language should continue to be used alongside English at the upper primary level, these participants recommended further use of English at the lower levels

to upper primary goes well and is managed easily by students, as they have been prepared for it during lower primary:

*'...Well... they have one aspect of English from the lower class. So, I wouldn't say fully-prepared but they have ...the ...would I say, the relevant this-thing that you need to build on. They already have it. Because, they communicate in the English language, somehow.' Teacher 13, School 4, Ghana*

Others recognised that the transition can be difficult, but that it works if teachers transition gradually, using a 'soft' approach:

*'... Yes, and sometimes, they may not understand why the teacher will come in and be using English throughout. So, what we do is that for the first few weeks is, sometimes, we tell the teachers to go soft – gradually – on them so that they get used to [it]. So, sometimes, when I'm there or I'm supervising or observing a lesson, and I realise that the lesson is presented and because the Dangme part was not used... I sometimes allow that... the key words are mentioned in Dangme so that they'll still get it – and then in the other languages, too, as well.' Headteacher, School 4, Ghana*

The switch to English at upper primary was deemed necessary so that students have enough time to further develop their English so that they can perform well in their further education and exams:

*'From P4 to [P6] and then to the junior high school, they'll be writing... [in English]... and all [assessments]... all questions are in English. So, they need a strong foundation; so, it's good.' Circuit supervisor, School 2, Ghana*

Participants raised no questions about the language of assessment being English; this was taken for granted.

### **Negative views about EMI at the upper primary level**

While the majority of participants viewed the use of EMI at the upper primary level favourably, there were at least five who asserted that teaching and learning would be more effective if the policy allowed for continued use of local languages. At least three of these participants were higher level education officials, who were keenly aware of and concerned with low student attainment in their District and identified EMI as a key factor in this:

**District 2 Human Resource Director, Ghana:** *And, apart from that [English as a medium of instruction policy], the children are not performing [well] at the upper primary; and, normally, the difficulty is from the language.*

**District 2 Director, Ghana:** *Yes... how to read with comprehension...*

**District 2 Human Resource Director, Ghana:** *So... before they can actually do well in the school, [in] after-school life, and even [the] upper school level, then they must actually master the language. Ehh [indicating an affirmative], so, we believe that the language policy should be extended and supported ...*

The headteacher at School 4 responded that it would be much preferable not to transition to EMI but to continue with local language instruction until at least the end of upper primary, particularly if there were options to do final exams in local languages.

The switch to English at upper primary was deemed necessary so that students have enough time to further develop their English so that they can perform well in their further education and exams

*'Then it would be better if you complete... like, you do everything in the local language up to the JHS level. Then, when you enter the secondary school, you start... From that time onwards, sometimes, your brain, too, [is] well developed to grasp certain things easily.'* Headteacher, School 4, Ghana

A teacher from School 2 also reported that continuing the use of local languages alongside English into upper primary would be beneficial:

**Teacher 8, School 2, Ghana:** *... if we were... allowed to teach in the local language and, later on, maybe, bring it back into the English language, it will help a lot. But, teaching in English throughout, because they're in the upper class, it's not helpful.*

**Research Assistant, Ghana:** *So, in other words, are you saying that it would be more useful if, [for] the rest of primary, they continue to be instructed in the local language?*

**Teacher 8, School 2, Ghana:** *Not... We blend the two; there should be a blend of the two languages. I think that one will help ...*

As this extract shows, while some participants considered that using the local language at the upper primary level might be beneficial, this was not to be at the expense of English. Each of these participants reported that English should be taught, and have a role in schooling, and that Ghanaian languages should not be the only languages used in education. Participants also observed that it would, theoretically, be beneficial to continue with the use of local languages at the upper primary level, if they could also use the local language in textbook activities and exams. Thus there was recognition that, while local language medium education might be better for many students in terms of learning, EMI was deemed to be more possible and practical.

## 2. Variances between national, school and classroom policies about using English and local languages

The interviews also aimed to capture the extent to which school LEP and school practices mirror the national LEP in Ghana. In all of the schools visited, the school policies were perceived to be in line with the national LEP. There was a recognition that local languages should be used at the lower primary level, and that EMI was used at the upper primary level. In all four schools, participants agreed that the school was following the government LEP. For example:

*'The school language policy is the same as the government language policy.'*  
Teacher 3, School 1, Ghana

There was a sense of statutory obligation to follow this policy. This can also be attributed to, as discussed above, the general perception that the policy was good:

*'The government has given us a policy to work with. We can't go out of that policy because, I think, the government – what – knows why [it made] that policy. So, we have to go [along with] the policy. We don't have to move away from it. So, we go with the government policy – the L1, L2. We go with it.'*  
Headteacher, School 1, Ghana

In all four schools, participants agreed that the school was following the government LEP



There were, however, differences in how aspects of this policy were understood and implemented in terms of:

- The use of local languages and English at the lower primary level.
- The transition to EMI at the upper primary level.
- The use of English only, local languages and classroom codeswitching at the upper primary level.

The variation between national, school, and classroom policies can be attributed to a lack of shared understanding of the national LEP and how it should be enacted. Policies about how and to what extent the local language and English should be used are not consistently or clearly understood and mapped out across institutions.

#### **Variance in managing local language and English use at the lower primary level**

While there was general awareness about the national LEP, participants were less clear about how the policy should be implemented, particularly with regard to using both local languages and English use at the lower primary level. Respondents understood that there was supposed to be a gradual decrease in the amount of local language use over the years from kindergarten to Grade 3, with a simultaneous increase in English use. There was, however, inconsistency about what percentage of local language should be used at each stage.

Along with different interpretations of what amount of local languages should be used at the lower primary level, there were differences reported in how the languages were to be used alongside each other. Some participants noted that practices were guided by the NALAP programme, which introduced literacy support materials for using local languages at the lower primary level, and promoted what they called an 'integrated approach to literacy'. There were, however, a variety of understandings of how the integrated approach worked. Some believed that the languages were to be used consecutively, with lessons primarily taking place in the local language, followed by a recap or summary in English:

*'For a ...subject that will take about ninety minutes you use... about eighty minutes in the local language and use just about ten minutes in the English language.'* Headteacher, School 3, Ghana

Another approach cited was the use of the local language for half of the lesson, with English used in the other half.

*'The idea is when you are teaching Literacy, you'll teach in Dangme, you teach it; whatever you've taught will be taught also in English, at the same time. So, if it's one hour they use thirty minutes for the [Dangme] lesson then the other thirty minutes for the English [lesson].'* Headteacher, School 4, Ghana

Another participant defined the integrated approach as the teachers translating the textbooks (e.g. for Mathematics) into the local languages (District 2 Director, Ghana).

In some cases, details about how much the local language should be used and how it should be used were irrelevant because the policy of using local languages at the lower primary level was not being followed. Even participants who praised the policy and replied that the school was intending to follow it admitted that it was not always possible to do so (discussed further overleaf).

**In some cases, details about how much the local language should be used and how it should be used were irrelevant because the policy of using local languages at the lower primary level was not being followed**

### Variance in managing the transition to EMI at the upper primary level

There was a lack of consistency amongst schools and participants in understanding how the transition to EMI should be managed at the beginning of the upper primary level; in Grade 4. Some reported that efforts were made to make the transition smooth and gradual, with the local language being used up to 50% of the time at the start of Grade 4 (Circuit supervisor, School 1, Ghana), or 20% of the time (Headteacher, School 1, Ghana). Still others mentioned a complete and abrupt shift to English (apart from in the Ghanaian and French language classes) from the outset of upper primary school (Teacher 1, School 1, Ghana). These differences of perception were even found within a single school (School 1).

### Variance in using English only, local languages and classroom codeswitching at the upper primary level

While all participants agreed that English was the main language of upper primary school at their school, there was variation between the schools and teachers as to how strictly they enforced the policy to speak English. Some reported that there was a strict English-only policy at their school or in their class, in which they completely prohibited students from using local languages. Other teachers were more tolerant of the use of local languages and classroom codeswitching. In terms of teachers' own practice, most of them reported using the local languages and classroom codeswitching on occasion, with a few aiming to use English only.

### Policies about students' use of local languages at the upper primary level

There were a range of responses in terms of classroom policies for use of English and local languages. There were teachers at each of the schools who remarked that they prohibited students from speaking any local languages in the classroom:

*'[they] can't be using the local language alongside the English.'* Teacher 14, School 4, Ghana

One teacher noted that she forbade her students from speaking local languages in order to encourage them to speak English:

*'But, in the classroom, when they know that I pay attention to them, if you don't speak English, you keep quiet. [If] you can't speak it, you keep quiet. I told them, I tell them, '...you shut up...' [chuckling] '...because teacher doesn't understand the Twi. So, it is English you are...' Ahhaa [strong affirmative]. I am doing that to encourage them to – just – pick it. Ahhaa [strong affirmative]. ... So that if even they speak the wrong one, they can be corrected. Ahhaa [strong affirmative]. By so doing...'* Teacher 7, School 2, Ghana

In terms of the school policy with regard to use of local languages in upper primary, School 1 (the multilingual, urban model school) seemed to have the strictest policy for enforcing English-only. Three participants from this school mentioned that students could be punished for speaking local languages. The punishment might consist of scolding, having to miss out on break time, or working outside:

*'Oh, you can be asked to forfeit your break time, part of it – to stay in the classroom – or you go and work outside.'* Teacher 2, School 1, Ghana

There was a lack of consistency amongst schools and participants in understanding how the transition to EMI should be managed at the beginning of the upper primary level

This was, however, not the only school where such practices were reported. One teacher from School 3 said that she occasionally punished students for using the local language by sending them out of the class:

*'Yes, we normally use Dangme when we're having Dangme lessons. But with the English, it's compulsory. Sometimes, when you speak the Dangme in the class, I'll let you go outside and go and pick and then you'll bring and I'll count it. So, it serves in some [way] or the other way round as a punishment. But, it's not anything they'll... I just want them [become] fluent in the speaking of the ... English...'* Teacher 9, School 3, Ghana

In School 3, however, it was recognised that the English only policy was difficult to enforce, as students continued to use local languages:

*'Even when it's written, boldly, 'Don't speak the local language!' ...that's what they'll speak.'* District 2 Director, Ghana

This was especially the case outside the classroom, where there was much more tolerance of other language use:

*'But, among themselves ... when they're playing; when they're on break; they any use any language [of] their interest. We don't punish them for that.'* Headteacher, School 3, Ghana

The Circuit Supervisor for School 3 reflected that students may have been punished in the past for using local languages, but that this should no longer be the case (although we see above that Teacher 9 at that school still punishes students for using local languages):

*'That restriction is not there. You see, some time ago, you know, the children were forced to – by all means – speak English. But, now, with this new language policy, whereby their local language is as well essential, that punishment aspect is no more there. So, they're free, during break time, to, you know, speak whatever that... I quite remember, in our school days, whenever we went out and then, maybe, you speak Dangme ...or you came to Form 1 for the first time and you're found speaking... they call something vernacular... [General laughter] ... [Laughing] your name will be written and then we were punished or the speaker were punished. But, today, that thing is not common again, in our schools.'* Circuit supervisor, School 3, Ghana

School 2 seemed to be the most flexible with regard to the language policy:

*'No, no, no, no. There are no punishments. ... We only caution them. We only tell them to speak English.'* Teacher 6, School 2, Ghana

Teacher 5 from School 2 explained that, at least in his classroom, students were not punished or even cautioned when they used the local language. He reported that it was important for him to create a positive classroom environment and build a good relationship with the students, and that using the local language was a good means of doing this:

**Researcher, Ghana:** *Yeah... So, they're not punished [for it]...?*

**Teacher 5, School 2, Ghana:** *No... No...*

The Circuit Supervisor for School 3 reflects that students may have been punished in the past for using local languages, but that this should no longer be the case

**Researcher, Ghana:** *[Because,] in some schools, sometimes there's... there's punishment [for it]...*

**Teacher 5, School 2, Ghana:** *Yes... some schools, they punish them but to me... to me, it's not... I don't accept that. [...]*

**Research assistant, Ghana:** *They should be able to express themselves?*

**Teacher 5, School 2, Ghana:** *Yeah! Ehhee... [indicating a strong affirmative] [They] should feel comfortable in the class... Yes... the language shouldn't be a barrier to them that... because of that, they cannot come to you and tell you... and tell you their problems.*

While students may be encouraged to use English inside the classroom, in most schools there is tolerance for use of local languages outside of the classroom. This seems to be, in part, because the English only policy is more difficult to monitor outside the classroom, where students are freer to talk in general. However, teachers from District 1 mentioned that students may voluntarily speak English amongst themselves, particularly when they came from a range of language backgrounds.

#### **Policies about teachers' use of English only at the upper primary level**

There was also a variety of practices reported with regard to teachers' following the EMI policy at upper primary. Some teachers explained that they tried to use English only at the upper primary level. This was in order to create an immersion-like environment, which they believed would make the students learn English better.

*'Yes, with the teachers, we try that those from P4 to [JHS level] will always communicate with them in them in English language. We try to do that just to keep them using the [English] language so that they become fluent in it.'*  
Headteacher, School 3, Ghana

One teacher explained that her practice of using English only was informed by her teacher training, where she learned that being a model was good practice that would support students to learn English:

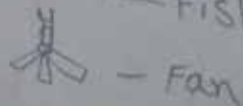
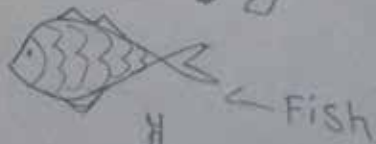
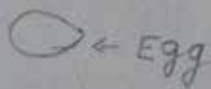
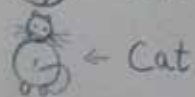
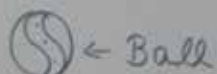
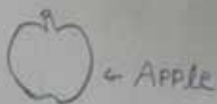
*'So, when it comes to English, you are taught the approaches to use in teaching English grammar. That is where the policies come in; that when you are teaching English, you don't use you L1 to explain those words; and children also learn the English language from the teacher. They take you as a role model; so, when you are speaking with them, they pick certain words from you and try to use them. Ahhaa [strong affirmative]. That is why I always speak English with them because, like I said, [chuckling] the Twi is for fighting – the one that I will use to fight! So, I wouldn't dare use it... Ahhaa [strong affirmative]. So, the more you speak the English language with them, the more they also learn from you and try to speak it.'* Teacher 7, School 2, Ghana

These excerpts show that in using English as the only language in the classroom, teachers are trying to act in their students' best interests and support the learning of English so that students can succeed in school exams and beyond.

Some teachers explained that they tried to use English only at the upper primary level. This was in order to create an immersion-like environment

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14/10/16  
 Wildlife Protection Act

Wild animals and birds, To regulate possession, acquisition of transfer of, or trade in wild animals and animals articles. The law also provides for declaring some area as wildlife sanctuaries, National parks and biospheres etc. Some of the famous areas of wildlife sanctuaries and National parks is given below:-

National Parks/Sanctuaries	Places (locations)
Dachigam National Park	Jammu & Kashmir
Jim Corbett National Park	Uttarakhand
Dudhwa National Park	Uttar Pradesh
Kaziranga National Park	Assam
Ranthambore National Park	Rajasthan
Gir National Park	Gujarat
Sanziska Sanctuary	Rajasthan
Mudumalai Sanctuary	Kerala
Periyar Sanctuary	Kerala

In order to make a secure environment for these animals to thrive these have been made.

Wildlife, according to the act, includes any animal, and within the term 'animal'

Mathematics - Numeracy  
 Match the object, numbers and numerals

1 Two  
 3 Three  
 4 Four  
 5 Five  
 2 Two

I'm a little  
 I'm a little  
 swim.  
 Here is my tail  
 When I want to  
 I wiggle my tail

Now we do,

Complete the sentences:

1. Is this a bell?

Yes, This is a ball!



2. Is this a cat?

No, This is not a cat  
 This is a mouse

3. Is this a fish?

Yes, This is a fish



4. Is this a frog?

No, This is not a frog  
 This is a duck

5. Is this a ball?  
 No, This is not a ball  
 This is a earring



### Policies about classroom codeswitching at the upper primary level

While classroom codeswitching has been promoted for use at the lower primary level through the NALAP programme, there are various understandings of whether it is a legitimate practice that can be used at the upper primary level and beyond. All of the participants said that they used codeswitching, at least to a certain extent. However, some of the participants saw classroom codeswitching as a legitimate practice, allowed and endorsed by policy, where others thought that in doing it they were breaking with policy.

Some participants viewed classroom codeswitching at the upper primary level as a legitimate practice supported by the school authorities and by policy, and that its value in supporting learning was accepted and promoted. The District 1 Director, a significant authority in the system, noted that teachers were free to use classroom codeswitching to support students' learning:

*'You see, if you're using one particular language and the children are not able to get whatever – grasp whatever – you're saying, you can change it to the language that they understand. ... you're also free to change it to the other language for them to understand, before you continue with whatever language you're supposed to... So, the teachers are free to do that.'* District 1 Director, Ghana

While the District 1 Director was tolerant of classroom codeswitching, School 1, which is in this District, pursued an English only policy, and no teachers at this school mentioned that they perceived codeswitching as a legitimate pedagogical practice.

Some teachers at School 2 (also in District 1), however, felt supported in their use of classroom codeswitching to enhance student learning. One teacher reported that teachers were 'in the right position to know what's best for the children'. She expressed that judicious use of codeswitching was acceptable, as long as English remained the dominant medium of instruction:

*'...So, you are in [the] classroom and you know the group of children you are teaching; so, whatever you will do to bring their understanding of whatever you are doing, you have to do it. ... But that is not to say that you have to forgo the English policy...'* Teacher 7, School 2, Ghana

One teacher at School 2 noted that there had been a change in the formal position to using the local languages in schooling:

**Teacher 5, School 2, Ghana:** *Formerly, I learnt that they were... it was strict but now... the way... people are talking that they should allow teachers to... we should use our language to teach... help the kids. Yes. Formerly, it was true that we shouldn't... We should use the English language...*

**Researcher, Ghana:** *So, you... So, it's... it's more flexible [now]?*

**Teacher 5, School 2, Ghana:** *It's more flexible... Ehh... [indicating an affirmative] ... They speak English to me, but at times... at times, they'll [say]... 'Sir, sir... can I say it in Twi...?' ...[then I'll say] 'Okay, yes...'* ...

Some of the participants saw classroom codeswitching as a legitimate practice, allowed and endorsed by policy, where others thought that in doing it they were breaking with policy

There were, however, also teachers who clearly viewed the use of codeswitching as going against policy. This was even the case at School 2, where Teacher 5 noted that the policy had become more relaxed. While Teacher 8 reported using the local language rarely, she was hesitant to discuss her use of the local language in her teaching. She reported that she only uses local languages when students do not understand something. She also said that she did not allow students to speak the local language in class.

**Researcher, Ghana:** *And, do you ever find, because their English isn't so good... do you have to use the Twi when you teach them, in P5?*

**Teacher 8, School 2, Ghana:** *[Well,] that is not the policy. [...] At times, when the need arises, I have to do that.*

**Researcher, Ghana:** *Oh, I know it's not the policy but, in reality, do you have to do it?*

**Teacher 8, School 2, Ghana:** *Yes.*

**Researcher, Ghana:** *So, how often do you have to...? This is all anonymous, you don't have to... you just say what you feel. We're not using your name. But, how much do you have to use Twi?*

**Teacher 8, School 2, Ghana:** *Well, I don't use it that much because I want to try them... I want to help them to have interest in the English language. So, for the usage of the Twi, I don't use it that much. I rarely use it. ... I use it when it becomes very difficult for them to understand but I don't use it, [normally]. I don't normally use it.*

**Researcher, Ghana:** *And do you let the students talk in Twi before they [answer]? If you ask a question, do you let them talk...?*

**Teacher 8, School 2, Ghana:** *No, I don't. I don't want them to talk [in] the Twi because I want to train them with English. So, I don't want them to answer my questions in the Twi.*

**Researcher, Ghana:** *Yeah, but do you ever let them talk in Twi, in [the] classroom...?*

**Teacher 8, School 2, Ghana:** *Well... it's not allowed but they do. It's not allowed but they do.*

Traces of this view of using local languages as illegitimate and against policy can also be seen in the following excerpt:

*'[Sometimes,] if the person is making a point, and... er... 'it's not coming' in the English, sometimes, I have to let him speak the local language so that, later on, I'll translate it.' Teacher 2, School 1, Ghana*

Such extracts give the impression that classroom codeswitching is rarely used as a pedagogic strategy, and when done so, the teacher quickly switches back to English as the main MOI. They also show that there are no clear policy guidelines with regard to the use of classroom codeswitching as a legitimate pedagogic strategy at the upper primary level. The lack of shared understanding with regards to use of English, local languages and classroom codeswitching, both at the

The lack of shared understanding with regards to use of English, local languages and classroom codeswitching, both at the lower and upper primary levels, contributes to the many obstacles facing the implementation of the national LEP

lower and upper primary levels, contributes to the many obstacles facing the implementation of the national LEP.

### 3. Practical obstacles to the implementation of the national LEP

While the interview suggests a general awareness of the national LEP and an intention to follow it, there is a complex array of factors reported by participants as hindering the implementation of the LEP. One of the factors that inhibit implementation, as seen above, is a lack of shared understanding of the policy. The following section explores further practical obstacles to using local languages at the lower primary level, and to implementing EMI at the upper primary level. The influence of the wider educational context is also considered.

#### Practical obstacles to the use of local languages at the lower primary level

Key practical obstacles reported regarding the use of local languages at the lower primary level include:

- A lack of teachers with competence in the appropriate local languages.
- Insufficient training of teachers in language pedagogy, and an absence of exemplification of how to implement the policy.
- A lack of resources to support learning of/in local languages and to exemplify to teachers how the LEP can be enacted.
- Multilingualism in the classroom.
- Low literacy levels in local languages.

#### Lack of teachers with competence in the appropriate local languages

A lack of teachers in general in Ghana, and in particular of those who could speak the appropriate local languages, was an obstacle to implementing the LEP mentioned by nearly all of the participants.

*'We have a challenge – a problem – with teacher deployment and training. Ehhee [strong affirmative]...' District 2 Human Resource Director, Ghana*

There is a strong demand for teachers at the lower primary level, and it can be difficult to match trained teachers with the language needs of a school:

*'Our problem is just getting the right people to [...come and handle...] the local language with the early [ones]...' Circuit supervisor, School 1, Ghana*

While a speaker of the local language may be preferred by a school, if one is not available, schools will take whatever teachers they can. But, since textbooks for lower primary are in English, teachers are required to translate them into the local language so that students can more easily understand them. This is not possible if the teacher does not speak the local language:

*'That is why the teacher in that classroom should be conversant with that local language. Otherwise... there'll be a lapse in the instruction. You know, if the teacher, assuming he's an Ewe, [is] teaching ...a Twi-dominated classroom, then you'll imagine what is going to happen. Mmhmm [strong affirmative]. Circuit supervisor, School 2, Ghana ...*

There is a complex array of factors reported by participants as hindering the implementation of the LEP



*Yeah... so, the teacher will be compelled to speak English although that is not what the policy requires.' Headteacher, School 2, Ghana*

There is a shortage of teachers who can teach through the local language at the lower primary level and teachers who can teach the local language as a subject at the upper primary level:

*'Because, right now, if you want Ga teachers in this municipal... just a few. Here, we don't even have any... any Ga teacher here. In this school, there's no Ga; even Twi, she comes from the JHS to teach and go. You see? [Indistinctly] ... teach and go... ..very few of teachers who are...[able to teach] ...the language. So, if you want to change and use the language, [there'll] be a problem.' Teacher 6, School 2, Ghana*

In School 3, a quarter of the teachers did not speak the local language (Dangme), but the headteacher says that they were learning it:

*'Er... I can say, in our school, we are sixteen in number. Sixteen, in number. Those who cannot speak the Dangme, at all, are just about – about four. [For] the rest, everybody, can speak some – some Dangme. And these teachers, some of them have been here for the past two, three, years. So they are picking up the language. So, now, they are also learning [chuckles].' Headteacher, School 3, Ghana*

Even speakers of the local languages might not have experienced formal learning through the language and be able to use it well in writing. One participant mentioned that teachers needed specific training to teach (in) the local language. She observed that just because she spoke a language it did not mean that she would be well equipped to teach (in) it:

*'The teachers available to teach the language ....mmm [indicating an affirmative] ...and, probably, training – for the teachers who are on the field already. And, if am to go to my region, now, I have not... as I was saying... I have not really dealt with... my mother tongue... that well or I'm not well-versed in it to say I'm teaching it. So, that means, those on the field, we should be properly assessed that, oh, we can really teach the language.' Teacher 13, School 4, Ghana*

So even though the majority of Ghanaian teachers are multilingual, they might not all have competence in the languages of the schools where they are deployed. Even if they do, this does not mean that they are well equipped to use those language as media of instruction.

#### **Lack of resources to support learning of/in local languages**

Many respondents cited the lack of teaching resources in local languages as a major obstacle to the implementation of local language use at the lower primary level. So despite a willingness to implement the policy, there was frustration over how to do so:

*'Though they have said they have brought out the policy but we don't see anything! There are no teachers; materials to use, they're not there. Maybe, if I have more materials, I have in-service training, maybe I can even help them with the Akuapem Twi. But, we don't have such things. So, it becomes...' Teacher 4, School 1, Ghana*

**There is a shortage of teachers who can teach through the local language at the lower primary level and teachers who can teach the local language as a subject at the upper primary level**

The NALAP programme developed materials to support lower primary teachers with the use of local languages. However, it was reported in two cases that the school was provided with the wrong set of local language materials. The school was a majority Twi speaking school, located in an indigenously Ga speaking region. In one case, this issue was quickly resolved. In the other, however, the materials were never replaced and sat on the shelf collecting dust.

*'We have Ga [textbooks]. As for Ga textbooks, we have a whole lot of them but the children... Because the children can't speak Ga, all the books are there. We're yet to get the Twi books.'* Headteacher, School 2, Ghana

In another case, a teacher reported that the materials have been in use since 2010, but that there have not been any further supplements or additional training or resources since then:

*'All that we wanted was [that] the textbooks, the materials that would augment these things, should be brought. That is all that we're waiting for, which has not been [done]... now.'* Circuit supervisor, School 2, Ghana

The headteacher at School 2 agreed with the Circuit Supervisor in the above extract and added that even when resources are provided, they are not usually provided for every student. This means that students are not allowed to take textbooks home, because that would not be fair to those who did not receive one. The need for books, particularly in the local language, that students could take home with them and read again and again at home was identified:

*'I think the textbooks should be made available. I know, right now, they don't really have the Dangme textbooks for them to encourage reading in the local language. So, maybe, we might do the writing but they really need to go back and read.'* Teacher 12, School 4, Ghana

### **Multilingualism in classrooms**

Another issue that many participants mentioned was that classrooms were frequently diverse and multilingual, particularly in District 1. This meant that there was more than one local language among the students, and therefore it was difficult to choose which of these should be used for instruction. In District 1, there were two local languages in the community (Ga and Twi), but there were also several children from other regions of Ghana who spoke additional languages. Often it was mentioned that under such circumstances, English was the default language of communication:

*'And, Accra, as I said, is a cosmopolitan area. The children in a class, you may not get one particular language that they use. So, there again, it becomes difficult to select one language in teaching them. So, if the teacher is comfortable with English, then she goes on with it [the English]. So... that local language aspect will be missing forever. Yeah.'* District 1 Director, Ghana

The use of English was thought to be a way to ensure that no group was advantaged:

*'There can be a class where about two-thirds of the class can speak Twi; one third cannot speak Twi; they are Gas. So, if we use Twi to teach, it will be a problem. The Gas will be handicapped. You see?'* Teacher 6, School 2, Ghana

The use of English was thought to be a way to ensure that no group was advantaged

### Low literacy levels in local languages

Several participants explained that, despite the policy which supports the use of local languages at the lower primary level, many students did not, in fact, develop literacy in that language. This made it difficult to continue with local language education throughout the lower primary level and beyond. Examples of this could be found in all of the schools.

*'No. Even, the local language, they're not all that perfect in it. Some cannot read in the local language; they can't write in their local language. They can only speak, you see.'* Teacher 6, School 2, Ghana

One teacher remarked that because spoken and written Dangme (as taught in school) are so different, learning to write in the local language was just as challenging for some students as learning to write in English:

*'...the way they speak the Dangme, you don't write it like that. ...Probably, it's as much difficult to them just as the English.'* Teacher 10, School 3, Ghana

One factor perceived by at least one participant to be contributing to the low literacy levels in local languages is the way that they were taught:

*'Hm. You see, the main challenge – the main challenge – is that the teaching of the language is done as a subject. That is the main challenge. Languages are supposed to be taught interactively. You get it? You interact with the things and, consciously and unconsciously, you will be developing the language. You know, when you give birth to a child, you don't strictly teach the child what to say in your language but, with time, you realise that, indirectly, the child has picked a lot of things. But, here because... Look at French! [Clapping his hands to stress his words] We have been learning French; how many Ghanaians speak French? So, it tells you that the way we are going about the languages is a problem. Not the language itself but the way we are handling them.'* Teacher 3, School 1, Ghana

The idea behind the LEP in Ghana is that students develop literacy in the local language at the lower primary level, and that this provides the foundation for successfully learning English, which will serve as the MOI from the upper primary level. Many participants, however, reported that the policy does not work in practice and that students are not completing the lower primary level with a strong foundation in local language literacy.

### Practical obstacles to the use of EMI at the upper primary level and beyond

Not only are there obstacles to using local languages at the lower primary level but also obstacles to implementing EMI successfully at the upper primary level. These include:

- Low levels of English among students.
- Lack of resources.
- Larger contextual restraints.

Because spoken and written Dangme (as taught in school) are so different, learning to write in the local language was just as challenging for some students as learning to write in English

### Low levels of English

The main challenge in implementing EMI reported by the participants was that students did not have adequate proficiency in the language to follow the curriculum in English. While this was not perceived as a problem for all teachers (as some of them reported that students had no problems following the curriculum in English), it was reported by the majority. Low levels of English were cited as a problem in both District 1 and District 2, particularly at Schools 2 and 3. Teacher 2 at School 2 mentioned several times that students' English proficiency was not high enough to follow the curriculum in English.

*'I think the language policy is somehow a barrier – to our work – in the sense that, you see, not all children can speak the English language but we are asked – and forced – to teach in the language...'* Teacher 8, School 2, Ghana

Many students are perceived as not having the required levels of English. One teacher at School 3 reported that many students had problems doing higher level thinking in English.

*'You can see that when you give them any exercise that involves thinking; you might see how slow they are – how they find it [difficult]... the time they spend [on] it to understand what you are looking for [from] them. ... That tells you that their thinking ability in the English language is lacking – is lacking.'* Headteacher, School 3, Ghana

Also at School 1, the school which according to the classroom observations had the students with the highest competence in English, one teacher remarked that students are good at 'mechanical' tasks, but that 'to creatively think and write, and the command of the language in their writing, that's the problem' (Teacher 3, School 1, Ghana). Participants in other schools also mentioned students' difficulties with reading (Teacher 7, School 2, Ghana) and writing (Teacher 8, School 2, Ghana), but most commonly highlighted students' problems with speaking English:

*'They find it difficult to express themselves. Yes. Though they'll read the thing... but, to explain it, it's always – sometimes – difficult for them.'* Teacher 11, School 3, Ghana

Students' low speaking abilities seem to be related to the fact that they have few opportunities to practice speaking inside the classroom (see discussion of classroom observation).

*'Mm... It's because they're not encouraged in the oral aspect. Yes. The oral aspect is not strong. Yes. They don't speak. They don't speak the [English language]... Yes. But, the oral, sometimes, because they're not fluent in the English, they feel reluctant to [say it]...'* Teacher 11, School 3, Ghana

Students' low proficiency in speaking English is also related to there being little use of the language outside school, particularly in the more rural District 2.

*'...they only use it the classroom. After the classroom, when they get home, nothing goes on again. So, it's only the classroom; [rhetorically] and how many minutes [can there be] for one lesson? So, if they're not practising constantly, it will surely affect them; they will find it difficult to read and understand.'* District 2 Director, Ghana

**Students' low speaking abilities seem to be related to the fact that they have few opportunities to practice speaking inside the classroom**

Thus several participants reported that students were more proficient in their home language than in English, and that they had to be forced to speak English:

*'...the local language, they can express themselves better in the local language because that one, that's what they use in their everyday activities. But it's mostly when they get to school then it's like, 'Okay, we have to add the English.' But, because they have that one at home, during everything], their thoughts and their thinking in that one, too, is better...'* Teacher 13, School 4, Ghana

Finally, it should be noted that not all participants' perceptions of students' English language competence were negative. As Teacher 5 at School 2 notes: 'They're not bad; they're good!'. Also the headteacher at School 3 is enthusiastic about the students' abilities in English, both spoken and written:

**Researcher, Ghana:** *And so, when your students get to the end of P6, how good is their English, by that time? How would you evaluate or assess their English, generally?*

**Headteacher, School 3, Ghana:** *Mm... hm... well... I'll say when they get to P6, I would – I can – assess them [to be] 75% [or] 80% - that can speak the English fluently.*

**Researcher, Ghana:** *But, how good is their English literacy? How good is their reading in English and their writing in English, by the time they get to the end of P6 – would you say?*

**Headteacher, School 3, Ghana:** *Oh, it's encouraging. It's encouraging because [when] you go to the class; they ask them questions in English, they answer the questions in English; they give them exercise in English and they do everything in English. So, it's encouraging. Though... with the background I gave you, the standard is not all that... it's not the best as we are expecting but, averagely, it's okay.*

While the headteacher reported that the students' levels of English may not be as high as they should be, he was pleased with their progress. After all, these children have been in school for only six years, the majority are around 12 or 13 years old (although some may be much older). Many of them started school with little to no English competence, they live in communities where English is not regularly used, and they are multilingual students who face many challenges both in and outside of school. Some participants were simply pleased that students were making an effort to learn:

*'...some don't find it difficult but some find it a little bit difficult. But, as I said, they're... trying [with it].'* Teacher 9, School 3, Ghana

That many are able to make progress while learning through a language that is not their mother tongue is perhaps rightly optimistic, even where challenges remain.

### **Perceptions of what supports the development of English language competence**

Teachers recognise that students struggle to understand the content in English. Many of them acknowledged that students prefer to speak in the local languages rather than English.<sup>148</sup> Despite this, teachers strictly follow the policy of using EMI at the upper primary level. The interview data suggests that they do this both

It should be noted that not all participants' perceptions of students' English language competence were negative

<sup>148</sup> cf. Owu-Ewie and Eshun, 2015

because they feel obliged to follow government policy, but also because they think that this is in the students' best interest:

*'I want to help them to have interest in the English language. So, for the usage of the Twi, I don't use it that much.'* Teacher 8, School 2, Ghana

*'Because they cannot speak the language – the way we expect them to – it makes the learning very slow, very slow. But I discourage the Twi because they must know! ... They must know the language. So, I don't encourage them to use the Twi language.'* Teacher 6, School 2, Ghana

Teachers' main strategy for supporting students' English language competence was banning the use of local languages and trying to create a context in which students are immersed in English. The only other strategy that they mentioned to support students' spoken English was correction, a practice also observed in many classroom observations. Examples of the features that teachers corrected are vocabulary, tenses and pronunciation. However, for students who are hesitant to speak and are developing their language abilities, correction strategies may work to dissuade them from speaking and trying out a new language. Using the local language to learn English and/or access the curriculum was not seen as a legitimate strategy. However, this insistence on using English seems to be contributing to silencing students in the classroom. These findings suggest that teachers need a better understanding of how to support spoken language development, as immersion and correction are not particularly conducive to supporting speaking in these classroom contexts.

#### **Lack of resources**

Another obstacle to implementing EMI at the upper primary level mentioned by many participants was a lack of resources. Even when there were textbooks in English, and for English as a subject, participants reported that they lack adequate resources for teaching English well. In many cases, there were not enough textbooks for each student in the class:

*'Er... for now, we are short of them; so, sometimes, they sit four on a desk or even more, to share one textbook.'* Teacher 10, School 3, Ghana

While sharing was possible in the classroom, the lack of textbooks meant that students could not take their books home with them and continue to read and study there. In an environment where there was likely to be little environmental print, students were therefore missing out on important literacy practice.

*'... [if] they don't have any [textbook], when they go home, nothing to... to read. When they're... when they are going home, I [could tell them]... 'Read this page... to this place... before you come tomorrow.' [They] have something to read... [But if] they don't have any textbook, they go home, they have nothing to read. They go and come back the same. So, they need materials to read.'* Teacher 6, School 2, Ghana

Finally, there were few resources at school beyond the textbooks for students to engage with, and no school libraries in any of the schools (though one is being built in School 1).

**For students who are hesitant to speak and are developing their language abilities, correction strategies may work to dissuade them from speaking and trying out a new language**

### Larger contextual restraints

Practical difficulties in implementing EMI at the upper primary level must be seen within the wider context of poverty and inequitable access to resources in Ghana. While full consideration of such issues goes beyond the realms of this research, the wider context of education must be taken into account, as it is highly significant for how LEP is enacted. While language plays an important role within this, many participants attributed students' struggle to keep up with the curriculum to a 'weak foundation' in students' learning and to external factors rather than issues around medium of instruction:

*'I wouldn't say [English as the MOI is] a big factor [students' lack of progress] because some of the children, here... some of them are good... So, it's not all that big ...It's very small. But for others, their knowledge – or let me put it, their brains – are very low. So, for them, we have to come down – come down very, very low – before they will get it! But, others, wherever you take them, they 'catch'.' Teacher 8, School 2, Ghana*

In the above extract, the teacher assumes that students who are not doing well in school have low cognitive abilities, i.e. their 'brains are low'. While we cannot gain insight into the background of such children from this single extract, one might imagine that the students being referred to are economically marginalised or from ethnic and linguistic minorities who tend to face the most severe obstacles in attending and achieving at school. That EMI is contributing to their difficulties and creating further obstacles is recognised by some participants:

*'English is about 40%. But a lot of the 60% might be from the background of the child – the child's background. The background is so poor that the [people at home] cannot provide teaching and learning materials; they're not well motivated; they don't even eat before they come to school. And, you know, this school is also not hooked [onto] the School Feeding Programme.' Circuit supervisor, School 2, Ghana*

As the Circuit Supervisor from School 2 pointed out, there are severe challenges for students with regards to success in education that go beyond medium of instruction. This was noted by participants from all schools, but particularly those from School 2 and School 3. As one participant suggested, poverty is the gravest problem for these students, and the use of EMI only exacerbates these problems:

*'...here, you are then talking about whether people are interested in doing the Ghanaian language – or Dangme. Er... it is about poverty cycle. If you look at the number of children that go to the JHS, go through SHS, and end up in the training colleges, most of them do not come from this place. Because, we said, the backgrounds are very – are very – poor. So, when people are poor, their value towards education, too, is also low. So, we don't end up getting [them in]... At the basic [school] level, you get them. [Not] If you go to the senior high [schools]...' Circuit supervisor, School 3, Ghana*

Poverty has an impact on students' ability to attend school, and many students in District 2 work before and/or after school. This means that they are often late or absent, and have no opportunities to do homework. All of this affects their opportunities to learn English, and to succeed at school:

**There are severe challenges for students with regards to success in education that go beyond medium of instruction**

*'You see, the child comes to school; after six, eight hours, in school, goes home very tired; instead of having some rest then [getting] up in the evening to do some homework, you see the child with tomato, with cassava, going round selling. So, before the child comes back home, he's so tired that they cannot sit at night to learn. Mmm [indicating an affirmative]. That's our problem.'*  
Headteacher, School 3, Ghana

Some students also travel far distances to school, which is particularly difficult for those who come for the second shift of the day, in the afternoon, when it can be extremely hot (Teacher 5, School 2, Ghana).

*'The majority of them are in the hinterlands; some of them you cannot... vehicles can't go. You have to park [your vehicle] somewhere and walk to the villages to see them. And, some of the children also walk long distances to school. Yes. They can walk over ten kilometres before they get to school. And, because most of their parents are peasant farmers, some of them have to ... go to the farm early in the morning to work before they come back to school. And some parents are herdsmen, the Fulanis – ahhaa [strong affirmative] – [in] some of the areas. So, they go and look after the cattle before they come to school and absenteeism and other things are very prevalent in the district.'*  
District 2 Director, Ghana

Some children come to school hungry, and not all schools in the District are on the school feeding programme. Even in schools where there are feeding programmes, students may save their food to take home to other family members:

*'I can tell you that there was a time we went to one of the schools, [a] boy collected the food all right, [but] was sitting beside [and] wasn't eating. When we asked, he said the mother says he should bring the food to the home for the junior brother to eat. So, you just imagine such a situation.'* District 2 Director, Ghana

Many of the students from School 2 were living with extended family members, or even living on their own, as their parents worked elsewhere, and this impacts their access to school.

*'Some of them are living with surrogate parents; and some are even staying in their own, fending for themselves; and so, it's making teaching and learning very difficult here.'* Circuit supervisor, School 2, Ghana

For such students, who already face so many barriers to accessing education, the use of English as a medium of instruction adds a significant additional burden.

Finally, it should be noted that many teachers in these schools are living and working in challenging circumstances. Some of the rural communities where they teach are difficult to reach and have a lack of accommodation for teachers, which means that they have long commutes. One teacher reported that he woke up at 3am to ensure that he would arrive at school on time (Teacher 5, School 2, Ghana). Working in such conditions has an impact on teachers' ability to support struggling students, as they often do not have the time or additional resources to do this important work.

**Even in schools where there are feeding programmes, students may save their food to take home to other family members**



#### 4. Attitudinal factors hindering the implementation of the LEP

Not only practical, but also attitudinal factors hinder the successful implementation of the national LEP in Ghana. The interviews provide examples of teachers associating English with being educated and elite, as well as perceptions that local languages are not prestigious or the appropriate languages of education. Such attitudes can be significant in influencing people's willingness to implement the use of local languages in education, and may reinforce the demand for EMI. There was, however, evidence that these attitudes may be changing, as there was a clear appreciation of the role of Ghanaian languages in projecting national identity and sustaining local values and cultures.

##### Attitudes towards English and local languages

English has a dominant role within Ghanaian society, as one of the country's official languages, and several workplaces and jobs demand competence in English. There is recognition that English is used widely in work and higher education, beyond the basic education level. This teacher notes that students need English to access jobs beyond schooling:

*'If in the world of work; let's say, after basic education, you got to secondary [education] and it's still there and you're entering the world of work and you can opt for an interview, or whatever you want to do in your local language, then yes, it would have been perfect. But, here lies the case, in the world of work, you're expected to be able to carry out every transaction in English. So, there's a need to terminate [the local language] or handle it as a subject while instruction goes on, to English, so that they can grasp the English language.'*  
Headteacher, School 4, Ghana

English is also perceived a lingua franca used regularly in the daily life of many Ghanaians, particularly those living in urban areas with diverse populations:

*'We express ourselves more in the English because of the diversity in the languages. If you don't understand my language, which means I can't communicate with you... But with the English, at least, if not for anything, we are able to [communicate] or speak.'* Teacher 12, School 4, Ghana

English is not only perceived to be of value within Ghana but also outside it. There are expectations that English might offer students opportunities to work and travel outside of Ghana.

*'You know, nowadays, we are in a global village and we are not going to stay in Ghana. Some of us – them – may travel. So, let's imagine, we use the language 'aa' – the local language ... and you find yourself in – maybe, in – America. How are you going to cope?'* Teacher 2, School 1, Ghana

As has been noted elsewhere,<sup>149</sup> in Ghana and in many other postcolonial contexts, there are strong ideologies of English as the language of the educated and the elite. English language competence is often equated with general knowledge or intelligence; many parents (and also students) put pressure on

Attitudes can be significant in influencing people's willingness to implement the use of local languages at the lower primary level

<sup>149</sup> Erling and Seargeant, 2013

schools to privilege the use of EMI. As a consequence, Ghanaian languages are often not associated with formal schooling and literacy.<sup>150</sup> Such attitudes were reported by the education officials in District 1 as impeding the implementation of local language medium instruction at the lower primary level:

*'The problem that we have with language policy, also, is that they [the parents] measure a child's performance – they, the parents – by their ability to speak good English. You understand? If a child comes home and he speaks good English, then they assume that all is well with the school. But when the child is not speaking good English, at the lower primary, then they say. 'Oh, they're not good', 'They're not...' That's the perception. But that should not be the case, anyway. It's difficult. It's difficult because the parents, permit me to say, they themselves are so myopic about the Ghanaian language...' Circuit supervisor, School 2, Ghana*

The Circuit Supervisor in School 2 saw this as an internalised postcolonial inferiority complex that causes people to dismiss their own culture:

*'Most parents want their children to be speaking English... and they come and they're happy that their children are behaving like the white man.' [General laughter] Circuit supervisor, School 2, Ghana*

English is associated with the elite, who are often seen as having abandoned their Ghanaian languages, which, for most, are considered those most appropriate for communicating at home:

*'With the elite – most of them – they speak English language at home. So, the children, they can't even speak their mother tongue. They can't.' Teacher 4, School 1, Ghana*

A corollary of this privileging of English is that Ghanaian languages are viewed as being of low status:

*'I will say that that problem is common with children from the, you know, highly educated background, where at home, they communicate through the use of the English language. So, when they come to school, they view their own language as, maybe, inferior.' Circuit supervisor, School 3, Ghana*

Related to the above perceptions is the equation of English with private schooling, commonly perceived as superior to government schooling (though several participants disputed this). Private schools do not follow the national LEP and use English throughout. This was perceived as a hindrance to the policy of using local languages at the lower primary level:

*'...and in the school, even though the school's policy is there, the English language seems to have [the] upper hand. And in our private schools [chuckles], most parents, you know, are deceived to send their children to the private schools because, there, the moment the children, you know, they take them through the English language... The moment they come home and they are able to rattle [slang for speaking with precise grammar and phonetics] ...the English language, they think, 'Oh...' 'You see?' Headteacher, School 3, Ghana*

English is associated with the elite, who are often seen as having abandoned their Ghanaian languages

<sup>150</sup> cf. Djité, 2008

While competence in English is associated with the elite, the lack of it was sometimes equated with being uneducated, 'rural' or 'local'. This was mentioned by at least two participants:

*'...because some people even feel, okay, if someone can speak well in their native [tongue], they think that person is – I don't know the word to use... they think that you, you're kind of, you're not that enlightened or something like that...' Teacher 13, School 4, Ghana*

The association between lack of English abilities with lack of education seems to be related to the perception that going to school and becoming educated necessarily entail learning and using another languages. The local language seems to represent the home and the familiar, while English is related to acquiring new knowledge:

*'...it's their first language, they want to move a step ahead to experience other languages. That is why. Because, they feel, 'After all, it's my language; so I know it. And because of that, I have to drop it and take on another language, which is new to me.' Teacher 8, School 2, Ghana*

Just as English can be perceived of as the language of progress, local languages can be seen as being backward. One teacher refers to the students who use local languages at school instead of English as being 'recalcitrant'.

*'Some of them. Most of them use the English but we have some recalcitrant ones who prefer to 'go the local way.' Teacher 2, School 1, Ghana*

Evidence of this perspective could also be found in this excerpt from one of the participants, who equates parents' lack of English with illiteracy:

*'[Yes] ... [local] language. And you know that English is a problem to some of the parents because they're illiterates. So, they speak the local language...' Circuit supervisor, School 2, Ghana*

Positive attitudes towards English as a language of the educated and elite, combined with attitudes of local languages as backwards and not suited to education, work against the implementation of local language use at the lower primary level, and work for the practice of English only. Such attitudes can also potentially impact on the use of codeswitching to support learning and access to the curriculum.

### **Negative attitudes towards Ghanaian language teachers**

A consequence of negative attitudes towards local languages can be seen in the discriminatory stances towards Ghanaian language teachers mentioned in the data. As an example of this, the School 2 Circuit Supervisor recounts how at PTA meetings, the parents greeted the teachers of other subjects more enthusiastically than the Ghanaian language teachers:

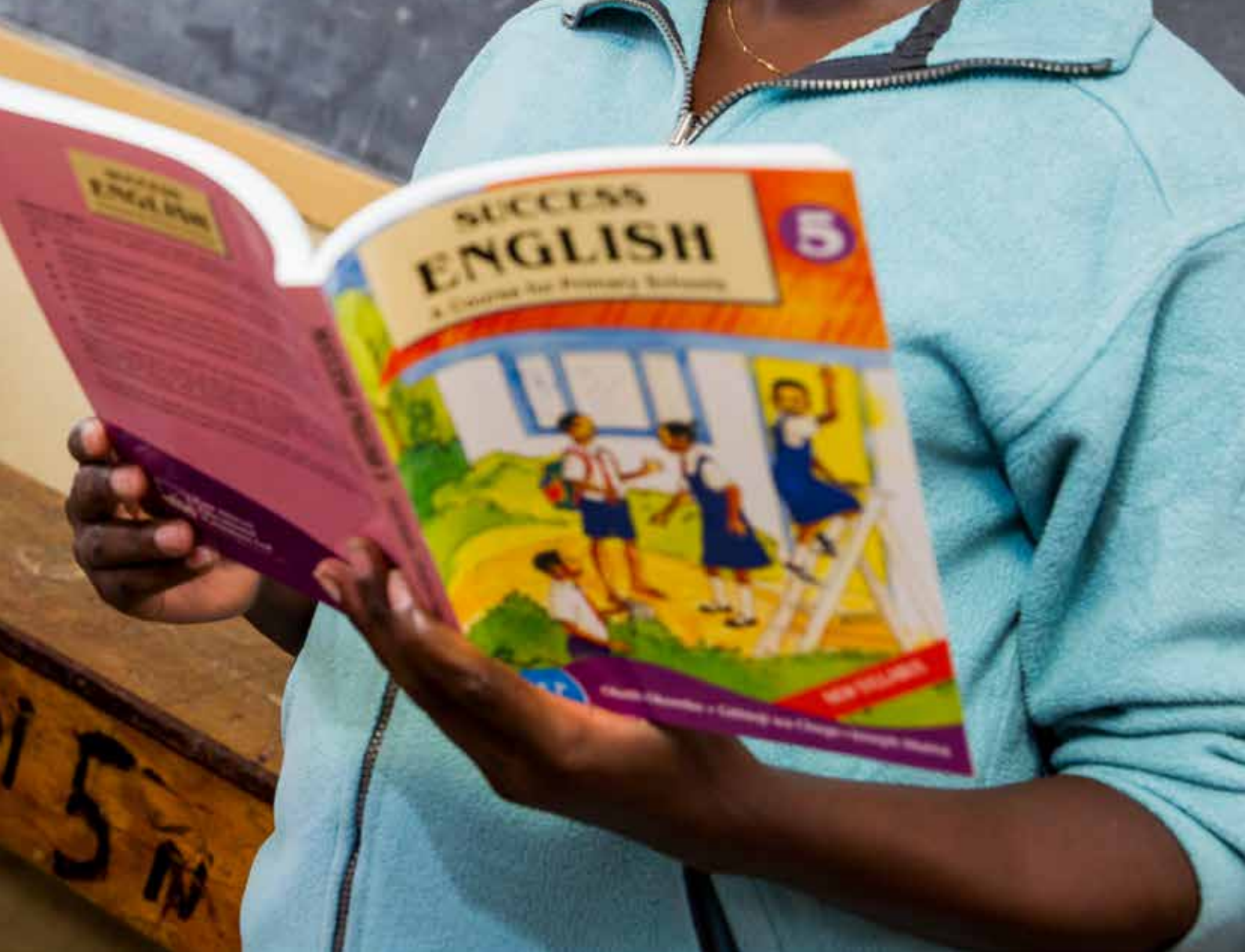
*'Their perception is that local language is not a very good subject area and... They have some negative [attitudes] – oh – towards the Ghanaian language. So, when they're introducing teachers... '...and this teacher is for English [language]', you see them clapping; '...this one is for Mathematics', you see them clapping; '...this is the Ghanaian Language...' [and] some even do not clap.' Circuit supervisor, School 2, Ghana*

The local language seems to represent the home and the familiar, while English is related to acquiring new knowledge

$2a + 6b + 4b + 3a =$   
 $4c + c + 2c =$   
 $10p + 2q + q + p =$

If  $a=3$  and  $b=4$ , find the  
value of (i)  $2b$  (ii)  $a+b$   
(iii)  $3a+b$  (iv)  $a+4b$

Linda  
Lucy  
Hellen  
John  
Vera  
Gina  
Paul  
Irene  
Mike  
Chloe  
Evelyn  
Vince  
Gail



15 IN

The headteacher at School 2 added a further anecdote about how parents responded impolitely to the Ghanaian language teachers:

*'At times, when they attend PTA meetings, and, maybe, there's a teacher teaching Twi; and when they are passing and they hear the teacher teaching, they'll come and tell you, 'Ah, I brought my ward [child] ...for you to teach them how to speak English, how to ...write English and you're teaching them Ghanaian language?'*  
Headteacher, School 2, Ghana

Negative attitudes extend to the teachers of Ghanaian languages, who, some participants note, are often considered to be less intelligent:

*'They think that, oh, if you are teaching those subjects – those languages – you are nobody...'* Teacher 7, School 2, Ghana

*'What I know – I've heard once – is that somebody said, 'They don't regard [local language] subject teachers.' So if you are 'teaching Twi', kyere sɛ, wo deɛ woa bɔn... ['it means, you're dumb ...'], 'you don't know anything.' Ehhee [indicating a strong affirmative]. You're teaching Twi...'* Teacher 6, School 2, Ghana

Some of these negative associations with Ghanaian languages could be attributed to the perception that Ghanaian languages are somehow a less serious subject of study at university. Two teachers recounted that the subject of Ghanaian language was taken less seriously during their teacher education:

*'When I was at training college, for instance, we were doing Ghanaian Language. We have Twi; we have Ga. When it's time for Ga lectures, people... don't... don't go! The interest is not there. You see? It's not there; so, they don't go. And so... the tutors themselves also know; and so, whatever you do, they'll pass you.'*  
Teacher 6, School 2, Ghana

The low prestige sometimes attributed to Ghanaian languages and the perceived lack of status of Ghanaian language teachers contributes to the challenge of recruiting local language teachers:

*'It means, we're not getting more people entering into the language area...'*  
Headteacher, School 1, Ghana

This participant bemoans the misinformed perception of such teachers, observing that most people do not appreciate the range of skills that students learn in the Ghanaian language curriculum, skills that are desperately needed in order to effectively enact the national LEP:

*'...some people look mean upon those who do the Ghanaian language. They [those people] don't know what is involved when you do Ghanaian language. You'll do general linguistics; you do sociolinguistics and other things. So, you are able to access other languages easily; but, they are not aware so they think it's a cheap – what – language and... they look mean upon such teachers.'*  
District 2 Director, Ghana

Without a change in the attitudes towards Ghanaian languages and a recognition of the very valuable skills of multilingual teachers with grounded understanding of Ghanaian language use and sociolinguistic issues in the country, policies implementing local languages in schooling will be met with limited success.

The low prestige sometimes attributed to Ghanaian languages and the perceived lack of status of Ghanaian language teachers contributes to the challenge of recruiting local language teachers

### Positive attitudes towards local languages and Ghanaian identity

While many participants viewed local languages as not being prestigious or appropriate for education, other participants clearly appreciated the role of Ghanaian languages in projecting national identity and sustaining local values and cultures. Some also recognised the value of education policies that promote the use of local languages as a means of promoting the vitality of local languages and cultures.

At least six participants expressed a concern for Ghanaian language in the face of a perceived increase of English use in Ghanaian society and education. Some participants reported that children are losing their abilities in Ghanaian languages:

*'You see a child bearing [a] name – [an] Ewe name – and the child cannot speak Ewe; you see the child bearing [a] Dangme name and the child cannot speak [Dangme] because the literates are teaching English to their wards [children] at home!' Teacher 14, School 4, Ghana*

The decreasing use of Ghanaian languages was thought to be detrimental to traditional languages and cultural practices, potentially leading to a loss of identity. The excerpt below shows that lack of ability in local languages can be perceived of as leading to disengagement with the community and its culture and identity:

*'...and, you see, it doesn't make you feel part of that community. You see, your identity is lost. You are neither an English [person] nor a Ghanaian. You see, you are in the middle. Because, no matter what, you can't call yourself an English person and, here you are, you don't even know your identity, you see; your cultural practices, you don't know anything about them; and they pride themselves... I don't know why they want to feel like that. So, they go to the village [their hometown] and they can't communicate with the people. You see, and to me, personally, I feel it's not the best.' District 1 Director, Ghana; see also Teacher 14, School 4, Ghana, who describes such people as 'misfits'*

As a result, some participants explained that local languages need promoting and protecting, and saw the promotion of local language use at the lower primary level (and potentially beyond) as one way of doing this.

*'I think the language policy is also helping them remember their local language.' Teacher 12, School 4, Ghana*

At the same time, discourses relating Ghanaian language use to national identity are being employed to promote the use of local languages in education.

*'...we keep telling them that if you start the children with the foreign language, they lose their identity. Yeah.' District 1 Director, Ghana*

Ideologies that the use of Ghanaian languages in education help to sustain local and national identities are being mobilised to gain support for the policy. However, not all the participants expressed this concern to protect local languages and cultures. There were several who believed Ghanaian languages were in a strong position, in both the school and the community, and there was therefore no need for them to be protected.

*'...as for the local language, they use that – the language – at home – all the time – [with] their friends, family members, their community.' Teacher 6, School 2, Ghana*

The decreasing use of Ghanaian languages was thought to be detrimental to traditional languages and cultural practices, potentially leading to a loss of identity

Local languages were viewed as particularly strong in the Dangme-dominant areas in District 2, where one participant remarked that when people move there, they tended to learn Dangme (as opposed to areas of Accra like District 1, which is no longer Ga-dominant because of migration from other areas in Ghana).

*'...here, the entire community, even, let's say, the non-Dangmes who come to settle here, the moment they come, they – even the parents – force [themselves] to learn the Dangme because it's a Dangme community. So, this is helping the school [to be] having or concentrating on one language, being the Dangme.' Headteacher, School 3, Ghana*

These extracts show that negative associations of Ghanaian languages with low levels of education are not fixed. Positive attitudes towards Ghanaian languages and their role in sustaining local and national values and cultures can also be recognised in the interview data. Such attitudes are drawn on to further promote the use of local languages in education.

## Summary

The classroom observation data suggests that lessons are dominated by teacher talk. The observational sketches provide further insight into classroom practices, showing that in some cases interactive strategies are used. Teachers attempt to build rapport and create an inclusive learning environment by drawing on local knowledge, making jokes, and responding to students individually. However, these sketches confirm the limited opportunities for students to speak. Students' responses to teacher-directed activities were in English, though they tended to be limited to a word or short phrase. Any uses of local languages were brief, although students sometimes used them quietly amongst themselves. The English lesson involved no meaningful communication and was not related to the curriculum in which the students are learning other subjects through English.

These observations suggest that teacher training has had a positive impact in terms of promoting some interactive pedagogies. While there is evidence of good practices in place, a fuller command of pedagogic strategies would allow the teachers to extend students' responses and their understanding of the content, and also to further develop students' competence in English. The interview data suggests that there is general awareness of the LEP in Ghana, with many having positive perceptions of it despite difficulties in the practical implementation. Many participants were aware of the value of learning through local languages and felt that this was important and positive, but only if not done at the expense of learning English. While some participants felt that the use of local languages should be extended into the upper primary level because many students had not learned English well enough by this stage to be able to learn the curriculum through it, the use of English only in textbooks, exams and further education was recognised as a significant obstacle to this.

Most participants reported that their school followed (or attempted to follow) the national LEP. However, there were differences in how aspects of this policy were understood and implemented. Areas in which there was the greatest amount of

While there is evidence of good practices in place, a fuller command of pedagogic strategies would allow the teachers to extend students' responses and their understanding of the content, and also to further develop students' competence in English

tension were around managing the transition from using local languages to EMI (when and how), and whether – and if so, how – local languages can be used throughout the curriculum to support both curriculum and content learning. The majority of participants understood the policy for the upper primary level as strictly supporting English only. The use of classroom codeswitching was reported by every participant as a practice used by teachers at both the lower and upper levels of primary education. However, teachers report that they do not use these strategies very often at the upper primary level, and the observation data confirmed this. This lack of local language use and classroom codeswitching use during instruction may be limiting students' access to content knowledge. Moreover, teachers' main strategies for supporting the development of spoken English were immersion and correction, two practices that might actually work against allowing students to practice new language.

Key practical obstacles were reported regarding both the use of local languages at the lower primary level and the use of EMI at the upper primary level and beyond. These obstacles included low levels of literacy in local languages and English, lack of resources and teachers with the requisite language skills, and multilingualism in classrooms. Attitudinal factors were also identified as hindering the implementation of the national LEP in Ghana, including associations of English with being educated and elite, as well as perceptions that local languages are not prestigious or appropriate languages of education. Many participants being aware of the value of using local languages in school – both for educational and cultural reasons. However, the use of English in Ghana as a lingua franca, and for further education, exams, and other gatekeeping mechanisms, means that there is a strong perceived need for English. While many take pride in and prefer to use the local languages for cultural, religious, educational and social purposes, they also consider English as a language of opportunity, social mobility and view it as an ingrained and unquestioned element of the educational system, wider society and the globalised economy. Despite this, there was also concern for the sustainability of Ghanaian languages and cultures, with some participants suggesting that these could be supported by their use and recognition in schooling. These concerns indicate that if other Ghanaian languages besides English were accepted in domains of prestige and power, negative attitudes towards using local languages in education might shift.

These findings, while specific to GAR, may be representative of similar educational contexts, particularly those in Sub-Saharan African countries where there is often a transition to EMI in upper primary school. In the following section, we present the findings from a very different, but also increasingly common context of EMI, where it is used in low-cost private schools in Bihar, India.

**While many take pride in and prefer to use the local languages for cultural, religious, educational and social purposes, they also consider English as a language of opportunity, social mobility and view it as an ingrained and unquestioned element of the educational system, wider society and the globalised economy**



Chapter 5

# Fieldwork in Bihar, India



In India, the fieldwork focused on the provision of EMI in the low-cost private primary school sector in the state of Bihar. Of interest were the LEPs embodied in these schools, insofar as they differed from those recommended by the government. The fieldwork took place in two adjacent districts within Bihar.

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### District 1: Urban

District 1 is an urban area in which Bihar's capital city is situated. Magahi, a variety of Hindi, is spoken alongside Hindi, at home and in the neighbourhood. English may be available in the environment but is not usually used at home.

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### District 2: Rural

District 2 is predominantly rural. The local language is Bajjika, also related to Hindi, but Hindi is also widely spoken. Exposure to English is very limited in this district.

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### The schools

Although members of the project team had strong educational links with Bihar, it being one of the focus states of **TESS-India**, a mass-scale OER-based government teacher development programme in which they were involved, they had no connections with the private school sector. They therefore called on their existing state-based partners for advice on selecting suitable LCEM private schools for the study. The main criterion was that the school should have a reputation for good practice.

A sample of three LCEM private schools was selected across two districts, one urban and one rural. All were independent of one another. A coaching centre was also included, as an example of an additional form of private educational provision in the state. In addition, a government primary school with a good reputation was also identified, for the purpose of comparison. In line with government policy, this was state-medium (i.e. Hindi), with English being a curricular subject. As with the Ghana study, as far as possible, the aim was to focus on the upper primary classes 6-8.

As with the Ghana study, as far as possible, the aim was to focus on the upper primary classes

Two of the LCEM private schools visited were located in the economically disadvantaged urban parts of District 1, while one of the LCEM private schools, the coaching centre and the government school visited were situated in the interior rural areas of District 2.

### **School 1: LCEM private unrecognised school**

School 1 was a LCEM private school, which was not recognised by the government. It charged INR 200-300 (£2.40-3.60) monthly, and had 600 students and 22 teachers.

The children were clean and neat, and wore well-kept uniforms. All had a school ID card with a photo and their details on a cord around their necks. They provided their own textbooks and stationery, and brought their own food in a container (tiffin) for lunch.

The school occupied two functional rented buildings, which were separated by a road. The fact that the building was rented seemed to be one of the major reasons behind the school not having government recognition. One building housed the pre-school sections and the other housed Classes 1 to 10. While some classrooms had concrete walls, many had thin plywood partitions, such that the voices of several teachers carried across them. With their close rows of heavy bench-desks, the small classrooms were very cramped. There was no space for students to store their bags, except on the desk in front of them. The walls were bare. An enclosed space adjacent to the school served as a playground when not flooded by the monsoon rains. During our visit, the students remained at their desks during the breaks and when eating their lunch. There was a very small staff room with a table and two chairs. Another building was under construction to increase the intake of the school.

Great importance was placed on educational achievement, with students being ranked according to their performance within each class. On the back of the school notebook was a group photo of the 'toppers', i.e. those gaining the highest grades the previous year. There was a strong emphasis on obedience, with students' behaviour being monitored via a CCTV camera in the headteacher's office. The headteacher's office contains a several piles of children's books but none were available in the classrooms or staff room' room. At 90%, school attendance was high.

### **School 2: LCEM private, recognised, Christian school**

Part of an association of Christian schools in India, School 2 was established by a wealthy local family, in a premises owned by them. The current headteacher and his brother took over responsibility for running the school from their elderly father. With a monthly fee of INR 600 (£7.20), a further INR 80 (£1) for the use of the computer facilities, and additional transport charges, it was the most expensive of the three LCEM private schools in this study. School 2 was recognised by the government.

The school had about 1000 students on its roll, from pre-school to Class 10. Class sizes were high at entry level but fall to 35-40 at higher levels. Although it had a Christian ethos, its 20 teachers had a range of religious affiliations, including

Great importance was placed on educational achievement, with students being ranked according to their performance within each class

Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh, as did the children. The majority nevertheless being Hindu, in line with the demographics of the location. The students wore smart uniforms and supplied their own textbooks and notebooks.

The school was housed in an old three-storey building. Unlike the other schools visited, it had a science laboratory and a computer room with about 20 desktop machines. Although basic and mostly bare, the classrooms were spacious, well-lit and cooled by ceiling fans. A large central courtyard served as a playground. To one side, a small booth with a sign saying 'tuck shop' sold snacks. At one end, there were student toilets and washbasin facilities. Next to the entrance was a generator that ensured a continuous supply of electricity during power cuts. A large staff room with a long table in the centre and well-stocked bookshelves provided the teachers with a quiet space to mark work and eat their lunch. A range of educational books in English and Hindi were also on display in the headteacher's office.

There was a CCTV camera display on which the students' behaviour was monitored. We were assured that the cane propped against the wall was not used to punish the children. Two children were seen standing outside a classroom tugging their earlobes, a punishment for not having brought the required textbooks to a particular lesson. Despite its focus on obedience, an inclusive, forward-looking atmosphere was nevertheless evident at the school; its students appearing to be more outgoing and playful than in the other private institutes we visited. According to a child with physical disabilities whose classmates carried him between the playground and his second-floor classroom, it was the only school of those his parents approached that would accept him. In collaboration with an NGO, the school had also introduced a '*Good Touch, Bad Touch*' child safety programme for younger students, and life skills/sex education for the older ones.

### **School 3: LCEM private recognised school**

School 3 had been in its current rural location and management-owned building for three years. Recognised by the government, its fees were approximately INR 300 (£3.60) a month, with textbooks and stationery paid for separately. There were approximately 600 students and 10 teachers from pre-school to Class 8. The children were neat and tidy in their school uniforms.

The School was based in a new two-storey building in good but incomplete condition. The ground floor accommodated the second home-cum-office of the headteacher, the Class 6 classroom, and a large open area with a tin roof, where the pre-school to Class 3 students were divided up into sections, each with their own whiteboards. The first floor consisted of a single space in which students from Classes 4, 5, 7 and 8 are separated into columns with their school bags in front of them on cramped bench-desks. Classes 7 and 8 each had fewer students and were taught together. There were three whiteboards at the front and long frame windows to the sides, but no lights or fans. The walls were bare. The teachers' voices could be heard across the open space. One toilet served all the students. There were no computer facilities. The area at the entrance of the school served as the playground. Although there was an emphasis on good behaviour, there were no CCTV cameras in this school.

Despite its focus on obedience, an inclusive, forward-looking atmosphere was nevertheless evident at the school

**School 0: Private Coaching Centre**

Surrounded by lush vegetation, the private coaching centre visited was housed in the same building as a low-cost Hindi medium unrecognised private primary school (this school did not form part of our study). The school ran in the morning and the coaching centre in the afternoon; the headteacher of the school being the sole teacher of the coaching centre. The coaching centre catered for students from Classes 6 to 12. Those attending included some children from the school taking place earlier in the day, and others from the private and government schools in the area. The majority only attended for short periods of time.

The coaching centre corresponded to one classroom in the school, which was new and orderly. The classroom was cramped, with closely fitting rows of bench-desks, on which the students kept their school bags. On the occasion of our visit, the classroom was very dark, as there was no electricity due to a power outage. A high-speed train line ran immediately behind the school, which caused considerable intermittent noise.

The atmosphere in the coaching centre classroom was very disciplined. On leaving the building at the end of the lesson, the students bent over in turn to touch the headteacher's feet.

**School 4: LCHM government school**

Established over 50 years ago, the government school that was visited was located in a rural area. No fees were associated with this school, which catered for the children of the very poorest local families, many of these being first generation school attenders. With an average class size of 30, there were about 300 students and 10 teachers across Classes 1 to 8. Attendance was about 65-70% – notably lower than that of the private schools described above. The language of instruction was Hindi, with English being one of the range of subjects taught.

The school was housed in a two-storey building. There was a large playground with a handpump and basic toilet facilities in one corner. The facilities were limited, due in part to a series of break-ins, involving the theft of ceiling fans and other items. There was no computer room nor books on display. The textbooks for Classes 3-5 had not been supplied for the current academic year, which had already crossed the half-way mark.

Unlike those attending the private schools, the children were eligible for the government's free midday meal scheme. There was a one-hour lunch break, during which the students sat in rows on the ground in the outside corridors and ate dal and rice. The parents provided them with notebooks and stationery. The school uniform was paid for by the state. Mostly it was in a poor condition. Unlike the children in the fee-paying schools visited, who wore shoes and socks, most of those in this school wore flipflops.

In contrast with the focus on obedience evident in the LCEM private schools visited, this school adhered to the government directive of having a 'loving' ethos. The kindness fostered in the school was apparent in the way the teachers talked to the students, and in the freedom they were given to be playful and active during breaks.

On leaving the building at the end of the lesson, the students bent over in turn to touch the headteacher's feet

## Participants

11 lessons led by 11 teachers were formally observed in the study (in the case of the private coaching centre's case, the lesson observed was given by the headteacher). In one case, the researchers observed one class of students taught two different lessons by two different teachers. Interviews were carried out with 21 participants, specifically all those observed, plus the other headteachers and five state/district Education officials. One teacher's interview audio file got corrupted and was not transcribed.

TABLE 14: BIHAR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Participants	Interviews	Observations
India Teachers	9	10
India headteachers	7	1
India State / District Officials	5	
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>11</b>

## Gaining access

Despite assurances that the visit was not an inspection or evaluation, in two of the LCEM schools and the coaching centre, there was a sense of preparation for the arrival of the researchers. Similarly, although it was reiterated that lessons be taught as normal, one or two appeared to have been conducted for the benefit of the researchers. In all cases, the researchers were treated courteously and given a great deal of time. However, with the exception of staff in the government school, there was an element of guardedness, particularly on the part of the headteachers, during their interviews. Some of the intended questions – such as those concerning their views on the LEP or those relating to awareness of research were unsuccessful, or considered overly sensitive, and were not pursued.

With the exception of staff in the government school, there was an element of guardedness, particularly on the part of the headteachers, during their interviews

## Classroom observation findings, India

In the following, the findings of the classroom observation from the schools in India will be discussed. The sample visited in Bihar involved a combination of LCEM private schools, a private coaching centre and a Hindi medium government school. Unlike in Ghana, where the same type of school was observed in each context, there were significant differences among the distinct forms of education provision sampled in Bihar, such that it was not possible to make direct and meaningful comparisons across a conflated cross-sector dataset. In recognition of this, the following focuses on a limited number of features of the observation data. A more detailed picture of some of the lessons observed is available in the observational sketches.

In Bihar, 11 lessons were observed – three in School 1, three in School 2, two in School 3, two in School 4 and one at the Coaching Centre (School 0). Two of the classes observed were multi-grade, one at LCEM School 3, which combined students from Classes 7 and 8, others at the Coaching Centre, which accommodated students from Class 6 to Class 12 from several local schools. The observations included four of Class 7, three of Class 6, one of Class 5 (in School 1) and one of Class 3 (in School 4). The observations were made up of six English language lessons, four science-based lessons and one Social Science lesson. Of the 11 teachers observed, seven (64%) were male.

The mean number of students in the classes visited was about 34 students: about 17 girls and 17 boys. Two of the classes had 22 students; another class had 24 students. The rest had 35 students or more. The biggest class was the multi-grade class at the LCEM School 3, with 45 students.

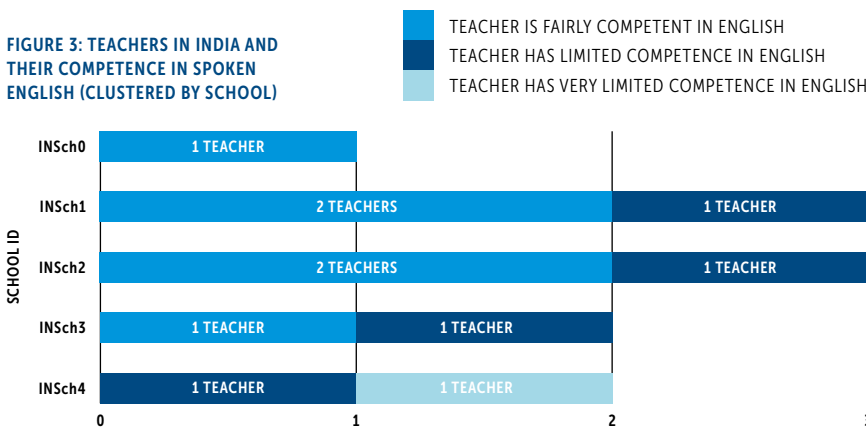
Overall, the boy-girl ratio was higher in the LCEM school and coaching centre classes observed, as compared to those of the government school, reflecting parental prioritisation of private education for their sons.

Of the 11 teachers observed in India, all but one used both Hindi and English in their lessons

### Language competence

Of the 11 teachers observed in India, all but one used both Hindi and English in their lessons, the exception being the English teacher in School 1 who used English throughout. One of the government school English teachers also used a little of the local language, Bajjika, with the children in her class.

Six of the teachers (54.5%) were judged to be fairly competent in spoken English, four (36%) had limited competence, and one of the two government school teachers was considered to have very limited competence in the language (see Figure 3).



All the teachers were very competent in speaking Hindi, with most preferring to use it instead of English during the interviews.

As the students produced very little English in any of the classes observed, it was difficult to assess their competence in the language. However, only those in the highest level class visited, namely the Class 7 English lesson in School 1, were estimated to be fairly competent in spoken English (see Table 15). In the English lesson in School 2, the students' competence in English could not be assessed as they did not use the language at all. In six classes (60%), the students were considered to have limited competence in English, and in the remaining two (20%), very limited competence.

**TABLE 15: STUDENTS' COMPETENCE IN SPOKEN ENGLISH**

Students' competence		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Fairly competent	1	10%	11.1%
Valid	Limited competence	6	60%	66.7%
Valid	Very limited competence	2	20%	22.2%
<b>Total</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Missing	N/A	1	10%	
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>	

These low levels of English reflect findings from the ASER study, in which only a quarter of the students in primary Class 5 were found to be able to read simple words in English and, of the students who could read words, approximately 60% could tell the meanings of the words they had read.<sup>151</sup>

## Classroom talk

A dominance of teacher talk in classroom observations is usually an indicator of a lack of student activity and participatory practices. Across the 11 lessons observed in Bihar, the proportion of the classroom talk attributed to the teachers was over 80% (see Table 16). In as many as five of the lessons (45.5%), the teacher talk was lecture-style and represented 95% of the total classroom talk. In one LCEM school Class 7 English lesson, the teacher was the only one to speak in the lesson at all. Such figures do not, however, directly reflect the amount of talk within each lesson. In the lesson where only the teacher spoke, for example, she said relatively little, with much of the class time involving silent student copying.

**TABLE 16: ESTIMATED TEACHERS' TALKING TIME (%) IN INDIA**

Teachers' talking time	Frequency	Percent
80 – 84%	3	27.3%
85 – 89%	1	9.1%
90 – 94%	2	18.2%
95+%	5	45.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100%</b>

Across the 11 lessons observed in Bihar, the proportion of the classroom talk attributed to the teachers was over 80%

<sup>151</sup> ASER, 2016



Unlike in Ghana where the teachers were observed to be using English 100% of the time, on average, the teachers in Bihar used English about 54% of the time, ranging between 20% and 65% in 10 of the 11 lessons observed. Only one teacher, the Class 7 English teacher in LCEM School 1, used English throughout their lesson (see Table 17). However, after the lesson, he explained that he did this for the benefit of the researchers and would normally also use Hindi.

TABLE 17: ESTIMATED TEACHERS' USE OF ENGLISH (%) IN INDIA

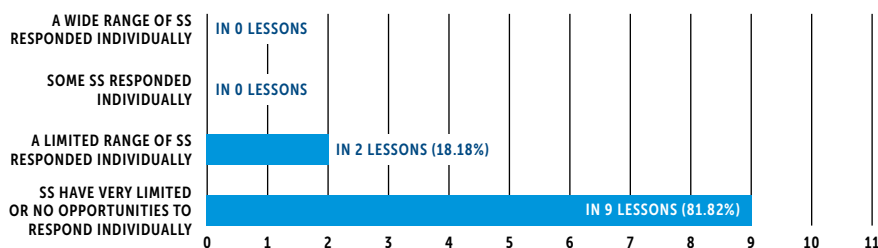
Teachers' use of English	Frequency	Percent
20%	1	9.1%
25%	1	9.1%
40%	1	9.1%
50%	2	18.2%
60%	4	36.4%
65%	1	9.1%
100%	1	9.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100%</b>

In most of the classes observed, the students spoke very little in either English or Hindi. In one English language lesson in School 2, the students did not speak at all during the lesson. In four of the remaining lessons, English represented between 80% and 100% of the students' language use. However, their use of English often corresponded to whole class choral responses to highly constrained question prompts. This made it very difficult to assess their levels of comprehension and proficiency in the language. In three lessons, a single child reading a passage aloud from the textbook corresponded to most of the students' use of English recorded in that observation.

Most teacher questions or prompts were directed to the whole class, in anticipation of choral responses or random individual replies. Thus, in nine of the 11 lessons observed in Bihar (81.8%), the students had no or very limited opportunities to respond to the teacher individually, and in the other two lessons, only very few students did so (see Figure 4). With the exception of one lesson in School 2, in which a small number of students talked in pairs as they worked through the textbook activities, such a practice was not encouraged.

Most teacher questions or prompts were directed to the whole class, in anticipation of choral responses or random individual replies

FIGURE 4: RANGE OF STUDENTS' (SS) RESPONSES DURING LESSONS IN INDIA



## Teachers' use of active learning strategies

Active learning strategies that encourage discussion or relate the teaching material to students' lives can be used by teachers to engage students in the lesson. These were, however, rarely seen in the classrooms observed in Bihar. The science teacher in School 2 was the only one to encourage student questioning and provide explanations, on a whole class and one-to-one level. She also enhanced the content by explaining concepts in her own words. Another science teacher in School 2 asked the students to draw a diagram of the circuit just described and write the answer to the question: 'Why does a fused bulb not glow?', individually, without looking at the textbook. While this engaged students in an activity, the focus of that activity was the production of the 'right' answer and not inquiry or experimentation. As the teacher checked each student's work, he gave them encouraging feedback and helped them correct errors by asking them questions to lead them to recognise any mistakes. Four (36.4%) teachers corrected the students' use of English. Such correction mainly applied only to the pronunciation of individual words, particularly by those students called on to read a passage aloud. It did not support them in extending or critically reflecting on their responses.

Five (45.5%) of the 11 teachers observed related the content of the textbook to the students' existing knowledge and experience. One of them, the science teacher in School 1, encouraged student contributions in response to such references in his lesson. In addition, he drew images to supplement those of the textbook.

**The science teacher in School 2 was the only one to encourage student questioning and provide explanations, on a whole class and one-to-one level**

## Teachers' use of language for classroom management

Apart from the teacher in School 1 who spoke only English throughout his lesson, all the others employed English and Hindi to varying degrees for a range of classroom management purposes, in addition to using both languages to mediate the textbook content. Such classroom purposes included giving instructions, setting homework, and inviting students to contribute. The extent to which these practices featured in individual lessons varied, as did the balance between the languages used for any individual teacher.

Apart from those in the government school, the teachers were not generally observed to be developing a rapport with their students or creating the atmosphere of a safe and inclusive environment. Only two teachers (18.2%) were observed praising their students. Both used Hindi to do so. Four teachers (36.4%), encouraged their students, while another four disciplined them. In these cases, English was used sometimes, sometimes Hindi, sometimes a combination. Five teachers (45.5%) chatted with their students before or after the lesson. All of them used Hindi; one of them also used English. Very few teachers called their students by name.

Read and underline  
Hard words  
of - ch - g.



## Activity types featured

Although the textbooks used in the lessons included a wide range of activity types, they were exploited to a very limited degree, with most teachers covering their content in the same manner, independent of the school or the subject. Broadly speaking, this involved the teacher reading the passages from the chapter aloud in English, and then paraphrasing them into Hindi. Such reading included any associated comprehension questions from the textbook. Sometimes the students copied out the comprehension questions and vocabulary from the textbook into their notebooks. Often they were asked to memorise the vocabulary in preparation for a test. Where the textbook included reflective, exploratory or interactive tasks, as was the case in the School 2 and School 4 English lessons observed, these were skipped over. Such practices were also observed by Bhattacharya, who found that although the English textbooks may provide opportunities to undertake communicative activities, teachers are often more comfortable relying on familiar, traditional methods such as memorisation and translation.<sup>152</sup>

The students in our study often appeared to be following the textbook passage as the teacher read it out, but were rarely given opportunities to read independently to themselves. Three lessons (27.3%) involved a single student reading a section of the textbook aloud, but in each case it was the same passage that the teacher had previously read out and, as such, the activity did not appear to benefit the rest of the class.

While the students took part in writing activities in 81.8% of the lessons, these were limited to copying words from the board or completing comprehension questions in their textbooks, and were therefore somewhat constrained in their scope. Apart from translating and paraphrasing from Hindi to English, or occasionally correcting a child's pronunciation, there were no instances of either the subject teachers or the English language teachers focusing on aspects of the English encountered in the textbook.

None of the lessons observed required the students to solve a problem or come to an agreement in pairs or groups. Only one teacher in School 2 permitted her students to confer a little as they worked through the activities in the textbook.

None of the lessons observed required the students to solve a problem or come to an agreement in pairs or groups

## Summary

The classroom observation data suggests that lessons were highly teacher dominant and textbook focused, with the teacher being the only one to speak for the majority of the lesson time. No notable differences could be detected between the LCEM schools and government school visited in terms of their instructional approach. The facilitative use of codeswitching between English and Hindi – to translate from the English textbook and occasionally explain or give an example – was common among all teachers (though only observed in the English classes in the government school). The labelling of these schools as 'EMI' could therefore be seen as a misnomer.

<sup>152</sup> Bhattacharya, 2013

In the LCEMs, there was an overwhelming sense that classroom codeswitching was a legitimate practice that was needed due to students' developing competence in English. In some cases, however, even the teachers did not speak much and spent lesson time writing on the board with students copying. There was no evidence of active-learning, student-centred practices that promote questioning and discussion. The students spoke very little, and when they did, it was almost always limited to choral responses or reading aloud. It was therefore difficult to gain an impression of their competence in English, or their grasping of the subject content.

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### **Observational sketches, India**

While providing indicative information about classroom practices in general within the schools visited in Bihar, the quantitative analysis above is necessarily limited in what it reveals about the different lessons observed. The following observational sketches provide a more detailed outline of the practices observed in lessons, followed by a comment on the use of language and pedagogic strategies employed in the lessons. The first two sketches describe a Social Science lesson and an English lesson in two LCEM schools, the third an English lesson in the Hindi medium government school.

**In the LCEMs, there was an overwhelming sense that classroom codeswitching was a legitimate practice that was needed due to students' developing competence in English**

## Sketch A: LCEM School 2

**14 boys and 10 girls sat at twin desks in a large second floor room with a frame window to one side. Four ceiling fans kept the room cool but made it noisy. A calendar hung on the wall next to the blackboard.**

The subject of the Class 7 lesson was English. The topic – from *Collins Exploring English* – was ‘Important People’. The teacher began with an activity on adjectives relating to human attributes. This consisted of a table composed of three columns. The first column contained a list of adjectives such as ‘great’, ‘creative’, ‘hard-working’. The second and third columns were headed ‘synonyms’ and ‘antonyms’ but were empty.

Silently, the teacher copied the list of adjectives into a column on the blackboard. In an adjacent column headed ‘synonyms’, she wrote one or more possibilities for each of the adjectives in column 1 (e.g. ‘great’ – ‘fine’, ‘loyal’ – ‘true’). When she finished, she rubbed the synonyms out, changed the heading of the second column and wrote a corresponding list of antonyms.

The teacher did not pronounce any of the words, translate them, indicate any differences between them or give examples of their use. She did not invite the students to ask questions and none of them did so.

As the teacher wrote, the students copied the adjectives, their synonyms and their antonyms into their notebooks. When they had finished, they stood up and handed them to the teacher, who wordlessly ticked and dated the copying. The only feedback she gave was in the form of a reprimand to a student for leaving several lines between the previous activity and this one. Having had their work checked, the students then copied the synonyms and antonyms from the blackboard into the empty columns in the table in the textbook.

The teacher seemed somewhat disaffected throughout the lesson, which ended somewhat abruptly when the next teacher arrived. She

spoke very little throughout. Mostly this was to give instructions. Sometimes she used English, sometimes Hindi. None of the students spoke at all. It was not clear how much they understood of the language that they copied down.

**When they had finished, they stood up and handed them to the teacher, who wordlessly ticked and dated the copying. The only feedback she gave was in the form of a reprimand to a student for leaving several lines between the previous activity and this one.**

It appeared that the teacher was selective as to which elements of the English language textbook to focus on (specifically the grammar and vocabulary activities), and which to leave out (those involving communication). Such an approach seems to reflect widespread perceptions of language learning as involving only the memorisation of individual words, alongside with wariness of the idea that student talk is valuable for learning.

In line with modern English language textbooks, it might be assumed that the activity on adjectives required students to attempt to complete the table themselves, on the basis of previous textbook input, with the help of a dictionary, and in collaboration with their peers, before comparing their version with that of the teacher and wider group. Such an exploratory approach was replaced by the teacher providing all the answers herself (perhaps obtained from a separate answer key), without any mediating explanations. In common with other lessons observed, the students were expected to rote learn sets of words or facts, often without understanding them fully or having had the opportunity to connect them to other learning and experiences.

## Sketch B: LCEM School 3

**Class 6 occupied a space separated from a corridor by a whiteboard. There, 35 students were seated at bench-desks in closely fitting rows, with an additional bench-desk arranged in a column to one side. The girls and boys sat separately, their shoulders almost touching their partner's as they turned a page of their textbook or wrote in their notebook, both of these balanced on top of their school bag in front of them.**

The subject was Social Science and the topic was 'Means of Communication'. The teacher read the passage from the English textbook out loud section by section, paraphrasing each sentence into Hindi as he did so. The students read the passage silently at the same time, but did not make any notes on the word meanings.

At regular intervals, the teacher repeated a sentence, omitting the final word or phrase, using rising intonation as a prompt for the students to complete it. This the students did en-masse, often shouting out the answer loudly.

**T:** 'Mobile phone is a very important means of communication. It is a very important ...?'

**SS:** 'Means of communication'.

**T:** You can buy postcards. You can buy ...?

**SS:** Postcards.

Every so often, the teacher asked: 'Understand?' and the students replied: 'Yes, sir!'.

Once or twice the teacher made connections between the topic and the students' wider knowledge and experience.

**T:** On TV you can now watch cricket match. Cricket match is a most important game in India.

**SS:** Yes, sir!

**T:** Do you play cricket match?

**SS:** Yes, sir!

The question was directed to all the students and all replied in the affirmative, though the girls would not play this game. He also elicited examples of newspaper titles and mobile phone

makes, to which the students replied 'Times of India!' 'Samsung!'.

Sometimes the teacher elaborated on or corrected the content of the passage. Thus, where it stated that mobile phone use was 50% in India, he said 'I know that 95% of people have mobile phone'. However, where it contained linguistic irregularities, he read these out as given:

*'To send a message through the internet, the computer is must to both the sender and reader.'*

On completing the reading passage, the teacher read through the associated comprehension activities, focusing on both the instructions and the answers.

**T:** Tick the correct answer. Tick the...?

**SS:** Correct answer.

**T:** Fill in the blanks. Fill in the...?

**SS:** Blanks.

**T:** Write T for true and F for...?

**SS:** False.

He then asked the students to copy the textbook activities into their notebooks. They did so word-for-word, including the instructions and the different multiple choice and other answer options. The lesson finished with them being asked to complete this task for homework.

The teacher of this lesson was one of the most energetic of those observed, his relative ease in using English, his skill in employing Hindi to mediate understandings, and his regular prompting of student contributions creating an engaging classroom environment. The proportion of student talk in this lesson was higher than any of the other lessons observed. However, the fact that most of this talk took the form of choral chanting in English – be this the repetition of the last word or two of what the teacher had just said or the expression of agreement 'Yes, Sir!' – meant that such forms of communication were mechanical and potentially meaningless to the children responding in this way.

## Sketch C: Government School 4

**The Class 7 English language lesson took place in an airy room on the first floor of the building. To one side was a frame window. At the front was a blackboard and a set of deep shelves to store the children's school bags. The walls were bare. Seven boys and 15 girls sat at four rows of bench-desks, separated by a wide central aisle. Some of the places were unoccupied.**

The lesson was based on a short poem called 'These Simple Things'. The teacher read the poem aloud phrase by phrase, paraphrasing the English into Hindi as she did so. Sometimes she did an action to illustrate the meaning of a word (e.g. for 'flowers'). Her pronunciation of English was not always precise. Most of the children had the poem open in their textbooks but did not appear to be following it as the teacher read.

When the teacher had finished, she asked a boy at the front to read part of the poem aloud. She then wrote many of the words from the poem on the blackboard, together with the Hindi translations. The words included 'cricket', 'nook', 'patch', 'flowers', 'cold', 'break', 'water', 'green', 'drink', 'bird', 'feel', 'sky', 'loving', 'smell', 'touch', 'life', 'simple', 'make', 'growing'. As she was writing, the teacher asked: 'simple means...?', 'bread means...?'. Mostly she gave the answers herself.

The students copied the words from the blackboard into their notebooks. When they finished, they stood up and the teacher checked and ticked their work, giving them gentle praise as she did so.

Some students did not finish copying before the end of the lesson, so their work was not checked. Among them was a boy who had misread the teacher's handwriting and made several copying errors, such as 'grun' (green), 'wato' (water), and 'rist' (rest). The lesson ended with the teacher

The teacher was kind and spirited and the children seemed secure, if a little distracted, during the lesson. Apart from the boy reading the passage aloud at the front and a few open question-answer exchanges, none of the children spoke.

saying 'All learn English' [for homework, with 'learn' implying memorisation of the words that they had copied].

The teacher was kind and spirited and the children seemed secure, if a little distracted, during the lesson. Apart from the boy reading the passage aloud at the front and a few open question-answer exchanges, none of the children spoke.

After the lesson, we noticed that the passage was accompanied by several imaginative activities. When we asked the teacher about these, she said that she normally would go through them with the children, but thought we would prefer to see 'board work' and copying.

The Hindi medium government school in which this English lesson was observed cannot be directly compared with the LCEM private schools that are the focus of this study. Of interest, however, are the similarities in the pedagogy approaches evidenced in these distinct educational contexts, specifically the teacher-fronted textbook-driven lessons, the focus on individual English words and their Hindi translations in written form, and the emphasis on memorisation and testing. These similarities indicate that such teacher-dominant approaches are deep-seated, widespread educational practices in Bihar and the wider country.



## Interview findings, India

In addition to the results of the classroom observation, the fieldwork was informed by insights gained through interviews with 21 participants. These participants included the 10 teachers observed, the seven headteachers of the schools and coaching centre visited (two sharing the role in the government school and in School 1) and five State or District Education officials. The audio file for one of the interviews was corrupted and therefore not included in the analysis.

In recognition of the differences between the LCEM private schools that were the site of research in India and the government schools where the fieldwork was undertaken in Ghana, the focus of some of the interview questions was different. One shift in emphasis was to explore the drivers behind the growth in low-cost private English medium education in Bihar. Of interest too were participants' awareness of the national LEP and perceptions of this policy. We sought justifications as to differences between the government's LEP and that of individual schools (these proved somewhat difficult to elicit), and perceptions on effective teaching practices in such contexts. The interviews also explored whether there were explicit LEPs for the LCEMs visited, how these policies were enacted, and whether or not they were perceived as being effective. More generally, the questions were intended to gain greater insights – from those within and outside these schools – of this little explored sector in India.

## Reasons underlying the demand for LCEM schools in Bihar

One of the key issues we sought to explore in the fieldwork was what was driving the growth in low-cost private schools in Bihar and the extent to which EMI reinforced this trend. Ideologies of English, specifically positive perceptions of knowing the language well, in terms of its prestige on the one hand and its various practical benefits on the other, did appear to be a factor in parental choice. However, in line with Rangaraju et al, we found that a more prominent driver behind the demand for low-cost private education in general – regardless of the medium of instruction – was dissatisfaction with the quality of schools within the state sector.<sup>153</sup> While dissatisfaction with government schools runs high, we also captured evidence that suggests that attitudes are changing, in recognition of recent improvements to the system.

### Attitudes towards English

As was found in Ghana, there were favourable attitudes towards English as a language of personal, national and international value. The prestige attached to knowing English in India was acknowledged as important by interviewees from both the private and the public educational sector:

*'First, we can say that English is a prestigious language for all Indians. So parents want to send their children to an English medium private school. ... In India, English is a status symbol. So, people don't dislike that. They like that. Knowing English is a privilege. Everybody likes English.'* Headteacher, School 1, India

While dissatisfaction with government schools runs high, we also captured evidence that suggests that attitudes are changing, in recognition of recent improvements to the system

<sup>153</sup> Rangaraju et al., 2012

The value of English as a common national means of communication was also highlighted:

*'As you know, India has many regional languages. But English is the binding language that can bind each and every language. If you go to Tamil Nadu, you know Tamil, but not Hindi. But you know English. In Bihar, we know Hindi and English. So English is the binding force across the nation.'* Headteacher, School 1, India

Another headteacher spoke of the importance of English as an international lingua franca:

*'...what is the position of English today in the world arena? You can see! A man cannot move forward without English! Where will you stay without English? How will we communicate with Pakistani people, with Irish people, with Danish people, with Italian people, with French people? How can you communicate? ... It must be compulsory in all the countries of the world, English as an international language.'* Headteacher, Coaching centre, India

Knowledge of English was also considered to be advantageous in terms of work opportunities:

*'Guardians want that their children should go into English medium as it increases their opportunities [in future]. Opportunities are less for those who have studied only in Hindi medium. Very few guardians want that their child should go into a business. Even in business, if one knows English, they could work at the whole of India level. If they know only regional language, then they would be confined to the local area. Maximum [most] parents want their children to go into government services. ... To earn the money in private sector, English is a compulsory and valuable medium. It must be spoken by the candidate [who] is chosen by the company. An aspect of company is our employee [who should] speak in English, work in English. So, to earn the money, parents want to send their children here.'* Headteacher, School 1, India

Also mentioned was the need for English to gain access to university study and professional qualifications. Those unfamiliar with the language would thus be disadvantaged:

*'Now times are very competitive. The competition is on all over India. If they would not know English, then they would fall behind. Most of the books, especially in higher education, are in English medium. Good writers are in English medium. There is lack of books in the regional language in higher education.'* Headteacher, School 1, India

The interview data contained no examples of negative attitudes towards English. Yet, while knowing English was considered valuable, there was widespread recognition of the importance of Hindi as the main language of communication within the state and no sense of any potential challenge to its status:

*'Accepting Hindi is essential because it is our mother tongue. But English is a global language. All of us must teach English.'* Teacher 7, School 3, India

Knowledge of English was also considered to be advantageous in terms of work opportunities

These attitudes reflect the findings of the British Council research into ‘Social Attitudes to English in Bihar’,<sup>154</sup> which reveals that English is not viewed as particularly valuable in the state of Bihar and there are strong allegiances to Hindi.

### Dissatisfaction with the state school education system

While knowledge of English was viewed as valuable, the greatest influence on demand for low-cost private schooling in Bihar – be this English medium or Hindi medium – was dissatisfaction with the quality of state school provision. Such criticisms were made by all three headteachers of the LCEM schools:

*‘In this local area, maximum [most of the] parents are annoyed with the government schools that are there in this area. They are not satisfied with the government schools because not much of studies are happening there. In our school, at least some studies are happening, which is better than those [government] schools. So maximum [most] parents are sending their children here.’ Headteacher, School 3, India*

More specific criticism of state school provision was targeted at its teachers, who were perceived as having little professional motivation:

*‘...the system of government schools, I think, is totally corrupt. No one teacher take interest in teaching.’ Headteacher, School 1, India*

Specific mention was also made of government school teachers’ poor English language skills:

*‘If you see the quality of government teachers, it is horrible, horrible... There are English teachers, but they don’t know the spelling of... If you tell them to write the days of the week, they will not be able to. Monday, Tuesday - they will write. Wednesday, Thursday - they will not be able to write. Saturday - they will not be able to write. It is a very bad situation. Because they paid [bribe] to get the job, if you attend or not, your attendance is marked in the government system and at the end of the month you get a fat salary. Most of the teachers just come for the salary. If you see their teaching standard, they are not motivated at all. They are not aware of the latest trends in teaching. ...The worst is that they are not interested. They are only interested in getting the salary at the end of the month. They are not interested in the welfare of the children.’ Headteacher, School 2, India*

Discontent with the state education sector was nevertheless recognised as being a product of more systemic issues, such as insufficient teachers, and the employment – in a bid to address this - of less qualified teachers on lower pay scales than those on regular contracts:

*‘[A] shortage of teachers prevails. Maximum [most] teachers are on ad-hoc appointments. There are not enough teachers. Some teachers are on regular posts. The salary gap between the two types of teacher appointments [ad-hoc and regular] is very large, due to which the ad-hoc teachers do not want to work. ... the teachers do not come regularly to the schools and those who come do not actually take classes.’ Headteacher, School 1, India*

More specific criticism of state school provision was targeted at its teachers, who were perceived as having little professional motivation

<sup>154</sup> Hayes et al., 2016

Teacher absence was also acknowledged as being due in part to frequent government and state- imposed non-teaching duties for which no classroom cover was provided:

*'So many type of works have been given to teachers, except teaching. For example, midday meal. It takes a lot of time of the system in government school. So many teachers remain engaged in [planning and supervising] that system. Then Census work etc. It is still continuing from time to time.'*  
Headteacher, School 1, India

One headteacher reflected on the fact that education provision in Bihar was particularly flawed, as compared to that of other Indian states:

*'The infrastructure is not there. Female teachers are sent far away from their houses. There is no decent toilet. They don't have anything. I don't blame only the teacher. I don't blame only the government. The entire system is in a very bad shape. I am talking about only Bihar. There are some states that are doing very well. You go to Delhi. You go to Manipur, Kerala. If you go to southern parts of India, the government schools are excellent. The teaching facility is excellent. The staff is excellent. The infrastructure is beautiful. I don't know what is wrong in Bihar.'* Headteacher, School 2, India

A consequence of parents opting for low-cost private schools – not necessarily English medium – was the negative association of those in the state sector with families who did not have the economic resources to consider alternatives. This had the effect of further fuelling demand for private education:

*'If you go further away into rural areas from the Patna city, then you will find that children are going to government schools mainly for midday meal or scholarship, or uniform or bicycle etc. Or those people who are absolutely helpless, who do not have any money at home, [they are sending their children to government schools]. Otherwise, anybody who earns anything is not sending their children to government school.'* Headteacher, School 1, India

### **Positive perceptions of LCEM schools**

Positive perceptions of private schools in general tended to be a corollary of the negative perceptions of government schools, and, as such, were somewhat unspoken. One respondent nevertheless highlighted the association of private schools with good moral education:

*'We, all the private English medium schools, take the responsibility. We try to make the student the best in all fields of life. We are developing a good culture, good habit etc. So, spoken English is a matter [a factor in parents' choice], but also a matter is parents want their children to have good cultural studies. The moral education is more in private schools than government schools. Private schools build up high moral ground. The attitude that education is important is increasing in India. For last two decades, this type of idea is spreading in society that education is important and educate person can earn more money and no one can cheat the person if they are educated. This type of awareness is spreading day to day in our society.'* Headteacher, School 1, India

**A consequence of parents opting for low-cost private schools – not necessarily English medium – was the negative association of those in the state sector with families who did not have the economic resources to consider alternatives**

### Negative perceptions of LCEM private schools

Negative perceptions of LCEM private schools were also captured, particularly stemming from those involved in the government school sector. A negative feature of low-cost private schools mentioned by one of the state education officials is that they frequently lack state recognition, in which case they cannot formally certify students. Thereby, preventing their progression to other educational establishments.

*'One, due to the certification. Most low-cost private schools are not registered with us [the state education office], so their certificates do not carry any value.'*  
District Programme Officer, India

Also highlighted, in this case by one of the headteachers of the LCEM schools, is the variable quality of schools within the sector, such that parents were becoming increasingly discerning regarding the choices they made among them, which may not be directly related to the medium of instruction.

*'There was this nearby area ... , where there were five schools. All those schools have almost closed down. Most of their students have come here. All because the studies there are not good. ... When I started English medium, I did not go to anybody. When they came to know that I was going to start English medium, they came on their own. Some came for English medium, some came for the reputation of the studies.'* Headteacher, School 3, India

### Emerging positive perceptions of government schools

Countering the main driver behind the demand for low-cost private schools in Bihar is increasing recognition of improvements within the state system over the last decade. These include the building of new schools, mass teacher recruitment, professional development programmes, and standardised monitoring processes. Such recognition was expressed mainly by the state education officials interviewed. However, the following excerpt is from the headteacher of one of the LCEM schools visited.

*'Currently the system is better. During the earlier dispensation, when the other party's government was there ..., the situation was much worse. The situation has improved in last seven to eight years, after the current Chief Minister ... took over two terms back. Many teachers have been appointed, buildings have been constructed. There is effort from the government side as well to make sure that the teachers attend classes. For example, the inspections are happening from time to time. These are the improvements I am seeing.'* Headteacher, School 1, India

Awareness of such improvements to government schools – particularly in relation to teaching quality – was reported as already having an impact on parental choice, with evidence of a reduction in movements to low-cost private schools and some of the existing ones becoming no longer viable in this competitive arena.

*'...we do not have such a problem in our area. In our area, children go to whichever neighbouring school that is there. Some people might be there who have that mind-set [of sending children to private schools], and it is slowly and slowly getting cured. People's preference declined for government schools*

Awareness of such improvements to government schools – particularly in relation to teaching quality – was reported as already having an impact on parental choice

*because it seemed to them that studies do not happen in our schools. When we are giving better education to children, then the guardians who are following up this thing, then they would never want to give [their child] to convent [English medium Private] schools. ... I have seen much change after my coming here.' Block Education Officer, India*

*'Some private schools that were there earlier, they have started closing down, because the children's inclination towards government schools increased. So those [private schools] closed down slowly. For example, the coaching class where we would be going [that formed part of our visit], it was a convent [English medium Private] school. But slowly the number of primary section children started going down, so they developed it into a coaching centre. Such small private schools have been closing down, where there were low-standard teachers.' Block Resource Person, India*

**In rural areas, government schools attracted children from a wide range of economic backgrounds**

It was also pointed out that, in rural areas, government schools attracted children from a wide range of economic backgrounds, partly in recognition of their improved facilities:

*... 'in rural areas, children from both classes, children from all classes of the society come to our schools. There are [three] reasons for the same. One, there is no option. There they do not have an option of any other school. The second reason is that the economic situation of the rural households is not so sound that they could send their children far away to some other school. And the third reason is that the State Government is providing so many facilities in the government schools. Much work is also happening on quality education. It is also due to this reason that there is increase in the children's and guardians' inclination towards the government schools.' District Programme Officer, India*

While some elements of state provision are now superior to those of the private sector, it was nevertheless admitted that repairing the damage to the reputation of government schools would necessarily take time, as would the process of disassociating such schools from the poorer, lower status members of the community.

*'I had also said earlier that the most of the small [low-cost] English medium schools are in a worse condition than our [government] schools. From nowhere - even if an evaluation would be done - to look the standard [performance] of the child, even in that - they [those schools] would not be able to do what our [government] schools would do. But even then, the society there feels [that private schools are better]. It has the mentality.... The perception will take a lot of time to change ... Social change does not happen very fast. So this viewpoint is also a reason. It does not matter [to the parents] even if the [low-cost] private school does not stand anywhere in comparison to our government schools. You will find many such [low-cost] private schools. Yet, children are going there. Teachers' education, qualification, teachers' way of teaching, all these things is not better than our government school teachers. Neither do they get [enough salary]. ... until 2005-6, the school system [was in crisis]. Once a system breaks, then when one's trust is lost, then it will take time to regain the trust, it will not happen fast. That was a phase when the number of*

*teachers in the schools had reduced drastically. When the number of teachers itself is low, then it would be dishonest to talk about quality education. And then in the neighbourhood, a private school, even just a small private school, was engaging children for the day, by keeping a teacher, even though on low wages, at least it was engaging children, was teaching something or the other. The people of the society were seeing that here children are going to government schools but there is no teacher. If a teacher is there in a classroom, then many students are roaming around. So the trust shifted slowly and slowly. It was lost. Its effect is still there.'* District Programme Officer, India

The interview data suggests that the rise of low-cost private schools in Bihar is primarily driven by dissatisfaction with government schools. The role of language-in-learning and the issue of ensuring that students are able to engage with educational content delivered in a language in which they have low competence, do not feature largely in the discussions about the reasons underlying the demand for LCEMs. In the following section, we explore further awareness and perceptions of LEP.

The interview data suggests that the rise of low-cost private schools in Bihar is primarily driven by dissatisfaction with government schools

## Language-in-education policy awareness and perceptions

As in Ghana, the interviews were also designed to gain insight into the participants' awareness of the national LEP and perceptions of this policy. The interviews in Bihar also sought to gain insight into whether there were explicit language-in-education policies for the LCEM visited, how these policies were enacted, and whether or not they were perceived as being effective.

### Awareness and perceptions of the national language-in-education policy in LCEM schools

Questions about the difference between the national LEP and that adopted by the LCEM schools were broached somewhat cautiously with those interviewed at private schools. One LCEM headteacher explained that there was no state control of the MOI of such schools. He nevertheless stressed that English was not taught to the exclusion of 'the mother tongue' in private schools – though in this case he referred to Hindi, the state language, rather than Magahi, the variety of Hindi that students are most likely to use at home and in the local environment – a policy also evident in the other schools visited:

*'Home language is important, but English is also not less important. Even the government, the schools ... start English [as a subject] from Class 1 itself subject. We are not leaving our mother tongue. We are teaching Hindi since starting. There is no boundation [compulsion] from the government. The government does not interfere in that. Whatever language you want to teach, you teach. Government has made it free [left it to the schools]. One can choose any language. ... Government schools follow Hindi strictly. Other states [e.g in South India] may need the English medium in government schools because they [the teachers and students] do not know Hindi. We have Hindi medium schools in Bihar too. We have Sanskrit also as a subject. But a student can choose only five subjects. English is compulsory. Hindi is compulsory up to*

*Class 8. But after Class 8 the student can [has to] choose one from Sanskrit or Hindi.' Headteacher, School 1, India*

Another LCEM school headteacher considered the national LEP to be hypocritical in that it promoted mother tongue schooling, while government officials sent their children to private English medium schools – presumably not low-cost:

*'If you see their children, most of the politicians' children go to the big schools, the missionary schools. They make sure that their children get the best education, the best English. They may not know how to speak English, but they make sure that their children go to good English medium schools.'*  
Headteacher, School 2, India

This excerpt suggests that the government's mother-tongue education policy may be perceived as a means of perpetuating a stratified society, where access to quality education and English are reserved for the better off.

### **LCEM school-specific language policies**

The interviews sought to explore the extent to which the LCEM schools' LEPs were explicitly stated, and to what extent there was an awareness of the role of language-in-learning. There was some initial reticence among the headteachers to respond to such questions, due perhaps to concerns that their school language policies were counter to the government recommendations, or that they did not match the researchers' perceptions of what might be good practice. It is possible too that they did not have a formally articulated policy and were not used to describing it.

It nevertheless emerged that a combination of Hindi and English was freely employed in all three LCEM schools visited, with the local language generally discouraged, except perhaps with entry-level students. In describing the use of Hindi and English in particular, respondents tended to focus on teacher rather than student communication, perhaps because the former did most of the talking in the classroom. One of the headteachers used the terms 'dual language' to refer to the LEP in his school:

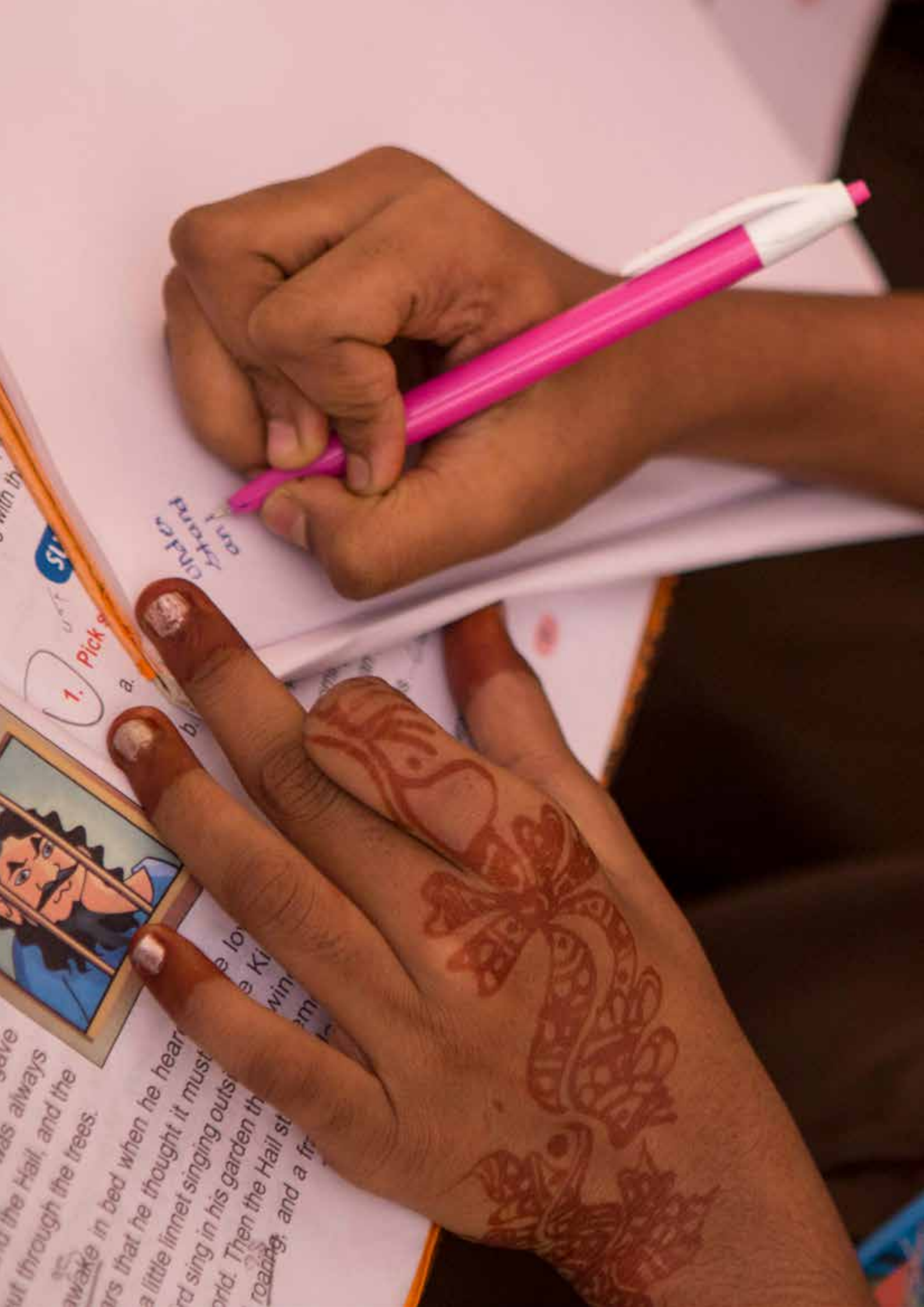
*'We use dual language. Even when we are teaching English, most of the explanation is done in Hindi and English. Once the child gets the grasp of the chapter, then it is English. It is basically. But in the higher Classes 9 and 10, we prefer that the children and the teachers communicate with each other in English. Because this is an English medium school. The dual policy is till Class 8 and English is preferred in Class 9 and 10. ... Of course the teacher does what is most helpful but we try to put this point that try to speak in English, so that the children can understand and they will do well in English, because this is an English medium school.'* Headteacher, School 2, India

Of interest was that no dissonance was perceived in using a 'dual language' approach in an English medium school for this or the other LCEM school headteachers.

For the headteacher of School 2, such an approach was related to a moral imperative to serve the least advantaged students, perhaps linked to the school's Christian ethos:

**A combination of Hindi and English was freely employed in all three LCEM schools visited, with the local language generally discouraged**





with the

Step

1. Pick

a.

b.



...  
... always  
... the Hail, and the  
... through the trees.

...  
... wake in bed when he heard  
... that he thought it must  
... a little linnet singing outside  
... sing in his garden the  
... world. Then the Hail started  
... roaring, and a fire

and  
stand  
any

*'Here, the main feature should be that the child should know what is going on, the child should understand what is going on. If the teacher goes blah blah in English and the child does not understand, then what is the use of teaching? So we make sure that the child understands. The difference, I personally think, is the background from where the children come. As I told you, we cater to the poorest of the poor. In Bihar there is a very big problem of caste. Casteism is very rife. It is all over India, but in Bihar it is very common, rampant. Because we deal with parents with limited resources, they just want their children to know English and do well. If the child is speaking some good English, they are every happy about it. They will not understand what the child is saying but they will be happy about it. And best is that our children do very well. When it comes to [the] Standard [Class] 10 Board exams, our children do very well. I think that is one of the reasons, because we use the dual language policy now, so it is easy for the children to understand the chapter. They understand it, they answer it well.'* Headteacher, School 2, India

At School 3, the headteacher mentioned that Hindi-support is provided for students, particularly in the lower classes, but that this reduced as the students continued through their schooling:

*'More Hindi support [as a medium of instruction] happens more in lower Classes - Class 1 and 2. From Class 3 to 8 Hindi support is hardly there, it reduces slowly.'* Headteacher, School 3, India

When the teachers were asked about the language-in-education in their respective LCEM schools, all spoke of a clear directive that they should use English as much as possible to maximise students' exposure to the language, with Hindi being used 'to explain'. Again, there was almost no reference to the students' language use.

*'Actually, the main language here is Hindi. So all the students do not follow English properly. So we have to use both languages, have to explain. There is this much instruction that maximum [as far as possible] English is to be used. Try your maximum [best] to use English only because this is an English medium school. There is no written instruction on this [on how much English to use in Class 5 and how much to use in Class 10], but the Director says it. In fact, we do not come to know, but I have an idea that he might be giving instructions [to any new teacher]. He has not told me, 'You have to use more English'. But I have seen him telling others so. Perhaps, it is possible that he might be noticing that I am already using English.'* Teacher 2, School 1, India

Several such teachers mentioned that, although Hindi could be used alongside English, other local languages were explicitly prohibited, e.g.:

*'Hindi and English. [The] local language is not allowed here. Only Hindi and English. Magahi is local language. Bhojpuri is local language. That language is not allowed while teaching. Yes [the Headteacher and the Director told me that local language is not allowed while teaching].'* Teacher 1, School 1, India

According to the headteacher of School 3, however, the local language was sometimes used with students at lower levels:

*'Bajjika is also used in the classroom in Class 1, 2 and 3. By the time Class 4 comes, they do not need.'* Headteacher, School 3, India

When the teachers were asked about the language-in-education in their respective LCEM schools, all spoke of a clear directive that they should use English as much as possible to maximise students' exposure to the language

In the Hindi medium government school visited, there was no formal policy regarding the use of the local language, but it was nevertheless considered helpful when teachers spoke to the entry-level students. Again little was mentioned as to the students' own language use.

*'To some extent Bajjika is used. Here, the local language is Bajjika only. Magahi is spoken in Patna [district]. Only 5% of the time, Bajjika is used. Mainly with the little ones, in Class 1, when they come to school, in the starting. It is not a policy that a little Bajjika is to be used when the child comes in Class 1 or so. It depends on the situation. If in the beginning, if the child does not understand Hindi, then a little Bajjika would have to be given. It is like that.'* Headteacher 2, School 4, India

One of the government school teachers explained that, while employing the local language was acceptable, particularly for affective purposes, she avoided using it, due to the risk of parental complaints:

*'I use only Hindi [other than English in the English lessons]. Not even a little of Bajjika. At home also, I do not speak Bajjika. It is only when I visit my natal home or siblings, that I speak Bajjika. I do not speak Bajjika here with children because it does not feel good. A complaint may go to the parents immediately. The guardians would come fast. If you say something, the children would add a pinch of salt on their own. The guardians here are not good. They would reach here very soon. Once, a sir said something to a child and the parent came to school. We can speak Bajjika a little, affectionately, while teaching. If one has to affectionately explain something, then one can talk in Bajjika.'* Teacher 4, School 4, India

The headteacher in the government school showed the researchers a state-published 'bridging' book containing lists of words organised by topic in the local language (Bajjika) with Hindi translations. The resource was designed to help teachers make connections between the languages with their students. The fact that the teachers interviewed were not aware of this resource was explained by the headteacher, who said that it was only meant to be used by teachers of Class 1 and 2. Thus the use of local languages does not appear to be widespread in either the LCEM schools or the government school visited.

### **Classroom instruction in practice**

In the interviews, the teachers were asked to describe their classroom practice and explain how they use both English and Hindi in their teaching. The classroom observation data revealed little difference between classroom practice in LCEM private schools and the coaching centre on the one hand, and the teaching of English in the Hindi medium government school on the other. Rather, all took the form of traditional teacher-led, lockstep, textbook-driven, transmission models of classroom instruction. Whether the subject of the lesson was Social Science or English, the teachers' focus was almost uniquely on individual words from the relevant unit of the English language textbook. Such a focus involved the pronunciation and translation of these items – all non-function exemplars. There were no instances of teachers drawing attention to their morphology or spelling or of them relating the words to others encountered before. The students were

In the Hindi medium government school visited, there was no formal policy regarding the use of the local language

expected to copy the words and their Hindi translations into their notebooks and memorise them, usually in preparation for a test.

One LCEM headteacher described the approach he promotes in his school as follows:

*'The teachers follow the textbook. I tell them the teaching method. ... For example, in English, suppose a chapter is a small chapter, then I give them two chapters to teach in a month. [According to my method], first I tell the Hindi of the whole chapter to the students. I tell all the teachers that first write the word-meanings, write all the word-meanings in a serial [in order]. Get it written [by the students in their notebooks] and then check it, then listen to it [the students read it out loud and the teachers listen]. After listening to it, I tell the teachers to do 'English to Hindi' of the whole chapter. Keep on doing 'English-to-Hindi' easily [translation that is easy to understand] till [the children] understand it. When [they] understand the Hindi [translation] completely, then do English-to-English. And the English-to-English keeps on happening till the child gets it somewhat. Then the question answers, we do not get them memorised. We just ask the child and the child keeps on giving the answer. The child gives all the answers without memorising them. He just keeps on giving the answers. Then [Monthly Test] happens in the same chapters, and the child brings 90-95% [marks]. The students would read the chapter as many times it takes for them to understand it. It has to be within a month. I come to know whether they have understood by asking them various questions...'* Headteacher, School 3, India

In the account of the approach adopted by the headteacher of the coaching centre, translation and testing were also emphasised.

*'My teaching aspect is this. At first, I see [the] translation of all students. All have to come with [the] translation. At least 15-20 [translated words] they bring daily. I check for each child. After that, I listen to words which they have [memorised]. Pronunciation and meaning. Listen. [After] all [of them] have said their meaning, then I teach them. That is Hindi. This system is set up between me and all children. ... So one child comes and stands next to me [as I sit at a desk] at the front [of the class] and says the word 'finished', and gives the pronunciation and the spelling - 'F-I-N-I-S-H-E-D' - and then the meaning of it in Hindi.'* Headteacher, Coaching centre, India

The similarities between the above descriptions of the classroom practices and those of the Hindi medium government school English classes are evident in the following excerpt from one of the teachers from the latter:

*'...I teach using both languages, because if the children are not understanding English, then ... the children will not learn at all. So [my method of teaching includes the following]. I put [introduce] the lesson. Then I ask them to read the book. They are not able to read some words which are hard. I ask them to identify hard words. I tell them you have the book and I do not give them time. They will find words like 'observation', 'recorded' and 'classroom'. Today I have told them to read. Tomorrow, I will speak a word and everybody will find the word in their book. One mark would be given to each student who finds one word. So everybody will find the words individually. I have told them that those*

In the account of the approach adopted by the headteacher of the coaching centre, translation and testing were also emphasised

*who get a 'laddoo' [a round shaped sweet, a delicacy that symbolises zero marks here], they will be punished. I will not actually punish them. Children said, 'Ma'am, do bring the laddoo!' I said, 'You will see it tomorrow, but you study tonight'. I will reward those who get four marks, ten marks and so on. Sometimes I give a toffee, a pen, a pencil, sometimes 'excellent', 'very good', 'keep trying', 'good'. Everybody says, 'We want excellent, we want very good'.*  
Teacher 5, School 4, India

Only the English language teacher of LCEM School 1 did not use Hindi at all during his lesson. This, he admitted later, was unusual and for the benefit of the researchers. On this occasion, he nevertheless supported his students' comprehension by paraphrasing within English itself. In the extract that follow, he reports confidently about his teaching practices and how he makes content accessible to the students in his classroom:

*'I always use simple language of English, for the betterment of the students, who never feel any difficulty in understanding what I am communicating to them. Never use difficult words. What is written in [the] dictionary, [the] capability you must have seen in this class, some of the words [are] difficult, but I try to retranslate in a simple way so that student should not fail to understand what the teacher is teaching to me. So I always go on the way of teaching, the paraphrasing. Always use the method [of paraphrasing] in English.'* Teacher 3, School 1, India

One teacher at the same school appeared to be particularly sensitive to the communicative challenges faced by his students, whether with English or Hindi:

*'Actually, I do guess that the student might face a problem here, in understanding. There, I take help of both English and Hindi. I just feel it, I get the feeling on my own, that here the student is perhaps not understanding.'*  
Teacher 2, School 1, India

The same teacher drew images to supplement the textbook, and explained how these seemed to enhance student understanding and recall:

*'Most of the topics, I try to teach the students with the help of drawings or pictures. What happens due to that is that students understand more and more through those and a figure gets created in their minds, and that is more stable. It remains in the memory for longer. For example, I explained about the mangrove plants, like [the] Agaricus. I have already taught them about Agaricus in Class 4. So I was reminding them [of what they] already know...'* Teacher 2, School 1, India

All the teachers expressed a desire to support their students and to ensure that they did well in their texts and exams - which effectively assessed how well they had memorised information. They also seemed to be genuinely interested in students' learning:

*'In my opinion... whatever I am teaching, it should result in the students understanding it. It should not be the case, where I just teach, speak and work is done, no... What are they understanding - they are understanding by imagining - the way I am teaching by imagining, that is very [important] to*

**All the teachers expressed a desire to support their students and to ensure that they did well in their texts and exams**

*me... Otherwise, I don't like [to teach just for the sake of teaching].'* Teacher 10, School 2

This was the same teacher who had enhanced the content by explaining concepts in her own words, encouraged questioning and provided explanations including on a one-to-one level. All teachers seemed to recognise that the students needed support in learning English, but the methods that they employed to do this were extremely restricted.

The interviews provided insight into teachers' perceptions of students' language competencies and to what extent they felt that this impacted their learning

## The LCEM school context

The interviews provided insight into teachers' perceptions of students' language competencies and to what extent they felt that this impacted their learning. They also offered an opportunity to explore the background, education and training of teachers and headteachers in the relatively under-researched context of LCEMs.

### Student proficiency in English

The nature of instruction in most of the lessons meant that the classroom observations tended to reveal little indication of the students' levels of English language proficiency. The interviews nevertheless offered an opportunity for the teachers to provide an assessment on this.

*'About sixty per cent [of students can speak English fluently in Class 10].'* Teacher 2, School 1, India

Another teacher mentioned that students' communicative abilities may be different in various skills or in different classes:

*'[The students] are better at reading and writing English. Speaking skill is weak [the weakest]. Listening comprehension is OK. It is better than speaking, but weaker than writing. They cannot speak English, but they can write and they also understand. [If the skills have to be ranked, then at the top would be writing, then reading, then listening and then speaking].'* Teacher 2, School 1, India

The director of the coaching centre for additional tuition mentioned that some students could be in quite advanced years of schooling and still struggle with the very basics of English:

*'But what happens is that children also come in Class 10 to our classes and they don't know small a-b-c-d. This is the problem. Then we have to start from there. ...'* Headteacher, Coaching centre, India

The extracts make clear that it was taken for granted that students' had only limited competence in English. A number of factors were mentioned as influencing students' English language competence. Here it is interesting to note that many teachers place the responsibility for learning English on students and/or their families. For one teacher, student diligence was key:

*'[In my opinion, some students speak well because] they are more careful towards their studies. Rest of the students are a little careless. They do not care about their studies.'* Teacher 2, School 1, India

Several respondents considered parental support to be central to students' capacity to achieve, whether in English or more generally.

*'[The] home environment is the biggest factor. Those children whose guardians cannot speak English at all, or even cannot speak proper Hindi, for them it becomes a factor.'* Headteacher, School 1, India

*'Some guardians are illiterate. Parents cannot read the homework that we give [their children] at school.'* Teacher 6, School 3, India

One LCEM teacher observed that the limited availability of English in the local environment was an impediment to students' learning of the language:

*'...even if they attend an English medium school, also the [private] tuition happens in Hindi. As a result, in this rural area no support becomes available for spoken English. So the child's [English] language does not develop. We teach the child from 10 am to 4 pm. That is all the environment they get. Then it becomes a mix [of all languages]. The biggest reason is the lack of an English language environment.'* Teacher 6, School 3, India

Another teacher considered that the key to students' success in learning English was being introduced to it as early as possible, a view also expressed by those in Ghana:

*'...those who came earlier, their [English speaking] is better and the ones who came later, theirs is weaker. Yes, the child who starts learning in English [medium of instruction] or will start learning English, then the child's English would be better. Children are not able to speak English so much because most of the children have [studied earlier and] come from a Hindi medium school or have come from such 'medium families' who may not have an environment of English. One more reason is that starting [of English medium instruction] should have happened from the Nursery Class. That is not able to take place. Approximately half of the students here have taken admission in Class 3 or 4, and they were studying in some Hindi medium school before that. Some were studying in government schools, some were studying in private schools, where the environment [for English] was lacking.'* Teacher 2, School 1, India

It is interesting to note that not one participant mentioned that the methods of teaching English in school might play a role in students' proficiency in the language.

### Teacher language competencies

Whether they were associated with the LCEM private schools or the government schools, all the participants interviewed were multilingual, with competence in Hindi and English as a minimum, and often abilities in at least one additional local language. Examples include:

*'Hindi and English. When I remain between my family members, I use Magahi language, that is the regional language. I have no idea of Mythili. Though I [understand], I will fail to communicate...'* Teacher 3, School 1, India

*'I speak Bengali, Hindi, and English. Of course [I am fluent in] Magahi, somewhat [not fluent in] Bajjika or Mythili.... I understand Bajjika words that the*

Several respondents considered parental support to be central to students' capacity to achieve, whether in English or more generally

*children speak. I try to speak as well, but when I try, the children say, 'Ma'am, it does not suit you!'* Teacher 5, School 4, India

The interviews and classroom observations in the LCEM schools indicated that, with very few exceptions, levels of teacher proficiency and confidence in English were moderate to low. This was also evidenced by the fact that it was mostly necessary to undertake the accompanying interviews in Hindi. None of the teachers appeared to use the language regularly outside the school context.

*'Reading English is easiest for me. Then writing is easy. Then listening to understand. I would be able to speak English only when I would be in touch with somebody [who speaks English] continuously. I am not able to speak English properly.'* Teacher 4, School 4, India

The same applied to those teaching English as a subject in the government school.

*'Not all teachers feel comfortable in teaching English. They do teach if they have to. But only those who have deep knowledge can teach with ease. Those who have been interested in English right from the start and feel even today that they want to teach English, [they can teach with ease]. Those who have learnt it to the extent of just enough to teach, they do try to learn and teach. For example, T1, whose lesson you observed in Class 3, she may not be very comfortable, but she has to.'* Headteacher 2, School 2, India

All the teachers interviewed had been educated in Hindi medium schools, with English as a curricular subject.

*'Actually I have studied first in Hindi medium school. Then I tried and tried to learn English.... English was a subject in school and also in college. I started to learn English from Class 4 or 5. Hindi medium continued till Class 10. In college [Class 11 onwards], the medium of instruction was not only [strictly] English, it was mixed. [Hindi was also used along with English]. But I read books in English only... Yes [I studied in English when I studied for my B.Sc. degree]. The textbooks and the medium of instruction were in English.'* Teacher 2, School 1, India

A few teachers mentioned that they had to learn the language independently in order to use it as a medium of learning when they entered higher education:

*'I learned English by reading. At school and in college [Class 12], I learned English. Self-study is very necessary, to teach, thought [think] and remember. Self-study. It is necessary to keep oneself prepared and updated. [I use] dictionaries of Hindi to English and English to Hindi.'* Teacher 7, School 3, India

One of the government school English language teachers received additional English tuition from her father.

*'I studied in a government school, where my mother used to teach. I started studying English [as a subject] from Class 6 onwards. The alphabet also used to start from Class 6 [in those days]. But my father, who was also a headteacher of a government Upper Primary school, he used to teach us English right from the start, at home itself, maybe when I was in Class 3 or some other time, I do not remember.'* Teacher 4, School 4, India

All the teachers interviewed had been educated in Hindi medium schools, with English as a curricular subject



The English that these teachers learned was primarily achieved through independent study or because a situation required it. This did not, however, necessarily result in them being able to use the language communicatively. Moreover, their teacher strategies appear to reflect their own experiences of being taught.

### Headteacher and teacher appointments, qualifications and training

Participants' strategies for teaching in LCEMs seem to be purely intuitive, rooted in their own experience and not in any knowledge of pedagogy. No eligibility criteria seemed to be required for either the headteachers (who were generally also the owners) or teachers of the LCEM schools visited. Typically, teachers at such schools were initially involved in giving private lessons to supplement other employment or study. They then might go on to set up their own school or seek work in those available locally.

In general, the headteachers of the LCEM private schools visited had Bachelor or Masters degrees but no qualifications in education, as evidenced in the following interview excerpts:

*'Teaching is my life [now]. I have studied till graduation in Hindi, B.A. in Hindi. No other studies [no training in education either].'* Headteacher, School 3, India

*'I am 42 years old. I completed M.A. in History. I have been working for this school for last 14 years. I have not done any other professional work.'* Headteacher, School 1, India

In contrast, government school headteachers and state education officials are often appointed to these roles as a consequence of their seniority as teachers. Most have educational qualifications in addition to first and higher degrees, but they are unlikely to have received any leadership-related training.

At the LCEM schools visited, the teachers held degrees. One had also undertaken a B.Ed., with the intention of gaining entry into the government school system. Examples of their education trajectories include:

*'I did B.A. English Honours from Bardhaman University that is in West Bengal. There was literature in the B.A., Shakespeare. I did only the B.A. [not any teaching qualification].'* Teacher 1, School 1, India

*'I started B.Sc. in Biology, [but did] not complete it. Some family problem I had. [I studied the full three years for the final exam of B.Sc]. I even got the admit card [for the final examination], but could not give the final examination due to some family problem. [I did not study for any qualification in education].'* Teacher 2, School 1, India

*'I have done M.A. plus B.Ed., which is the eligibility requirement for teaching in Class 12. This is the purpose of my doing M.A. and B.Ed. I can be promoted to an inter college [government Secondary school having Class 12].'* Teacher 6, School 3, India

Teachers in these schools often seemed to get their jobs through connections, with some being acquaintances of the headteachers or having been among their

In general, the headteachers of the LCEM private schools visited had Bachelor or Masters degrees but no qualifications in education

former students. In contrast, the minimum professional requirements of those teaching in the state sector have been steadily increasing. Those who do not meet them are therefore obliged to engage in government training and gain the required qualifications. Teachers employed in the state education sector were, thus, generally better qualified than those of the private sector. One headteacher explained this thus:

*'...recently, since last one year or so, only teachers with B.Ed. qualification are being recruited. Most of the teachers here are graduates, some have post-graduation. Only one or two teachers have B.Ed. degrees. The rest have training that is below B.Ed. level. Even those who had not done training, the government got their training done from government institutions. The average educational level or the qualification of teachers in government schools is better than that in private schools.'* Headteacher 2, School 4, India

While teachers' pay and conditions in the LCEM private schools were generally worse than those in the government sector, staff turnover appeared to be low, with older members of staff often having been in post for a number of years. Several younger teachers nevertheless admitted that they considered such work to be temporary while they prepared to take qualifications for alternative careers. The practice of supplementing their work with additional coaching outside school hours appeared to be commonplace, with one teacher (Teacher 3, School 1) describing with pride his capacity to give additional coaching classes until late every day, including on Sundays.

All three headteachers of the LCEM schools maintained that they made available professional development opportunities for their teachers. However, the frequency of such provision varied and the content was not explained in detail. Some training was supplied by the headteacher, while other sessions were offered by publishing houses.

*'All these teachers were prepared here in this school. All of them did practice. A monthly meeting happens. It gets decided in the meeting that all subjects, except Hindi, would be taught through English. After the monthly meetings, as needed, I give training to the teachers, about how the children to be taught, what needs to be taught. What is to be done? This is decided every month.'* Headteacher, School 3, India

The teachers reported different experiences of such training opportunities, however, as in the following divergent responses from employees within the same school:

*'Yes, time to time, we are instructed by the Director and the Principal, [about] how to teach, how not to use the local language, how to give homework and check it.'* Teacher 1, School 1, India

*'No [there was no training or induction or guidance when I joined the school]. No teacher training or workshop took place since I joined the school eight years ago. No guidance was given. I have done all these on my own. I have learned on my own, while teaching, based on my own experience. [No workshop has happened for me even from any publisher].'* Teacher 2, School 1, India

**While teachers' pay and conditions in the LCEM private schools were generally worse than those in the government sector, staff turnover appeared to be low**

In contrast, an extensive programme of training opportunities provided by government bodies, NGOs and international organisations, which focused on general and subject specific skills, was available as part of Bihar's commitment to improving the quality of its new and continuing state school teachers. In-service opportunities were described as being somewhat unpredictable, however.

*'It keeps on happening. Sometime subject-wise training take place, sometimes sports training takes place. Sometimes training happens on teaching methods. ... These trainings are conducted by the government, NGOs, UNICEF etc. Government conducts in-service training called Basic Training, [which includes] teaching methods. Rest all of the training are done through NGOs, UNICEF, TESS-India etc. The government has BEP, Bihar Education Project [Bihar Shiksha Pariyojana], [which] conducts 30-day training for new teachers. ... However, the [in-service] training [by the NGOs, UNICEF etc.] are not regular and one cannot estimate or predict how many such trainings would be done in a year and how many of the old teachers would get a chance to undergo it.'*  
Headteacher 2, School 4, India

Thus, while government schools are making efforts to improve their teaching standards, this appears to be much less of a priority within the LCEM schools.

## Summary

The observational sketches provide rich descriptions of the types of lessons observed, with teachers carrying out activities without explanation, speaking only a little and students sometimes not at all. Classroom practices focus on memorisation of individual words or facts, along with their Hindi translations, often without any evidence that they understood them. When students spoke it was primarily limited to choral chanting or the production of a Hindi translation.

Unlike in Ghana, the national LEP in India promotes the use of the mother tongue (or the state language), not English as the MOI. The study in India thus focuses on the increase in demand for LCEM private education – i.e. activity outside the state sector. As indicated above, attitudes towards the value of English in Bihar appear to be quite moderate. While English is viewed as useful, this is not to the detriment of Hindi or the local language. The growth in LCEM private schools in this state therefore appears to be driven only partly by attitudes towards English, the main driver for parents opting for such schools being dissatisfaction with the quality of provision of the state school sector. While the MOI may be attractive, the fact that such schools fall outside the government sector seems to be more important, with many parents in the state having opted for low-cost Hindi medium alternatives as well. How far the future of LCEM private schools in Bihar is threatened by the continued programme of investment and improvements across the state education sector remains to be seen.

In terms of the LEP in LCEMs, of interest was the fact that none of them promoted wholly English medium instruction. Rather, Hindi was routinely used to mediate and support the study of the English textbooks. Such an approach did not appear to be formally articulated in any policy and seemed to be intuitive rather than

Unlike in Ghana, the national LEP in India promotes the use of the mother tongue (or the state language), not English as the MOI

based on any awareness of related pedagogic theory. While some respondents were initially unsure as to whether the approach would be acceptable to the researchers, in general, there was no sense that it was done illicitly without the knowledge of headteachers or parents.

The facilitative use of classroom codeswitching between English and Hindi – to translate and occasionally explain or give an example – was common among all teachers. While students were asked to give the English or Hindi translation of a term, they were not provided with structured opportunities to speak in any language. In some schools, particularly the government school, respondents reported that the local language was employed by teachers with entry-level children, but such classes were not observed. Opportunities for students to communicate in any language were nevertheless very limited in all of the schools visited.

Of interest were the similarities between the LCEM schools and the government school visited in terms of their instructional approach – a legacy of long-held practices, deep-seated beliefs and personal experiences of similar forms of teaching and learning. The teachers at LCEMs, though all with experience of higher education, overwhelmingly had not been trained as teachers and had few teacher development opportunities.

The fact that the children produced very little language – whether spoken or written – within the classrooms observed, meant that it was difficult to gauge the effect of the classroom methods, in terms of students' abilities in either English or Hindi and their mastery of the content being covered in lessons. The higher levels of discipline and pressure in the LCEM schools may result in better performance in the LCEM schools than in the government school, but it is important to recognise that the latter is supporting children from extremely disadvantaged homes. One of the LCEM schools reported that they took in students that other (private) schools would not, and it would be interesting to explore further the practices of government and private schools in terms of inclusion, e.g. including students from linguistic and ethnic minorities, students with disabilities, etc. Of interest is whether growth in LCEM schools will create further barriers to educational equality of opportunity or whether they will gradually fall away in line with the wide scale programme of improvements projected across the government sector.

**Of interest were the similarities between the LCEM schools and the government school visited in terms of their instructional approach**

Chapter 6

# Comparing EMI contexts in Ghana and India



## This section compares and contrasts key findings from the two very different contexts of EMI investigated in this study.

These two contexts of EMI represent two types of increasingly common educational models, both of which make use of local languages in limited ways in providing EMI. In doing so, we also consider the main messages from the literature review undertaken for this research, and how the research confirms, contradicts and extends previous work in this field.

### Classroom practice

Since the 1990 Education for All agenda, educational reforms, including strong elements of student-centered pedagogy, have flourished, both in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Over time, there has been increasing attention paid to the quality of teaching and learning in schools, with the result being that Goal 4 of the SDGs ensures inclusive and equitable *quality* education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all. It is also increasingly recognised that medium of instruction is a key aspect of improving the quality of education.<sup>155</sup> Our research clearly indicates the continued need for government education policies in both contexts to continue to promote the use of local and state languages in education. However, there is also a clear need to exemplify classroom teaching and language supportive pedagogies to enable teachers to create student-centred interactive, inclusive classrooms for more equitable learning opportunities.

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### Pedagogy

The classroom observations undertaken in GAR and Bihar revealed similar practices in terms of the teacher-dominated pedagogy observed. In both contexts, despite evidence of low learning outcomes and insufficient levels of English among students, there was a low occurrence of student-centred, active learning practices that supported the development of content and language learning. Few indicators of good practice for effective teaching and language supportive pedagogies were evidenced in classrooms in either context, though the teaching in Ghana, where teachers had been trained, was for the most part more interactive and inclusive than that in the LCEMs in India.

Lessons in both contexts were highly teacher dominant and textbook focused, with the teacher being the only one to speak for the majority of the lesson time. The most striking factor in both contexts was that students had very limited opportunities to speak. In both contexts, the focus was on students' memorisation of content knowledge and the majority of questions addressed to students were 'closed' and sought a 'correct' answer. No pair or group work was observed in

<sup>155</sup> GEMR, 2016; UNESCO, 2016

either context. The majority of activities involved reading and writing activities, with very few speaking activities. There were no observed examples in either context of students engaging in a discussion or scaffolded dialogue, or of them being supported to develop and pose their own questions. In Ghana, teachers' main strategies for supporting the development of spoken English were immersion and correction; two practices that might actually work against allowing students to practice new language.

In the English lessons observed, the pedagogies used were similar. These lessons featured no meaningful communication or conversation, and students were rarely engaged in speaking activities. Moreover, the English curriculum was not related to the curriculum in which the students are learning subject content through English. Students had no structured opportunities to develop the subject-specific language needed to follow the curriculum.

Although the pedagogy observed in Ghana was primarily teacher-dominated, the observational sketches showed that a few teachers were using a variety of interactive activities, such as questioning and using realia. Evidence of inclusive practices was also revealed and many teachers seemed to have developed a good rapport with students: there were instances of teachers drawing on local knowledge, making jokes, and responding to students individually. These observations suggest that teacher training has had a positive impact, and that good practices are in place that can be built on to include a greater focus on language.

In India, however, where the majority of teachers were untrained, establishing rapport and an inclusive atmosphere in the classroom did not seem to be a priority. Instead, the atmosphere in the classrooms observed was very disciplined and controlled. The purposes of the teacher strategies employed were sometimes difficult to determine. Mostly the teacher just read out of the book and the students listened. Teachers spoke little and did not explain what they were doing in the lesson and why. Classroom practices focused on memorisation of individual words or facts, along with their Hindi translations, often without any evidence that students understood them.

In the small sample of lessons observed, we detected no relationship between the type and region of the school, the pedagogy used in the classroom, the number of teacher and student activities featured in the lesson, and the teachers' observed English language competence.

**The English curriculum was not related to the curriculum in which the students are learning subject content through English**

## Teacher language

Previous research has shown how teachers' competence in English can impact on their ability to teach in EMI contexts. In Ghana, the teachers' competence in English was considered to be reasonably high, where in India it was quite low. In Ghana, the teachers spoke almost exclusively in English, whether to discuss the curriculum, to explain, for affective purposes or for classroom management. Although almost all of the teachers reported in their interviews that they regularly use the local language and classroom codeswitching, there was hardly any classroom evidence of this, even in schools where the majority of students and

teachers shared a local language. Teachers only offered brief explanations or translations of single words or phrases in the local languages. This is despite research that shows that judicious and strategic use of codeswitching can enable students to understand concepts in both languages and to participate actively during lessons.<sup>156</sup> Teachers used the local language when they perceived that students needed support in accessing a specific bit of content knowledge. They did so based on students' facial expressions or lack of attention, rather than by checking their understanding through open questioning and discussion. In interviews, Ghanaian teachers seemed to believe that language policy explicitly forbade the use of local languages at the upper primary level, and that they were acting in their students' best interests when promoting an English-only classroom.

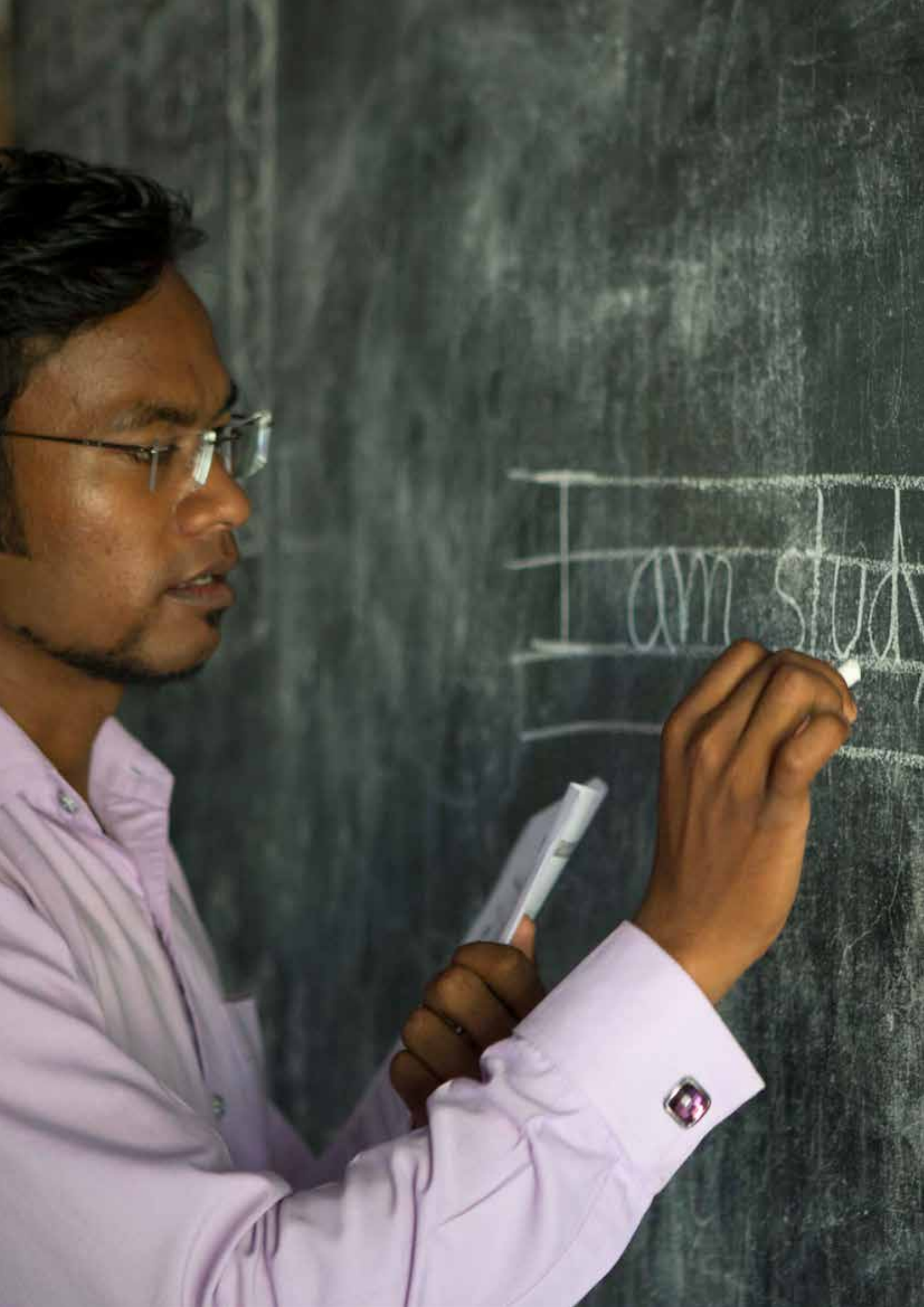
In India, however, the facilitative use of codeswitching between English and Hindi – to translate and occasionally explain or give an example – was common among all teachers, and classroom codeswitching was openly recognised as a legitimate and necessary pedagogic strategy, since students' English-language competence was developing. The labelling of these schools as 'EMI' could therefore be seen as a misnomer. Classroom codeswitching was also the observed practice in the English classes in the Hindi-medium government school. While it was recognised that students required the extra support of Hindi, there was no use of other local languages in the classes observed. In some schools, particularly the government school, respondents reported that the local language was used with entry-level children, though soon replaced by Hindi. Since the local languages are all varieties of Hindi in this particular area, the dominance of Hindi seems to be less of an obstacle for students. Hindi and English were the only languages perceived as legitimate for classroom teaching.

In Ghana, where the observed teachers' levels of English were relatively high, the use of EMI does not seem to be a main factor negatively influencing their pedagogic practice.<sup>157</sup> Teachers' low levels of English, however, may be an issue in regions of the country where English is less present in the local environment. Entrenched, teacher-centred pedagogical practices, rather than low levels of English, seem to be the greater obstacle. In fact, in the Ghana fieldwork, we observed that the teacher in the sample with the perceived lowest level of English used the highest number of activities in his lesson and provided his students with the most opportunities to talk. He also noted in his interview that he was supportive of students' using their local language in the classroom and was strongly opposed to instituting an English-only policy. This singular example illustrates that lower levels of competence in English do not have to negatively impact on teaching and learning, as long as teachers are able to use a wide range of pedagogic classroom strategies, employ classroom codeswitching judiciously to support learning and create inclusive environments in their classrooms so that students feel confident to actively explore curricular content and experiment with language. There were, however, extremely limited examples of teachers' being able to do this in the classrooms observed. In fact, teachers' levels of English may have been perceived as relatively high due to the fact that they primarily engaged in 'safe talk'<sup>158</sup> in the classes observed.

**Lower levels of competence in English do not have to negatively impact on teaching and learning**

<sup>156</sup> cf. Probyn, 2015; Westbrook et al., 2013; Yevudey, 2013 <sup>157</sup> cf. Ankohmah et al., 2012 <sup>158</sup> Chick, 1996





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In India, where the teachers' competence in English was much more limited, this may have contributed to their almost complete reliance on choral repetition, memorisation and having students copy from the board, and to the instances observed of teachers avoiding the more 'communicative' activities in textbooks. Here, too, however, a legacy of long-held practices, deep-seated beliefs and personal experiences of similar forms of teaching and learning seem to be the key features driving the teacher-dominant classroom practice.

## Student language

In both contexts, it was overwhelmingly the case that the students spoke very little in the lessons, and when they did, it was almost always limited to choral responses or reading aloud. In Ghana, there were more examples of students being questioned individually, but their answers were usually very brief. It was therefore difficult to gain an impression of their competence in English, or their grasping of the subject content. In both contexts, it was difficult to perceive any improvement between the English levels of students in lower and higher classes, though this would need to be substantiated with further research. The lack of student talk was also obvious in the English language classes observed.

In Ghana, students' responses to teacher-directed activities were almost always in English. In some classes they were asked a number of questions, both individually and as a group, but their responses tended to be limited to a word or short phrase. Students used the local language with the teacher only rarely, when, for example, they could not produce a response to a question in English or if they sought clarification on an item. They used the local language fleetingly and informally with each other in class, for example when passing out books. In India, when students spoke it was primarily limited to choral chanting of English from their textbooks, or the production of a Hindi translation of an English word. In the rare instances when they asked the teacher a question, this was done in Hindi. Students were not involved in any structured speaking activities in English in either Ghana or India, not even in the English lessons, nor were they encouraged to ask questions or discuss content in the local language. They were not provided with structured pedagogic translanguaging opportunities, much less invited to make their own choices with regards language use. Opportunities for students to communicate in any language were very limited in all of the schools visited, and students were virtually silenced in the classroom in both contexts. This silencing may be attributed to low levels of English in both contexts, but in India it was exacerbated by strict rules against talking in class, where students were sent out of class if they were not prompted to speak.

Thus, while teachers' competence in English may be an issue, the almost complete absence of student talk observed in lessons in both contexts seems to be a significant factor contributing to low learning outcomes. The 2016 UNESCO Policy Paper 24 focuses on the need for students to be taught in a language that they understand, posing the important question: 'If you don't understand, how can you learn?'. Our research prompts a related question: 'If you cannot speak, how can you learn?'. There is a large body of evidence demonstrating that high

**Students were not involved in any structured speaking activities in English in either Ghana or India, not even in the English lessons**

quality classroom talk not only engages students' attention and participation, but enhances understanding, accelerates learning and raises achievement in formal examinations.<sup>159</sup> In addition to this, a rigorous review of research on pedagogy and teaching practices in LMICs highlighted the importance of student talk in enhancing learning. High quality classroom talk was found to be enabled through inclusive and supportive communications, varied teacher questioning, informative feedback, building on student responses, student questioning, the use of local languages and codeswitching.<sup>160</sup> Such practices were overwhelmingly absent in the classrooms observed in our study, and students were virtually silenced. This severely limited their opportunities to learn and develop proficiency in the medium of instruction.

Teachers need a fuller command of inclusive, student-centred and language supportive pedagogic strategies. This would allow teachers to generate further opportunities for dialogue and enquiry, extend students' responses and their understanding of the content, and further develop their competence in English. Using language supportive pedagogies, including classroom codeswitching as well as translanguaging are potential means of enhancing learning.

Using language supportive pedagogies, including classroom codeswitching as well as translanguaging are potential means of enhancing learning

### Implementation of multilingual strategies to support EMI

While the classroom observation data provided an impression of the teaching and learning practices going on in primary schools in Ghana and India, the interview data provided insight into the attitudes and beliefs underlying those practices. Our research confirms other studies,<sup>161</sup> that there are a number of attitudinal as well as practical factors that constrain teachers' abilities to use active, student-centred, language supportive pedagogies.

#### Attitudes that sustain EMI and constrain the use of local languages in education

Previous research suggested that attitudinal factors play a key role in sustaining EMI practices in the face of evidence that students learn better in their mother tongue. In both contexts, English continues to be associated with the educated and elite, and these perceptions clearly influence the attractiveness of EMI. Such attitudes to English, while present, did not, however, seem to be the key driver of EMI in the context of Bihar. English was undoubtedly perceived of as an important language in India and internationally. However, there was also widespread recognition of the importance of Hindi as the main language of communication within Bihar and beyond, and there was no sense of any potential challenge to the status of Hindi.<sup>162</sup> These positive attitudes towards Hindi might contribute to the acceptance of Hindi-English classroom codeswitching. There was, however, no indication that other local languages – the ones that the majority of children probably use in their homes and communities – were deemed as acceptable languages of education, and these were also absent in the classrooms observed. There is an overreliance on the state language in government schools – Hindi in Bihar – and on English in private schools, with other local languages only being used – if at all – at the initial stages of education.

<sup>159</sup> Alexander, 2015; Hattie, 2009 <sup>160</sup>Westbrook et al., 2013 <sup>161</sup>e.g. Mendenhall et al., 2015 <sup>162</sup>cf. Hayes et al., 2016

In Ghana, English serves as a lingua franca, and is required for success in exams and entrance to further education. It is also used as a gatekeeping mechanism for employability in some situations. Thus it is clear that English is perceived of as highly important. However, this study reveals that many participants take pride in and prefer to use the local languages for cultural, religious, educational and social purposes. While associations with local languages with 'backwardness' and a lack of education were apparent, there was also a detectable concern for the sustainability of Ghanaian languages and cultures, with some participants suggesting that these could be supported by their use in education. These concerns indicated that if other Ghanaian languages besides English were accepted in domains of prestige and power, as is the case with state languages in India, negative attitudes towards using local languages in education might shift.<sup>163</sup> While there is some evidence of positive associations of the use of local languages in schooling in Ghana, this seems to apply only to the 11 languages recognised by the government, and not the languages with fewer numbers of speakers, which tend to be the languages of the poorer and more disadvantaged areas of the country. Thus in both contexts, despite positive attitudes to English, there is recognition of the value of other local and state languages. Attitudes to languages of smaller minority groups need to change in order for them to be more widely adopted in educational settings.

#### **Attitudes towards the use of local languages in education and classroom codeswitching**

In Ghana, the interview data reflected a general awareness of the value of learning through local languages, particularly at early levels of schooling, and that the use of local languages in schooling can support English language learning. This awareness and positive stance towards the use of local languages at the lower primary level, however, has not yet translated into a complete shift in practices. Many participants commented on the continued challenges of using local languages during the lower primary levels, and this seems to be contributing to low learning outcomes regarding local language literacy and English.

Teachers at the upper primary level in Ghana attempted to follow policy guidelines which promote a shift to EMI, even though they recognise that learning through English is a challenge for many students. While the teachers report that they occasionally use codeswitching as a strategy to support students' understanding, this was rarely observed. The lack of local language use or classroom codeswitching may be attributed to interpretations of the LEP as enforcing a complete shift at the upper primary level to English-only, and to teachers' efforts to maximise the use of English so that students have maximum exposure to the language.

Some participants in Ghana felt that the use of local languages should be extended into upper primary because many students had not learned English well enough by this stage to be able to learn through the language; however, the use of English only in textbooks, exams and further education was recognised as a significant obstacle to extended promotion of the local languages. The learning of English was deemed of primary importance to all participants. The promotion of local languages in education was only perceived as appropriate if not at the expense of

The use of English only in textbooks, exams and further education was recognised as a significant obstacle to extended promotion of the local languages

<sup>163</sup> Tackie-Ofusu et al., 2015

learning English. The fact that local languages, when appropriately mobilised, can be facilitative in the learning of English was recognised by some participants.

In India, there were no perceived resistances to the idea of using both Hindi and English as languages of instruction. Hindi was routinely and openly used to mediate and support the study of the English textbooks, and classroom codeswitching was viewed as a legitimate pedagogic strategy for the learning of content and the learning of English. Participants seemed to have received no formal guidelines regarding the use of language in this type of school, and very little pedagogic training in general. They intuitively seemed to think that codeswitching between Hindi and English is helpful in terms of both content and language learning. The strategies used, however, were extremely limited in that they focused primarily on the repetition and translation of single words and phrases, instead of focusing on communicating content and mobilising discussion. The fact that classroom codeswitching is commonly practised by teachers and that there are positive attitudes towards it suggests ripe ground for promoting the use of bilingual classroom strategies among students, and for elevating current practice from mere repetition and translation to more cognitively challenging and productive bilingual education strategies.

#### **Practical obstacles that inhibit quality bilingual education within EMI contexts**

Key practical obstacles were reported regarding implementing EMI and high quality bilingual education in both contexts. In Ghana, one obstacle identified was a lack of shared understanding of the LEP and how it should be implemented. Managing the transition from using local languages to EMI (when and how), and whether – and if so, how – local languages should be used to support both curriculum and content learning were key areas of tension. There was a general impression that English was the only language that could be used beyond the lower primary level. The study revealed a few instances of strictly enforced ‘English only’ policies, with some students even being punished for using the local language in the classroom – a practice which seems unjustifiable given the emphasis of promoting inclusion and equity in global education goals.

In all the Ghanaian schools visited, there were broader issues within the education system that were perceived as hindering the provision of quality bilingual education. These included a lack of teachers with the appropriate language skills and a lack of resources. Such teachers, however, were observed to be finding ways in which the local language could be drawn on, even when they lacked proficiency. Thus, while not all teachers have proficiency in all students’ languages, the contexts observed were not so diverse that it was impossible to make meaningful use of local languages in education.

In Ghana, participants reported a dearth of resources altogether, and this was notable in the classroom observations where students shared books. There was a particular absence of materials in local languages, and all textbooks – even those designed for the lower primary level – were in English. Although the lack of resources is definitely an issue, even if there were more multilingual resources, teachers have not been adequately trained to use them. For example, in at least two of the schools visited, the multilingual materials that were developed through

There was a general impression that English was the only language that could be used beyond the lower primary level

the NALAP programme were not being used because teachers did not know how to use them. While participants may know that the languages are intended to be used alongside each other, they do not have a firm grasp of how to do this. Teachers need exemplification to support a change in practice.

In India, the existence of the LCEM schools can be seen as a response to severe challenges in providing mass scale quality state education in India. The fact that parents are choosing such schools for their children is based, in part, on the perception that they have more accountability, lower student-teacher ratios and better resources. In the LCEM private schools visited in Bihar, there was regular use of English textbooks, which were purchased by the parents. The larger issue in these contexts seemed not to be resources but teachers' extremely limited uses of them. Thus in both contexts there is an urgent need for exemplification of actual classroom practices that teachers can adopt in order to support EMI and the development of English language competence, while using both the official textbooks as well as resources beyond the textbook.

Interviews with teachers suggested that the classroom practices they employed and the policies they instituted were rooted in a desire to support students in their learning. However, their means of providing that support was extremely limited. In India, the majority of participants in the study had not been trained as teachers and had few teacher development opportunities. In Ghana, the majority of teacher education initiatives did not include language supportive pedagogies. Providing access to teacher education opportunities that promote active, student-centred and language supportive pedagogies is an extremely pressing issue in terms of improving the quality of education in both contexts.

Finally, in both contexts, the practical difficulties in implementing EMI must be seen within the wider context, which is highly significant to the effectiveness of teaching. None of the schools visited in either context were serving particularly privileged communities, and many students faced significant challenges outside of schooling that limited their access to schooling, such as hunger, travelling long distances to school, working or helping out at home, and parental absence. Limited competence in the language of education simply exacerbates students' difficulties in accessing education.

**In India, the existence of the LCEM schools can be seen as a response to severe challenges in providing mass scale quality state education in India**

Chapter 7

# Recommendations



**In this final section, recommendations for improving learning are suggested. We draw on the messages synthesised from the literature review, which echo policy statements put forward by leading stakeholders in international education.**<sup>164</sup>

We also draw on the experience of the research team and their work on international teacher education programmes that support the implementation of student-centred, active learning, language supportive pedagogies (e.g. English in Action in Bangladesh, TESSA, and TESS-India). These suggestions are rooted in a constructivist theory of knowledge, which assumes that knowledge emerges through learners' interactions and experiences and that students learn best when they are actively engaged in inquiry and discovery – activities for which language plays a key role.<sup>165</sup>

The recommendations are particularly relevant for government schools, in multilingual contexts around the world, where attempts are being made to use both local and state languages, ensure national unity and cultural identity, and provide access to national and international languages, while also sustaining indigenous languages. The recommendations also have relevance for low-cost private schools, and could help them to improve their quality and increase access for the low-income students that they serve, ideally moving them in the direction of recognised standards and best practices. In fact, such schools might be relabelled 'English focus schools' instead of 'EMI' schools. This label would more closely match the practices used there and also bring them in closer alignment with the government LEP.

**Recommendations are particularly relevant for government schools, in multilingual contexts around the world, where attempts are being made to use both local and state languages, ensure national unity and cultural identity, and provide access to national and international languages, while also sustaining indigenous languages**

### **Flexible multilingual education**

The LEPs in both Ghana and India are commendable for their intention to implement UNESCO's 1953 recommendation that 'every effort should be made to provide education in the mother tongue', while also aiming to ensure universal access to English. We recommend that these policies do not veer away from their promotion of using students' languages in primary education, particularly at the early levels. Our research confirms that a large number of children at the early primary levels are not being taught in their local languages in both contexts, and that further efforts are needed to enable this.<sup>166</sup>

In line with the findings of several other studies that have investigated the implementation of the use of local languages in education, our study finds that this

<sup>164</sup> the Juba Language-in-Education Conference Concluding Statement of Principles in McIlwraith, 2013: 7-8; Mackenzie and Walker, 2013; UNESCO, 2016 <sup>165</sup> cf. Alexander, 2015; Mendenhall et al., 2015; Westbrook et al., 2013 <sup>166</sup> cf. UNESCO, 2016



is fraught with difficulties. Many of the challenges associated with these LEPs can be attributed to the policies being too simplistically conceptualised. The policies are rooted in notions of language as homogenous, standardised, codified entities with clear boundaries. This concept of language is not appropriate to diverse, multilingual education contexts. Instead, policies in these contexts need to take into account that Ghana and India – similar to many other LMICs – are diverse, highly multilingual, multiethnic contexts.<sup>167</sup> In both these contexts, the norm is that speakers mix languages fluidly and interchangeably. Classrooms can be made up of students from a variety of linguistic backgrounds, and the teacher and students may not share all the same languages. The local or state language recognised by the government may not match the actual languages that students use in their homes and communities. The variety of Twi, for example, in government textbooks in Ghana may not match the language that children use in their homes and communities, while the local language – a variety of Hindi – may differ considerably to the Hindi used in schools in Bihar. Therefore, the concept of ‘mother tongue’ may not be straightforward for a number of multilingual students.<sup>168</sup>

One means of taking into account multilingual realities is by formulating LEPs that are more flexible, and that promote positive attitudes to multilingualism in education. Weber calls this ‘flexible multilingual education’.<sup>169</sup> The idea of flexible multilingual education refocuses us to turn questions about medium of instruction away from ‘Which medium is best for education?’ to ‘How can multilingualism be used as a resource for learning content and languages?’. It allows us to move from questions such as ‘Should children be learning through Ga or Twi or English, or Magahi or Hindi or English?’ to questions such as ‘How can we draw on Ga, Twi and English, or Magahi, Hindi and English to support students’ learning?’. Putting flexible multilingual education at the heart of LEP, moves away from the idea of ‘English-only classrooms’ where students are hesitant to speak a language that they are still learning, to a policy which enables teachers to strategically use all of their linguistic resources for teaching, and enable their students to use all theirs to enhance learning and communication. If policies are flexible, even if the ‘official’ language of instruction remains English, all of students’ linguistic resources can be used as needed. Flexible multilingual education not only legitimates, but also promotes, the strategic use of classroom codeswitching and translanguaging to facilitate learning.

Flexible multilingual education practices are particularly important at the early stages of education, and indeed have been supported through programmes like NALAP in Ghana. But programmes like NALAP have not been far reaching in their remit, and our research confirms that many students in Ghana and India need support beyond the lower primary level in learning English, and accessing content through English. Extending the use of local languages into the upper primary level and beyond in Ghana has been recommended by many, as students who have not yet developed a strong foundation in English can continue to learn and develop their skills in English.<sup>170</sup> In Ghana, flexible multilingual education policies would promote the continued use of local languages beyond lower

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<sup>167</sup> cf. Alidou et al., 2006; Ansah, 2014; Norton, 2014; Rosekrans et al., 2012 for Ghana; Agnihotri, 2007; Jhingran, 2009; and Mohanty, 2010 for India <sup>168</sup> cf. D’Souza, 2006; Le Page and Tabouret-Keller, 1985 <sup>169</sup> Weber, 2014 <sup>170</sup> cf. Alidou et al., 2006; Heugh, 2007; Igboanusi, 2014; Kirkpatrick, 2013; Owu-Ewie, 2006; Truong, 2012

primary school. In India, they would legitimate the use of local languages alongside state languages in government schools at all levels, while also extending the role of local languages together with state languages in private English-medium schooling.

LEPs which draw on local languages have been deemed unfeasible in some contexts because of the diverse, multilingual students that make up many classrooms. It is often not possible that all teachers have competence in all of the students' languages. This, however, matters less in the context of flexible multilingual education, where teachers are confident in using multilingual, active student-centred pedagogies, where students can use their own languages in discussions, to support each other, and to make transitions to the official languages of instruction. Enabling students to use all their linguistic resources in this way is beneficial for understanding, for deep cognitive engagement, for accessing (standard) English, and for cultivating multilingual practices.<sup>171</sup>

Flexible multilingual education policies recognise the value of English as a national and international lingua franca, but require a move away from promoting purist approaches to teaching and learning the language. They recognise that the language has been indigenised and is used regularly and creatively in postcolonial contexts, like Ghana and India, in interaction with local languages.<sup>172</sup> They also recognise that English is only one communicative resource among many, and that local and national languages have important roles in ensuring national unity and cultural identity, and in economic and social community development.<sup>173</sup>

The following set of recommendations are made with different stakeholders in mind. Each is explained in more detail below:

- 1.** At national (and regional levels where appropriate) policy and education decision makers can formulate flexible multilingual education policies.
- 2.** At national, regional and school level, stakeholders can foster a change in attitudes to promote more flexible multilingual approaches that better aid learning.
- 3.** At national, regional and local school level, teacher development could be revised to support their use of flexible multilingual approaches.
- 4.** Teacher training and professional development organisations can adapt teacher education programmes to support teacher use of flexible, multilingual approaches in classrooms.
- 5.** School leaders and teachers can rise to the challenge and opportunity of the multilingual classroom.
- 6.** Materials and curriculum developers can focus on appropriate resource development.
- 7.** The academic community can support by furthering relevant research.

**It is often not possible that all teachers have competence in all of the students' languages**

<sup>171</sup>García and Li Wei, 2014; Hornberger and Vaish, 2009 <sup>172</sup>cf. D'Souza, 2006; Eapen, 2011; Kerswill, 2017 <sup>173</sup>cf. Kamwangamalu and Tovares, 2016

## 1. Formulating flexible multilingual education policies (national and regional level)

Policy level educational decision makers and leaders can support the formulation of LEPs that are flexible and that promote positive attitudes to multilingualism in education by:

- Continuing to promote the use of students' languages in early years of primary education.
- Recognising and valuing widespread multilingualism, and the value of all languages, in the community.
- Taking a clear stance against 'English only' school and classroom policies, and any punishments for students who use local languages.
- Making clear that, due to their importance in supporting learning, the use of local languages in the school or classroom is allowed and encouraged, particularly in early education but also into the upper primary level and beyond.
- Making clear that the use of all students' linguistic resources is allowed and encouraged, not only the official local or state languages.
- Making clear that the use of local languages in education supports the learning of content and other languages, such as English.
- Making clear that the use of classroom codeswitching and translanguaging does not go against the LEP, but supports it. Languages do not necessarily need to be kept separate in education – as in society – but can be used fluidly and interchangeably to enhance communication and learning.
- Promoting the use of local and national languages as a means of supporting economic and social community development.
- Promoting international languages (English) as a national and international lingua franca.
- Encouraging low-cost English-medium schools to re-conceive themselves as 'English focus schools' and also bring their LEP in closer alignment with the government policy.
- Bringing private schools in line with recognised standards and best practices in education, requiring them to recognise the value of local languages in learning.

The use of classroom codeswitching and translanguaging does not go against the language-in-education policy, but supports it

## 2. Fostering changes in attitudes towards language of instruction policies and enactments (at national, regional and school level)

In LMICs, language is a readily available low-cost resource which everyone can access and harness. But the implementation of flexible multilingual education requires a change in attitudes amongst policy makers, school leaders, teachers, parents and students, as negative attitudes to multilingual education often impact the success of implementation.<sup>174</sup>

<sup>174</sup> Cruz and Mahboob, in press; Ferguson, 2013

In order to enable shifts in attitudes that recognise the value of local languages in education and society at large, advocacy and awareness-raising initiatives are needed. Such initiatives require that all stakeholders in education be informed about the policy, understand the rationale underlying it, and develop more positive associations with local languages and classroom codeswitching. Success has been reported in terms of changing attitudes to the use of local languages in education in Ghana and other LMICs.<sup>175</sup> Propelling the systemic and ideological shifts needed for multilingualism to take root in education, requires concrete action at national and regional levels to reduce the role of English as a gatekeeper to public sector jobs and other economic opportunities.

In order to enable changes in attitude, governments, ministries and schools need to undertake the following actions:

In order to enable shifts in attitudes that recognise the value of local languages in education and society at large, advocacy and awareness-raising initiatives are needed

- Provide clear messages to all stakeholders in education about the language-in-education policy and how it is to be implemented.
- Manage expectations about the amount of time it takes to experience results in response to policy changes, and avoid policy fluctuation.<sup>176</sup>
- Reduce the role of English as a gatekeeper to public sector jobs and other economic opportunities.<sup>177</sup>
- Create community dialogues and multimedia campaigns featuring celebrities, everyday people and academics to:
  - Raise awareness of the LEP and its rationale.<sup>178</sup>
  - Share research about the value of local languages for the development of literacy, success in education, national development and cultural sustainability.<sup>179</sup>
  - Share research about the value of local languages for learning English, and research that challenges commonly held assumptions about English only and early starts in English.<sup>180</sup>
  - Promote the idea that codeswitching and translanguaging are the norm in multilingual societies, and that these practices do not reflect communicative or cognitive deficiencies.
  - Share research about the pedagogical value of codeswitching and translanguaging.<sup>181</sup>
  - Disseminate information about the actual opportunities afforded by knowing English and other regional and national languages.<sup>182</sup>

### 3. Teacher development to enable flexible multilingual education (national, regional and school level)

Systemic barriers to improving the quality of education cannot be addressed through revising LEP statements alone. The policies can only be realistically implemented with the required resources and appropriate pedagogies. The implementation of flexible multilingual education thus requires a change in teacher development and support

<sup>175</sup> IEQ, 2000; Trudell, 2005 <sup>176</sup> Hamid et al., 2013 <sup>177</sup> cf. Cruz and Mahboob, in press; Owu-Ewie and Adu-Buandoh, 2014 <sup>178</sup> cf. Rea-Dickens et al., 2013 <sup>179</sup> cf. Alidou et al. 2006; Davis and Agbenyega, 2012 <sup>180</sup> cf. Rosekrans et al., 2012; Trudell 2005 <sup>181</sup> cf. Ferguson, 2003; Probyn, 2009; Garcia and Li Wei, 2014 <sup>182</sup> cf. Kamwangamalu and Tovaes, 2016

practices. It requires teachers to be able to take gradual steps in the direction of active, student-centred, language supportive pedagogies.

In order to enable these changes in practices, ministries and schools need to undertake the following actions:

- Create resources (videos, guides, adaptable lesson outlines) for teacher educators, school leaders and in-service teachers that exemplify flexible multilingual education in practical situations in classrooms, throughout primary education (including the upper primary level in Ghana).
- Ensure that there is a cadre of well-informed teacher trainers and evaluators to support the shift in teacher education.<sup>183</sup>
- Create resources for teachers (videos, teachers' guides, etc.) so that they know how to teach local languages and English literacy at the early stages of education through to upper primary, and to manage the transition to using more English.
- Adapt the pre-service teacher education curriculum so that all teachers practice student-centred, active, language supportive pedagogies.
- Adapt the pre-service teacher education for English and local language teachers, so that they can better support learning.
- Provide in-service teacher education opportunities that focus on language supportive learning practices.
- Actively recruit multilingual teachers.
- Deploy teachers to schools where they can communicate in the students' languages, whenever possible.
- Create language supportive classroom resources so that they are locally relevant and level appropriate (textbooks, etc.).
- Align assessment with the school curriculum and allow for multilingualism.<sup>184</sup>
- Monitor and evaluate policy implementation.
- Create better regulatory structures to reinforce policies and hold schools accountable to their policies, particularly private schools.<sup>185</sup>
- Discuss and realistically estimate the cost of implementing policies across the system, taking into account long-term reductions of cost due to reducing grade repetition and attrition.<sup>186</sup>

The implementation of flexible multilingual education requires a change in teacher development and support practices

#### 4. Adapting teacher education programmes (teacher training and professional development providers)

This study makes clear that teachers have a limited range of pedagogic strategies, particularly with regard to enabling their students to speak. In order to enhance the quality of learning and enable the LEP to have its full effect, changes need to be made in both pre- and in-service teacher education.

<sup>183</sup> cf. Alidou et al., 2006; Clegg, 2010 <sup>184</sup> cf. Shohamy 2011; Westbrook et al., 2013 <sup>185</sup> Bhattacharya, 2013: 180; Clegg and Afitska, 2011; James and Woodhead, 2014 <sup>186</sup> cf. Alidou et al., 2006; Brock-Utne, 2005; Gandolfo, 2009; Hamid et al., 2013 Heugh et al., 2007/2013; Sawin, 2015

There needs to be a shift in teacher education programmes to enable all teachers – not just language teachers – to access a range of language supportive pedagogies to support the learning of content through an additional language. In many cases, teacher education has succeeded in providing teachers with theoretical knowledge of student-centred active learning, and with an appreciation of the value of local language in early education. However, teachers often do not know how to enact such practices. At the very least, if teachers do continue to rely on the lecture method (for cultural or historical reasons, or to maintain hierarchical relationships in the classroom), the lecture should be linguistically accessible to students.

In order to transform pedagogy, teachers need:

- Strategies to promote spoken language skills, e.g. pair and group work, student presentations, role play, dialogues, elicitation, support and praise, prompting and extending student utterances.<sup>187</sup>
- Guidance for making their lessons more accessible to learners with lower language competence, e.g. employing highly accessible forms of teacher talk, using of visuals.<sup>188</sup>
- Strategies for making curricula content more locally relevant, e.g. using the local language to awaken students' interest in a topic before moving on to related content in English or using vernacular themes (e.g. Hindu myths or local stories) to connect Western literary themes in the textbooks or curriculum.<sup>189</sup>
- Strategies that draw on content and language integrated learning (CLIL) approaches.<sup>190</sup>
- Strategies for making current codeswitching and translation practices more cognitively engaging, e.g. devoting more attention to meaning<sup>191</sup> or having students translate texts back into the local language to ensure they understand.<sup>192</sup>
- Guidance for using translanguaging as a pedagogical resource, i.e. creating opportunities for students to use all their linguistic resources to enhance communication and understanding.
- Guidance for assessing and providing feedback on students' language use and progress.

In order to engage students in more cognitively challenging dialogues and discussion, the following classroom practices can be promoted:

- Give students a chance to think in their preferred language first before responding in English.<sup>193</sup>
- Allow students to use local languages for exploratory talk and group work.<sup>194</sup>
- Draw on students' preferred languages for classroom discussion.
- Encourage students to speak in English, focusing on communication and ignoring mistakes.

The ability to enact language supportive pedagogies is particularly important for language teachers – both English language teachers and local language teachers. English teachers need to be prepared to teach English as a language to access

**The ability to enact language supportive pedagogies is particularly important for language teachers – both English language teachers and local language teachers**

<sup>187</sup> See further <http://www.tess-india.edu.in/learning-resource-1276?section=7> <sup>188</sup> cf. Clegg, 2010 <sup>189</sup> cf. Ramanathan 2003; 2005 <sup>190</sup> Mohan, 2001 <sup>191</sup> Bhattacharya, 2013 <sup>192</sup> Ramanathan, 2005 <sup>193</sup> Fonken, 2008 <sup>194</sup> Probyn, 2009

knowledge, and so the English language curriculum needs to support the delivery of the curriculum in other subjects.<sup>195</sup> They should also be better equipped to promote communicative skills, particularly for spoken language.<sup>196</sup> Teachers should be enabled to learn about local languages and cultures with a view to drawing on them in the classroom to support students' learning,<sup>197</sup> and to strengthen community or national economic and social development.

Teacher education initiatives should model flexible multilingual education and make use of teachers' own local languages in their delivery.<sup>198</sup> This would provide teachers with better access to professional learning and would also allow them to experience classroom codeswitching and translanguaging, something their own schooling probably did not offer them.

Teacher education resources should include:

- Videos which model locally relevant good practice.
- Locally relevant, multilingual textbooks.
- Lesson ideas.
- Teacher guides.
- Teacher education and evaluation guides.

Experience gained through the involvement in large-scale international teacher education programmes show the power of video resources for modelling good teaching practice and enabling classroom change.<sup>199</sup> In order to transform classroom practice, such video resources need to:

- Represent authentic classrooms.
- Provide a multiplicity of examples in various levels, subjects and school contexts.
- Be created in collaboration with local teachers and students.
- Exemplify student-centred, active learning.
- Demonstrate effective and strategic classroom codeswitching.
- Model effective translanguaging strategies, e.g. moving students between languages and modes in input and output.
- Model wider repertoires for language, e.g. playful, conversational, academic, subject based.
- Showcase a variety of ways to learn and use languages, e.g. singing, playing games with language, role play to practice use of different registers.
- Exemplify the use of any classroom resources created as part of educational change initiatives.

In order to inspire a change in values and attitudes in teachers, such video materials and related content should:

- Engage in critical analysis of stereotypes about 'intelligence' and 'weakness', and any associations of these with different languages.<sup>200</sup>

Experience gained through the involvement in large-scale international teacher education programmes show the power of video resources for modelling good teaching practice and enabling classroom change

<sup>195</sup> cf. Ankomah et al., 2012; Williams, 2014 <sup>196</sup> cf. Ramanathan, 1999 <sup>197</sup> cf. Alidou et al., 2006; Rosekrans et al., 2012 <sup>198</sup> cf. EDQUAL, 2010 <sup>199</sup> cf. Adinolfi, 2016; Solly and Woodward, 2013  
<sup>200</sup> cf. Dyer 2008

- Develop positive perceptions of students interacting, questioning and speaking.
- Engender positive attitudes to multilingualism, in which local languages, classroom codeswitching and translanguaging are valued.
- Inspire a teacher to think 'I can try that'.

In order to have maximum effect, such videos should be trialled and adjusted before they are rolled out on a wider scale. They can then be used in in-school teacher education initiatives and also in pre-service teacher education. They can be made available online, on CD and on SD cards so that they could be viewed on smart phones, which are widely available in most LMICs.<sup>201</sup>

## 5. Rising to the challenge and opportunity of multilingual classrooms (for schools and teachers)

Some of the practices that were observed in the fieldwork may be shared and built on in order to meet the challenge of the lack of teachers who can use local languages to support students with accessing the curriculum. These include:

- Making sure that teachers who teach at the lower primary level can speak the local language; moving those who do not to the upper primary level where students' competence in English is higher.
- Having a local language teacher or teaching assistant dedicated to language support. This teacher/teaching assistant works with teachers of other subjects to help them develop skills and vocabulary for teaching in the local language.
- Consulting with local language speaking colleagues and/or the Ghanaian language teacher(s) in the school to identify vocabulary and expressions in the local language that would be useful for classroom management purposes and specific lessons.
- Learning the local language. A few teachers mentioned that they were doing this, particularly when the local language is quite similar to one the teacher is familiar with (e.g. Dangme and Ga), or, for example, when a teacher has moved into a community where the language is used (e.g. Ewe speaking teachers who had moved to District 2 for their jobs).
- Using students as a resource. Teachers who did not speak the local language mentioned two different strategies that they use:
  - Calling in an older student who speaks the local language from another class to explain things in the local language.
  - Calling on local language students within the class to translate for their peers.

These strategies can be enhanced and developed into wider exemplification programmes to integrate non-local teachers and facilitate their communication with students.

Another practice mentioned which can help schools manage the linguistic diversity of their student populations includes recording the linguistic profiles of students. One school mentioned that they keep a record of all the languages

**Another practice mentioned which can help schools manage the linguistic diversity of their student populations includes recording the linguistic profiles of students**

<sup>201</sup> cf. <http://www.tess-india.edu.in/>



spoken by the students and teachers so that the complexity of the socio-linguistic landscape is clear to all involved. This kind of data can be used by local and national governments to inform teacher recruitment, and teacher and resource deployment. Ongoing linguistic mapping can show how communities are changing and growing, and where resources need to be placed in some cases urgently.

## 6. Resource development (materials developers and curriculum designers)

Teacher education initiatives promoting flexible multilingual education need to be accompanied by resource development and a realigning of the curriculum. The curriculum and textbooks have been found to often be at a level beyond students' existing competences and realistic achievement levels, and the existing English language teaching resources do not support the delivery of the curriculum. There is a general dearth of resources in local languages that display multilingual examples relevant to the school context. Studies recommend that resources should be meaningful to students' lives, incorporate local contexts and multiple languages, and feature accessible levels of English as well as themes that are appropriate and interesting.<sup>202</sup>

While societal multilingualism is often presented as an obstacle in the development of local resources, good practices have been identified for overcoming some of these challenges. The Language Supportive Textbooks and Pedagogy (LaST) project in Rwanda,<sup>203</sup> for example, has developed materials that offer bilingual vocabulary support; high quality, contextually relevant illustrations; clearly labelled, relevant support activities; and teachers' guides in the mother tongue and English to complement these.<sup>204</sup> Trudell (2016) also puts forward suggestions for creating context-appropriate resources that make use of local languages and provide access to English, and these practices can be drawn on and further developed in a range of multilingual contexts. In addition to improving learning outcomes, the development of such resources can also help to standardise such varieties and promote their use for wider communication.<sup>205</sup>

Given that teachers have limited time for making materials, resource creation initiatives could be undertaken as classroom or whole-school projects, promoted by school leadership, perhaps with community input and support. Students can be encouraged to bring resources from home and their community.<sup>206</sup>

Assessment resources also need to be developed in order to support flexible multilingual education. As Shohamy compellingly argues with regard to multilingual assessment, proposals need to be developed whereby 'mixing languages is a legitimate act that does not result in penalties but rather is [viewed as] an effective means of expressing and communicating ideas that cannot be transmitted in one language.'<sup>207</sup> Students should be rewarded for what they can do with language(s) and for the content knowledge that they demonstrate, rather than being penalised because of perceived 'deficits' in language.<sup>208</sup>

**Given that teachers have limited time for making materials, resource creation initiatives could be undertaken as classroom or whole-school projects**

<sup>202</sup> D'Souza, 2006; Fonken, 2008; Opoku-Amankwa et al., 2011; Ramanathan, 2005; Tackie-Ofosu, 2015 <sup>203</sup> See further <https://www.britishcouncil.rw/programmes/education/language-supportive-textbook-project-last> <sup>204</sup> cf. Milligan et al., 2016 <sup>205</sup> cf. Rosekrans et al., 2012; Trudell, 2007 <sup>206</sup> See further <http://www.tess-india.edu.in/learning-resource-1276?section=10> <sup>207</sup> Shohamy, 2011: 427 <sup>208</sup> Early and Norton, 2014; Rea-Dickins et al., 2013

## 7. Further research (academic community)

This research has been necessarily limited to two national contexts, and only two districts within those contexts. Fieldwork conducted elsewhere might reveal a different set of opportunities and challenges. The literature review conducted for this study attempted to include only the highest quality available research; however, the assessment of the evidence was relatively weak. We need a richer understanding of the relationship between language and learning, and of how to effectively implement different approaches to multilingual education, particularly in low-resource contexts. We also need a greater understanding of the potential of the recommendations proposed in this report, particularly the role of local language use, classroom codeswitching and translanguaging in supporting understanding, English language speaking and writing skills.

Given that there was a near absence of students' speaking in these contexts, further research is also required to explore students' spoken language abilities in English outside of school, and compare them with their classroom language use. Moreover, in Ghana it would be fruitful to explore the potential of local language use in contexts outside of GAR, where there is more limited use of English in communities, and local languages have a more dominant presence. In India, more insight is required into the use of local languages in states outside of Bihar, where there is more linguistic diversity and greater distance between students' home language and the state language.

The rise of low-cost private schools also requires further investigation both in India and Ghana. Of particular interest would be the extent to which these schools offer educational opportunities to students with disabilities or students from linguistic and ethnic minorities. Finally, it would be interesting to further explore student outcomes in such schools, not only in terms of performance on exams, but also in terms of the opportunities available to graduates.

Finally, further research needs to explore ways of changing perceptions of language and language use so that flexible multilingual education policies are embraced by all the relevant stakeholders.

We need a richer understanding of the relationship between language and learning, and of how to effectively implement different approaches to multilingual education, particularly in low-resource contexts

...back again was a little child, sitting in the  
 ...gently above the ch...  
 ...with delight, and the flo...  
 ...back again was a little child, sitting in the  
 ...gently above the ch...  
 ...with delight, and the flo...  
 ...back again was a little child, sitting in the  
 ...gently above the ch...  
 ...with delight, and the flo...



**SUMMATIVE AND FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS**

...suitable words from the passage from the paragraph mentioned.  
 ...at twelve o'clock they found the Giant  
 ...they had ever seen.

- ...lace dress is very ..... delicate
- ...his manner is ..... very great
- It is time for the trees to ..... You must wear it with care. (para 2)
- ...wake up hearing the ..... Mr Lee is a kind man. (para 3)
- ...near my house. .... wittling ..... of the birds (para 5)
- ..... raining the days have been bright (para 8)
- surprise gift the child shouted with ..... (para 7)
- ..... (para 8)

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We changed our name from CfBT Education Trust in January 2016. Our aim is to transform lives by improving education around the world and to help achieve this, we work in different ways in many locations.

CfBT was established nearly 50 years ago; since then our work has naturally diversified and intensified and so today, the name CfBT (which used to stand for Centre for British Teachers) is not representative of who we are or what we do. We believe that our new company name, Education Development Trust – while it is a signature, not an autobiography – better represents both what we do and, as a not for profit organisation strongly guided by our core values, the outcomes we want for young people around the world.





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