Negotiating Language and Learning: An ethnographic study of students' experiences in two Tanzanian secondary schools

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I, Laela Adamson, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Signed: Laela Adamson   Date: 16th April 2020

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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with students' negotiations of language and learning in multilingual contexts. Students' experiences of schooling are profoundly shaped by language-in-education policies and practices. In Sub-Saharan Africa, language of instruction policies overwhelmingly give prominence to European languages. This is despite a body of evidence, that has been built up since the 1970s, showing that the use of an unfamiliar language as the language of instruction limits learning. Debates about language of instruction in Africa are crucial, but have tended to become stuck in a conflict of seemingly irreconcilable beliefs and priorities. This thesis asks whether broadening the lens of language-in-education research and exploring the multiple roles that language plays could support the acknowledgment and explanation of these different concerns. It also considers how the conceptual vocabulary offered by the capability approach might help to reframe the debate so that it encapsulates all valued functions and meanings of language and makes a clearer distinction between language-related outcomes and learning processes.

Drawing on the analysis of data from an ethnographic study in two Tanzanian secondary schools, this thesis offers a rich, socially-situated account of students' experiences of negotiating language and learning in their school environments. This demonstrates that language acts not only as a form of communication, but also as an aspiration, a guardian of culture, and an expression of being. The key finding and contribution of this thesis is that students' experiences of language and learning are characterised by important connections between a range of different language values and language- and education-related capabilities. A more holistic approach to language and education planning and intervention, that recognises and strengthens these connections, could result in more inclusive and equitable learning experiences for students in multilingual environments.

Impact Statement

This thesis explores students' negotiations of their school language environments. It builds on existing research showing that current language of instruction policies and practices, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, have a detrimental impact on student learning. This study considers whether broadening the lens of language-in-education research and conceptually and analytically reframing the analysis could shift the debate that has become stuck in a conflict of seemingly irreconcilable beliefs and priorities. This aim is urgent as this study finds that the current language-in-education status quo is negatively effective learning, social-emotional well-being, and equity in education. This study draws from an ethnographic study in two secondary schools in Tanzania, but its empirical and theoretical findings may be relevant across a range of multilingual contexts.

This thesis takes a multidimensional approach to the study of language-in-education, highlighting empirical findings about students' experiences that are often either missing, or only mentioned in passing, in existing research. It also helps to explain some of the findings elsewhere in the literature that have been labelled as 'perplexing' or 'contradictory'. Moreover, this thesis contributes to the development of the capability approach as a useful conceptual and analytical framework for the study of language-in-education. Dissemination of findings from this study has already begun, with papers presented at conferences of the British Association of International and Comparative Education and the Human Development and Capabilities Association. As well as seeking to publishing journal articles in English, I will explore collaborative opportunities for publishing in Kiswahili so that findings are more widely accessible in Tanzania. Methodological reflections about learning and using language for ethnographic research were published in a chapter in a collaborative volume in 2020, which is hoped will prove useful to others embarking on research in multilingual contexts.

The non-academic impact of this project began during the field research. The process of working with a team of student researchers built research capacity and understanding. Both the findings of this study, but particularly the learning from working with young people as researchers, have also influenced my own professional practice as a UK secondary school teacher with whole-school responsibility for teachers' and students' engagement with and in research. In this role, I regularly connect and share experiences with other schools across a nationwide network.

This thesis outlines the importance of a holistic and joined-up approach to education policy-making, planning and intervention. The crucial identification of connections between different aspects of students' experiences of language and learning is particularly valuable for those concerned with language-in-education. But these insights are also pertinent for governments and organisations interested in wider issues of educational quality and justice, issues that have been agreed to be important at a global level, with their inclusion in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Finally, this thesis recommends a process of public deliberation that should guide decisions about language-in-education values, policy and practice. This should be informed by a broad base of evidence, to which this study contributes.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

1. Introduction

This thesis is concerned with students and their experiences of schooling. In many countries, and particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, a defining feature of formal learning is that much of it is conducted in a European language with which the vast majority students are not familiar (Brock-Utne, 2014; UNESCO, 2016). Language is integral to education. It is the medium through which learning is communicated and through which understanding is assessed. Language is also central to young people's negotiations of who they are, their relationships with others, and their aspirations for living in the world around them. These negotiations are both part of, and informed by, the educational processes that students are exposed to. Yet broader processes relating to language-in-education are less often the focus of research than classroom language practice. This thesis asks whether exploring issues relating to language-in-education more holistically and from students' perspectives can offer new insights on the multiple ways in which language(s) shape students' experiences of learning.

This thesis both contributes to, and is haunted by the spectre of, the language of instruction (LOI) debate. In multilingual societies, politicians and education planners make choices about which language(s) will be used, and how they will be used, in formal schooling. In particular, they formulate policy in relation to media of instruction in classrooms and the languages to be used for formal assessment and examination. These choices have huge implications for everyone working within schooling systems. In 2009, one of Tanzania's leading contributors to the academic research and debate about LOI, Martha Qorro, noted:

> 'It is not easy to talk of new ideas when discussing the language in education, or the language of instruction issue, since for almost 50 years countries such as Tanzania have been debating the language of instruction issue, with the debate almost going stale at times' (Qorro, 2009b, p. 58).

Qorro's frustration is rooted in the fact that, in those 50 years, there has been little change in school language practice. Though some countries have made provision for the use of mother tongue or local *linguae francae* as languages of instruction in the earlier stages of schooling, the vast majority of Sub-Saharan African countries

transition to the use of a European language before students have developed sufficient fluency in that language to use it as an effective medium for learning (Brock-Utne, 2014; Heugh, 2006). This is despite a growing body of research evidence showing that the use of an unfamiliar language as the medium of instruction presents obstacles to meaningful learning (Afitska *et al.*, 2013; Alidou *et al.*, 2006; Brock-Utne, Desai and Qorro, 2003; Qorro, Desai and Brock-Utne, 2008; Roy-Campbell and Qorro, 1997). In fact, observations from a variety of countries suggest that there is a trend towards extending rather than minimising the use of European languages in schooling, driven both by governments and by parents (Chavez, 2016; Kamwendo, 2016; Probyn, 2009).

The empirical research from which this thesis draws focuses on students' experiences of language in secondary schooling in Tanzania and explores whether these might enable a broader perspective on issues relating to language-in-education. This is, in part, because this was the context in which I first encountered the LOI question. In 2006, I visited secondary schools in Tanzania to evaluate a UK project that distributed textbooks. I was struck by the fact that I struggled to communicate with the students who we had, rather naively, believed would be able to use these textbooks, written in English for first language English speakers, to support their learning. In subsequent years, I worked alongside students to renovate school library spaces and developed some understanding of the language challenges that they faced. But I always came away confused that students would insist on the importance of using English as the LOI, despite the struggles they listed. I concluded that, in order to develop meaningful understanding of students' experiences in relation to language-in-education, I would need to commit to a longer period of time and I would need to learn the language that students most commonly used in school, Kiswahili.[1] These realisations, in large part, moulded the ethnographic design of this study.

Tanzania is also a compelling case because, unlike some countries, there is one clear candidate for an African language to take the place of English as the

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[1] In English, this language is known as Swahili, but as Kiswahili is the name used in the majority of the language of instruction literature about Tanzania, this thesis follows suit.

medium of instruction. Kiswahili has official status as the 'national language' and is estimated to be spoken by 99% of the population (Kimizi, 2009; Vuzo, 2018). Tanzania has also been considered by some as 'progressive' in its LOI policy compared to many other Sub-Saharan African countries because Kiswahili is used as the sole LOI throughout all seven years of the primary stage in government schools (Nomlomo and Vuzo, 2014, p. 75). This is longer than many other countries that either begin with a European LOI from the outset, or transition to a European LOI by year 4 or 5 (Trudell, 2016b). These factors perhaps explain why Tanzania has been of particular interest to language-in-education researchers, who have generated a rich body of empirical evidence relating to the LOI question (Brock-Utne, Desai and Qorro, 2003; Mligo and Mwashilindi, 2017; Mwinsheikhe, 2008; Qorro, Desai and Brock-Utne, 2008; Vuzo, 2018). Many of these studies, and their authors, paint a rather bleak picture of language and learning in Tanzanian secondary schools, presenting students as victims of LOI policy and practice that is neither fit-for-purpose, nor has student learning as its central focus (Brock-Utne, 2004; Qorro, 2013). They note that students are often 'labeled as problems' for not having more fluency in English (Wilder and Msseemmaa, 2019, p. 479; Rubagumya, 2009). National media coverage of examination performance has repeatedly highlighted failures (Daily Nation, 2013), with some even citing student attitudes and 'laziness' as key contributing factors (Khaji, 2019). This thesis strongly supports the assertion that the current approach to language-in-education in Tanzania does not work for the vast majority. However, it raises questions about the positioning of students in the common narrative, and seeks to uncover examples of agency and perseverance in the face of learning challenges. In doing so, this thesis explores aspects of students' experiences of schooling that are not always identified or prioritised by existing analyses of the relationship between language and learning, and thus may be of interest to those working in education across a variety of multilingual contexts.

The authors of a multi-country study commissioned by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) suggested that one reason for the continuation of language policies which give primacy to a European LOI is that 'the interconnectedness between language, communication and effective teaching and

learning is misunderstood outside expert circles' (Ouane and Glanz, 2011, p. 19). Whilst confirming the importance of grounding language-in-education policy and practice in accurate and up-to-date theoretical and empirical understandings of language acquisition and multilingual learning, this thesis also asks whether there might be other important connections that significantly contribute to the shape and quality of students' educational experiences. It has been suggested that language attitudes in Africa are 'perplexing' (Senkoro, 2005, p. 12), but through reviewing the existing theoretical and empirical literature about LOI debates and language both in education and society more broadly, this thesis questions whether seeming contradictions in attitudes might be explained through greater acknowledgement of the multiple roles that language plays in students' lives, both in and beyond the classroom. By incorporating a conceptual vocabulary that highlights the plural meanings and values attached to language, this thesis seeks to construct a more holistic and multi-dimensional picture of students' experiences and aspirations. It is suggested that the explicit acknowledgement of language's multiple roles and the connections between language and different aspects of students' lives may help to reframe the LOI debate, which has previously been characterised as encompassing a number of, seemingly irreconcilable, ambitions and concerns (Norton, 2014; Rubagumya, 2009).

The discussion and analysis in subsequent chapters certainly include numerous examples of challenge and struggle either caused or exacerbated by school language policy and practice. But they also highlight examples of student agency and the strategies that students use to negotiate their school language environments. Building from the examples discussed, in drawing conclusions, this thesis considers the implications of this study for research, policy and practice relating to education in multilingual contexts and offers recommendations for improving the quality of students' experiences of language and learning.

Language and quality education

The international community has widely embraced the aspiration that education should be available to all. Frameworks such as Education for All, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have included specific education goals that have ensured that education has remained high priority for development planning at the national and international levels (UNESCO, 1990; United Nations, 2000; United Nations, 2015). Under the current framework, the SDG 4 goal states that there should be 'inclusive and equitable quality education' (United Nations, 2015). This responds to criticism that the earlier MDG, 'to achieve universal primary education', encouraged a focus on numbers of young people who could access schooling, rather than considering what that education entailed and what students were learning (Hanushek and Wößmann, 2007; Perlman Robinson, 2011; Unterhalter, 2014). However, there remain concerns that the reliance on numerical indicators for SDG 4 leads to the narrowing of the conceptualisations of educational quality, inclusion and inequality (King, 2017; Unterhalter, 2019).

There has been extensive debate about what constitutes 'quality education' and how it can and should be measured (Barrett *et al.*, 2015; Sayed and Ahmed, 2015). This discussion is ongoing, but particularly salient to the experiences of students in multilingual contexts, and thus to this thesis, is the assertion that assessments of educational quality must consider not only student *outcomes,* but also the learning *process* (Alexander, 2008; 2015; Barrett, 2011). It seems difficult to argue with the fact that students' familiarity with the LOI will have a profound influence on both their educational achievement and their engagement in, and experience of, the learning process. Many students around the world, and particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, are simultaneously striving to both understand subject content and to acquire the language of teaching and learning. Studies have also shown that this situation places significant strain on teachers, many of whom lack confidence in the LOI (Mwinsheikhe, 2009; Trudell, 2016a). Of course, language is not the only factor that influences educational quality, but it has been argued that,

without an appropriate approach to language-in-education, the potential of any other strategies will be significantly limited (Afitska *et al.*, 2013; Wolff, 2006).

One aspect of educational quality and the educational process that is frequently overlooked by numerical indicators, including those attached to SDG 4, is the relationship between school life and the social-emotional well-being of students. Although the number of participating countries is limited, and the only Sub-Saharan African country to participate so far has been Mauritius, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey has collected information relating to different aspects of students' well-being and suggests that well-being is strongly supported by 'a school environment where bullying is unusual, where students do not feel out of place, and where establishing genuine and respectful relationships with teachers is the norm' (Schleicher, 2019, p. 47). Also concerned about students' social-emotional well-being, the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education has created a 'Happy Schools Framework' based on both regional survey data and a theoretical review. This framework highlights the importance of a positive schooling environment, including features such as collaborative and supportive relationships, a sense of achievement, being able to engage in a relevant and engaging curriculum, and the use of '"positive discipline" techniques rather than physical and emotional punishment' (UNESCO Bangkok, 2016). Although student social-emotional well-being has rarely been an explicit focus of LOI research, observations from some studies do raise concerns that the use of an unfamiliar language may have a negative effect, for example raising incidences of bullying and physical punishment (Joyce-Gibbons *et al.*, 2018; Ngakane, Muthukrishna and Ngcobo, 2012), or increasing student anxiety (Gkonou, Daubney and Dewaele, 2017; Opoku-Amankwa, 2009). This is an area of students' experiences of language-in-education that this thesis seeks to bring to the fore.

Language is also a key factor in questions of educational equity and inclusion. In both multilingual societies and nominally monolingual societies with migrant populations, students arrive at school with different linguistic backgrounds. As a result, their abilities to understand and use the language(s) of the school environment, and thus engage in the learning process, differ. In a variety of contexts,

language-in-education policies have been linked to the marginalisation of groups of students who do not have access to the LOI outside of school (Brock-Utne, 2017; Mohanty, 2010). One significant concern is that students who face the greatest struggles engaging with education in an unfamiliar language are more likely to drop out of school (Hunt, 2008; Sabates *et al.*, 2010; Vuzo, 2018). In a quantitative study of the relationship between language policy and income equality in 33 African countries, Coyne (2015, p. 631) found the use of an ex-colonial language as the LOI 'makes completing schooling more difficult for many students, particularly those from marginalized linguistic groups or the lower socioeconomic strata of the population'. Other studies have identified links between poor performance in the LOI and other potential sources of inequality, such as poverty, gender and rurality (Nyamubi, 2019; Posti-Ahokas and Lehtomäki, 2014; Walker and Mathebula, 2019), demonstrating that decisions relating to language-in-education can act to compound the effects of existing inequalities (Tikly, 2016).

Despite the crucial importance of language to questions of educational quality, equity and inclusion, multiple scholars have complained that consideration of language is all too often neglected in education and development planning (Brock-Utne, 2014; Taylor-Leech and Benson, 2017; Tikly, 2016). Language-in-education has been the topic of multiple international and regional conferences and documents (for example see Alidou *et al.*, 2006; McIlwraith, 2014; UNESCO, 2016). Moreover, the importance of the choice of LOI is noted in several documents linked with international educational target-setting (UNESCO, 2003; UNESCO, 2005a; UNESCO, 2018, amongst others). But, writing about language and development in contemporary Africa, Prah (2012, p. 305) asserts that these discussions and commitments have 'remained mainly at the argumentational level' and that there has not been a concerted effort to transform practice. Certainly, this holds true for the Tanzanian case where the argument about LOI has been active for 70 years, but has not resulted in noticeable change in school language practice (Brock-Utne, 2010; Tibategeza and du Plessis, 2018).

Tanzania and the language of instruction 'stalemate'

In Tanzania, the LOI debate has been active since the late 1950s, but is effectively stuck in 'stalemate'. The 'battle' is between English and Kiswahili and has predominantly focused on which language should be used as the medium of instruction in secondary schools (Brock-Utne, 2005). Since independence, Tanzania has used Kiswahili as the medium of instruction for all seven years of primary schooling, before shifting to English from the beginning of secondary school. Although it is possible to identify some points of shifting attitudes towards both languages (Mohr, 2018), including some changes in the wording of language-in-education policy documents, these have not resulted in substantive change in the way that language is used in classrooms (Tibategeza and du Plessis, 2012; 2018). An article written for the *Los Angeles Times* in 1993 described Tanzania as being in 'language limbo' (Drummond, 1993), and this has not changed in the 27 years since. If anything, the dramatic increase in the number of young Tanzanians progressing to secondary level schooling has placed a much larger percentage of the population in the middle of this language tug-of-war.[2]

The group advocating a shift to using Kiswahili as the LOI in secondary schools and beyond is comprised mostly of academic researchers, including Tanzanian, regional and international scholars. Empirical studies conducted by this group have drawn attention to a variety of issues that are associated with using English as the LOI in Tanzanian secondary schools. These issues will be explored in detail in chapter 3 of this thesis, but the questions that have garnered the most interest are around: student performance in written tasks, examinations and tests (Bartlett and Vavrus, 2013; Brock-Utne, 2007a; Vuzo, 2008); levels of student-teacher interaction (Afitska *et al.*, 2013; Rubagumya, 2008; Webb and Mkongo, 2013); and the variety and effectiveness of pedagogical strategies (Brock-Utne, 2007b; Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir, 2004; Mwinsheikhe, 2008). Studies have also raised concerns about

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[2] Enrolment statistics vary noticeably depending on the source, but there is agreement that there was a rapid increase in students enrolled in lower secondary schooling in Tanzania, with the number of students enrolled at this stage increasing by roughly three times between 2005 and 2012 (Todd and Attfield, 2017; United Republic of Tanzania, 2009; United Republic of Tanzania, 2015).

the use of English as the LOI increasing the prevalence of corporal punishment (Joyce-Gibbons *et al.*, 2018; Mwinsheikhe, 2009), and negatively influencing students' confidence and self-esteem (Lyakurwa, 2012; Nomlomo and Vuzo, 2014). However, this thesis asserts that the impact of the LOI on students' social and emotional well-being has not yet commanded a level of attention commensurate with its importance for students' experiences of schooling.

Resistance to change comes largely from politicians and the Tanzanian public. Language attitude surveys conducted both by academics and for the NGO-led survey *Sauti za Wananchi (Voices of the Citizens)* have shown that teachers, students and parents are aware that the use of English makes learning more difficult. Despite this, they still state a clear preference for continuing with English as the LOI (Qorro, 2009b; Senkoro, 2005; Twaweza, 2015). Reasons offered for maintaining the status quo include, but are not limited to, the requirement to respect the democratic desires of the electorate, the high cost of creating learning materials in Kiswahili, and the importance of English as a global language (see discussions in Babaci-Wilhite, 2013; Kadeghe, 2003; Telli, 2014).

There is a difference between learning a foreign language, and learning using a foreign language as the medium of instruction. Afitska et al. (2013) make an important point when they remind us that there are good reasons for ensuring that students have equitable access to a language of wider communication, like English or French. However, they, like Tikly (2016), argue that it is not the process of learning a European language, but the insistence that it be used to teach other subjects, that has been shown in many contexts to negatively affect learning outcomes. The equation of these two processes contributes significantly to the LOI stalemate. Brock-Utne (2012, p. 787) argues that 'our greatest challenge as educators working in Africa is…the common belief among many lay people that the best way to learn a foreign language is to have the language as a language of instruction.' She goes on to assert that this misconception has become an 'undeniable "truth"'. But Brock-Utne argues that this misconception can be altered, as other historical 'truths' have been successfully challenged, if enough people can come to understand that it is disadvantaging them.

Those who maintain that English should remain the medium of instruction ignore a growing body of evidence about the negative impacts of the current language situation on students' learning, leaving students and teachers to continue to struggle with a LOI in which they are not proficient. Moreover, the insistence that English is best learned when used as the sole medium of instruction also means that multilingual solutions, based on emerging and developing understandings of processes of language acquisition, are being largely ignored.[3] But the advocates of moving away from English as the sole medium of instruction are perhaps also guilty of neglecting the significance of some of the arguments for retaining English. By dismissing reasoning as 'unscientific' (Mligo and Mwashilindi, 2017, p. 52), or driven by self-interest (Senkoro, 2004; 55), critics fail to reassure the majority that their recommendations for change can still ensure that Tanzanian students have access to opportunities to learn English. This thesis uses both conceptual and empirical discussion to broaden the scope of analysis of LOI and language-in-education issues. In particular, it explores students' experiences of living with and using multiple languages, and asks and analyses how different languages are valued. By doing so, it aims to present findings and conclusions that better speak to the multiple concerns and motivations of those who hold opposing positions in the LOI debate.

This study comes at a time when the LOI debate has returned to prominence in Tanzania. The most recent Tanzanian Education and Training Policy, which was announced in February 2015, declared that Kiswahili had a role as a LOI at all levels of education (Jamhuri ya Muungano wa Tanzania, 2014) and reignited debate in the media (for example see Jingi, 2015; Mohammed, 2015). But the wording of the statement relating to language in the policy document is ambiguous and has not been accompanied by initiatives to implement change in practice (Tibategeza and du Plessis, 2018; Vuzo, 2018). Yet this policy represents a potential opportunity for advocates of a different approach to language-in-education, if they can find a way of framing and disseminating their argument that better respects and addresses public concerns and resistance to change. Rubagumya (2009), himself citing Ouane (2005),

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[3] For examples of recent work relating to multilingual education and language acquisition, see (Cummins, 2015; García and Li, 2014; Probyn, 2015; Tikly, 2016).

argues forcefully that education and language experts have a responsibility to keep trying. After all, as Rubanza argued in 1996, 'delays in resolving this issue are causing tremendous harm to our new generation' (Rubanza, 1996, p. 83). Almost 25 years later, this remains true for yet another generation. In fact, the most recent Uwezo national learning assessment, conducted by the NGO Twaweza in 2017, found that, literacy rates in English for students approaching the transition to secondary school were 'low and declining' (Uwezo, 2019, p. 9).[4] Vuzo (2018, p. 803) argues that the unsuitability of the LOI for the majority of students entering secondary education 'pushes them out of the school system' and holds Tanzania back from making progress towards achieving the SDGs.

In order to accommodate positive, evidence-based change in policy and practice, and thus improve the schooling experiences and outcomes of students, there needs to be some movement in the entrenched positions of the LOI debate. This thesis contributes to this aspiration in two key ways. Firstly, it offers an in-depth investigation of students' language-related beliefs and behaviours in two Tanzanian secondary schools, which builds a broader and more holistic picture of the connections between language and different aspects of students' experiences of learning. This highlights the significance of arguments from both sides of the LOI debate for students' educational aspirations and achievement. It also brings to the fore elements of students' experiences that are less frequently part of the discussion, including the relationship between language and student well-being and the role of student agency and negotiation of challenges. Secondly, this thesis identifies the need for and proposes a conceptual vocabulary that brings together the multiple concerns of those approaching the issue of LOI from different positions and through different lenses. In doing so, it looks to the concepts and tools offered by the capability approach (Robeyns, 2017; Sen, 1992; 1999) and explores its potential for fulfilling this role.

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[4] In contrast, they found an increase in Kiswahili literacy amongst primary school students between 2011 and 2017 (Uwezo, 2019).

My personal relationship with Tanzania, language and learning

I first became interested in the LOI debate in 2006 when I visited Tanzania as a volunteer with a project, based at Nottingham University in the UK, which shipped donated textbooks from UK schools to be distributed to secondary schools in Tanzania. Before this visit, I had unquestioningly accepted the explanation that, because the LOI in Tanzanian secondary schools was English and there were close similarities between the syllabi in science and mathematics, that UK textbooks would be useful in Tanzanian schools that were facing severe resource shortages. However, when I visited schools and spoke to teachers and students, it was quickly apparent that the use of English as the LOI posed a significant challenge, and that the level of English in the donated textbooks would be too difficult for the majority of students to meaningfully engage with.

By 2007, the student project had officially registered as an NGO, called READ International.[5] I made subsequent trips to Tanzania in 2007 and 2008, and between July 2009 and June 2010 I was based in Tanzania full-time, establishing a country office in Dar es Salaam. Between 2006 and 2010, I visited more than 200 secondary schools across 13 regions of Tanzania to learn about the educational challenges faced and to evaluate READ International's activities. In large part motivated by concerns about language in schools, the activities of the organisation also changed during this time, eventually stopping the donation of UK textbooks and instead buying titles locally that were identified by schools as most useful. Alongside textbooks, fiction was also provided in both English and Kiswahili to encourage reading for pleasure. Beyond providing books, READ International developed a project where university student volunteers worked with school pupils and teachers to renovate a space in their schools to create or rejuvenate a library. This project allowed me to spend a little more time working alongside Tanzanian secondary students and learning about their experiences.

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[5] Since 2013, all governance of the organisation has moved to Tanzania and it was locally registered as a Tanzanian NGO, named READ Tanzania.

Between 2007 and 2009, I was enrolled in a Masters-level degree in Development Studies at Oxford University in the UK. I chose to write my dissertation about the challenges Tanzanian secondary school students faced in accessing quality education, and conducted fieldwork while in Tanzania in 2008. The main source of data for this study was interviews with secondary students and teachers and it emerged that many felt that the LOI was the most significant challenge they faced. Despite this, most participants asserted strongly that they would not want a change in LOI and preferred to keep English in this role. By this time, I had read some of the literature relating to LOI in Tanzania and Sub-Saharan Africa more broadly and had developed some understanding of the historical, political and economic role and status of English. But even with this contextual knowledge, students' and teachers' insistence on the importance of using English as LOI, alongside their acknowledgement of the significant obstacles to learning this created, felt confusing. I was fully convinced by the commitment of the young people I had worked with and interviewed to their education. So, it was frustrating to see the scale of the obstacles and challenges they, and how they appeared to be exacerbated by the use of an unfamiliar LOI.

It was at this stage that I began thinking that doctoral-level research might allow me the opportunity to spend more time exploring the issue of language-in-education in Tanzania. I knew that I would want to conduct research based on fieldwork over a significant period of time. This would allow me to immerse myself in a school community so that I could observe and try to understand the patterns and dynamics of school practice in a way that my short visits had not permitted me. But rather than apply immediately for a doctoral programme, I took up a place on a UK teacher training programme. I felt that being a qualified teacher myself would enable me to better understand processes of teaching and learning. I would feel more confident about what I was looking for when observing in classrooms. In 2012, I began my PhD part-time, whilst continuing to teach in a UK school. I wanted to allow myself time to significantly improve my Kiswahili before embarking on fieldwork as I felt that my previous interactions with Tanzanian students had always

been limited by language and I wanted to be able to talk to students and teachers in a language with which they were comfortable.

On returning from conducting fieldwork in September 2015, I returned to work in the same UK school, though this time with an additional responsibility for supporting staff and students to engage with and in research. This meant that, while I was conducting the analysis of the data from Tanzania and writing this thesis, I was continuing to learn about empirical and theoretical research relating to teaching and learning in the UK. This experience has undoubtedly had some influence on the way I looked at the data from this study and the literatures that I drew on to inform the interpretation and analysis, perhaps most notably in chapter 9. This continued engagement in learning about broader educational processes, developing myself as a practitioner, and working with young people, has also strengthened my commitment to the research presented in this thesis and its potential for contributing to improvements in the quality and equity of students' educational opportunities.

Language and learning in two Tanzanian secondary schools

This thesis aims to develop a rich and nuanced understanding of students' experiences of language-in-education. It is based on ethnographic field research conducted in two secondary schools during an seven-month period in the Morogoro Region of Tanzania in 2015. This research sought to answer the question: *how do students negotiate their school language environments?* The notion of the 'school language environment' offers a boundary to the study and recognises that language use outside of school is quite different to that within the school campus, although the school language environment is considered to include activities outside the physical grounds of the schools, but which are associated with the practices of schooling. The notion of a 'linguistic environment' has been defined in the broader literature as encompassing information about which languages are spoken, how, and by whom, but also the broader sociolinguistic features of language practice. These include the underlying structures of power that endow different languages with

different levels of status and thus influence language attitudes and behaviours (Grin and Vaillancourt, 1997; Shorten, 2017). As such, this research question is designed to generate an account of students' language beliefs and practices that is socially-situated.

To further guide the research, and to support this over-arching question, this study is also built around the following sub-questions:

1) *How do students value the different languages they use?*

2) *What are the challenges that students face when trying to learn English, and when learning using English as the language of instruction?*

3) *What strategies do students employ to negotiate these challenges, and how do these strategies enable or constrain their capabilities?*

4) *How do teachers enable or constrain students' negotiation of language and learning?*

These research questions are designed to focus attention on the *processes* relating to language and learning. This is considered an important contribution of this thesis. As chapter 2 will demonstrate, the strand of the LOI debate that highlights the importance of English has a tendency to focus on desired outcomes and aspirations for English, for example potential employability (Mohr and Ochieng, 2017). However, even when studies of language have looked at processes of learning, for example through observations of classroom interaction, they have often drawn conclusions based on students' use, or failure to use, English (Brock-Utne, 2007b; Issa Mohamed and Banda, 2008). Often the observations are of negative outcomes, for example students being unable to answer questions, and these are explained by the use of an unfamiliar LOI. This thesis certainly does not dispute the potentially negative impact of the LOI on students' ability to participate in lessons, but it aims to also explore the parts of the language and learning process that are less observable, and to look more closely at *how* language creates obstacles to positive outcomes and how students and teachers try to negotiate these obstacles.

To add conceptual rigour to this endeavour, this thesis frames its analysis of students' experiences of language-in-education from the perspective of the capability approach. The core conceptual distinction at the heart of the capability

approach is between 'functionings' and 'capabilities' (Robeyns, 2017). 'Functionings are achieved outcomes', while 'capabilities are the potential to achieve these functionings' (Walker and Unterhalter, 2007, p. 4). This distinction offers helpful clarity to the analysis of language-in-education because it draws attention not only to whether or not students successfully achieved the desired outcomes or functionings, for example answering a question in class. It is also important to consider whether the student had the *capability* to successfully achieve the functioning under observation. 'Capability' not only refers to a person's skills or knowledge, in this case whether a student knows enough English to answer a question, but also requires consideration of the broader circumstances that might influence a student's ability to respond (Nussbaum, 2011). The capability approach supports the analysis of the full variety of factors that might enable and constrain students' capabilities, including those that can only become visible when we listen to students' own perspectives about their experiences of language and learning.

For the rich empirical account developed in this thesis to be able to enhance broader understanding of language-in-education issues and have the potential to influence policy and practice, it needs to speak back to the LOI debate. In addition to supporting the analysis of the empirical data, the capability approach can also helpfully illuminate the root of some of the tensions in the debate. The capability approach focuses on the extent to which a person is able to 'be' and 'do' the things that they 'value - and have reason to value' (Sen, 1999, p. 18). Within the LOI debate, there are multiple, seemingly irreconcilable values in relation to language outcomes. These include valuing effective communication for learning, valuing connecting schooling to students' cultural backgrounds, valuing the potential of English to support future aspirations, and valuing the use of local languages to support equity and inclusion in schooling. Within the context of the LOI debate, it may seem that these values are conflicting, and thus commentators prioritise different values. However, it is central to this study to acknowledge and respect that people hold multiple values simultaneously, an assertion that also sits at the centre of the capability approach (Robeyns, 2017, p. 56). Alongside these valued language outcomes, though, contributors to the LOI debate also hold strong opinions about

which language they value as LOI. The capability approach asks that we look first at the outcomes or capabilities that students value, and then consider how those capabilities can be created and supported. This requires developing and engaging with understanding relating to processes of language acquisition and the use of different languages for learning, as well as students' broader experiences of language use in education. The conceptual distinction between capabilities and the process and conditions that enable them, along with the requirement to acknowledge and respect multiple language values, is useful for ensuring that the findings of this thesis are framed in a way that does not further entrench divisions in the LOI debate, but highlights connections and common ground.

Referencing the Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's warning about the danger of the 'single story' becoming the 'only story', both Tao (2016) and Okkolin (2017) separately argue for the applicability of this warning to the context of education in Tanzania. Tao (2016) points to the pervasiveness of the narrative that teachers are deficient in their commitment and behaviour, which she argues fails to recognise the challenges presented by the circumstances they are working and living in. In contrast to the dominant picture of students' educational failure, Okkolin (2017) focuses on the experiences of ten Tanzanian women who have been very successful in education. The argument made by both authors is not that there are not elements of truth in the most commonly heard story, but that the more the narrative is repeated, the more likely it is to be assumed to be the complete and only story.

This warning is equally relevant to the issue of language in education in Tanzania. The suggestion that the best way to learn English is to use it as the LOI has already become an 'undeniable "truth"', despite strong bodies of research evidence to the contrary (Brock-Utne, 2012, p. 787), and has thus stalled progress towards change. There is also a danger that evidence of the negative impact of using English as the LOI on learning leads to acceptance of a story where students are framed as hopeless in the face of a language-in-education policy that limits learning. Of course, there are elements of truth in this, and this thesis explores the challenges,

frustrations, fears and disappointments that this situation presents. But the students in this study certainly did not present themselves as hopeless, instead demonstrating a high level of perceived agency and belief that their commitment to education would be rewarded. Moreover, the constraints caused by language affected some students more than others. In her work looking at South African students facing challenging circumstances at the point of transition to university, Wilson-Strydom (2017) argues for the importance of the researcher challenging the starting assumptions and looking at students in a different way. She argues that this may, in turn, change the types of interventions that are suggested. By positioning students at the centre of enquiry and exploring their experiences of language and learning in a more holistic way, that analyses both capabilities as well as functionings, I am trying to do just that.

Structure of the thesis

Chapter 2 situates the argument developed through this thesis in context by mapping the landscapes of language and education in Tanzania. It considers the portrayal of Tanzania as a linguistic success story, raising questions about the extent to which this is true when it comes to language-in-education. Against this broader background, chapter 2 introduces the Tanzanian LOI debate, which has inspired a significant body of research, but also staunch resistance to altering the status quo. By considering the arguments *for* and *against* a change to use Kiswahili as the LOI, this chapter suggests that conflict is underpinned by prioritisation of different goals for language in and beyond education, combined with different assumptions and understandings about processes of language acquisition.

Having argued in chapter 2 that different groups in the LOI debate prioritise different language-related goals, chapter 3 presents a typology for considering the multiple roles that languages play in society, but specifically for students in formal education. This chapter explores the empirical evidence about language-in-schooling in Tanzania and elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa, organised into different language functions: 'language as communication'; 'language as aspiration'; 'language as culture'; 'language as being'; and 'language as social (in)justice'. Chapter 3 argues

that the language choices that are presented as part of the LOI debate fail to acknowledge the coexistence of multiple reasons for valuing language(s). This chapter identifies a need both for a broadening of the focus of empirical research to encompass the multiple meanings of language(s), and for a conceptual framework that can support this multidimensional analysis of students' experiences of language and learning.

Chapter 4 presents key elements of the conceptual vocabulary and analytical tools offered by the capability approach, including the distinction between capabilities and functionings and the recognition of value pluralism. This chapter demonstrates how these concepts can support analysis of students' experiences of language and learning in a way that both encompasses the multiple roles played by language and evaluates the relationship between language-in-education processes and desired language-related outcomes. Chapter 4 also explores capabilities-related tools for conceptualising students' agency in relation to negotiating their language environments, and for exploring different forms of connections between capabilities associated with language and learning. Finally, this chapter considers arguments related to the capability approach about the importance of public deliberative processes in value-formation and decision-making and suggests that these might have the potential to shift the LOI debate.

Chapter 5 describes the research design and explains why an ethnographic perspective was considered particularly valuable for this study. This chapter offers an account of the research process including the assumptions, reflections and practicalities that influenced decisions made with reference to access, data generation methods, data management and analysis, and research quality. It also introduces the voices that contributed to this study. These included students, teachers and student researchers, but the chapter also recognises the influence of the lead researcher and explores my own positionality and multiple identities. Chapter 5 ends with a description of the social-geographical context of the study and an introduction to the two school sites, where the research was conducted, in the Morogoro region of Tanzania.

Chapter 6 uses data to explore students' aspirations relating to education and English, arguing that schooling and English are inseparable in students' imaginations. Approaching aspirations from the perspective of capabilities highlights two sets of aspirations relating to education / English: those related to future hopes of 'becoming'; and those related to ideals of 'being' in the present. In addition to presenting examples of students' future aspirations, this chapter analyses the aspirational identity of 'being a good student', and the mindset and behaviours this entails. This chapter introduces the notion of *"soma kwa bidii"* as both a valued capability and a key strategy discussed by students as part of their negotiation of their school language environments.

Chapter 7 looks more closely at students' language environments, contrasting the monolingual 'English Only' ideal with the multilingual reality. It is argued that, not only does the monolingual ideal fail to represent the practical importance of multilingual language use in schools, it also downplays the value attached to Kiswahili by students and teachers. Instead, this chapter shows that the widespread use of Kiswahili was explained by both students and teachers as a regrettable necessity to compensate for students' linguistic shortcomings. Against these conflicting language narratives, this chapter presents data generated largely by student researchers about challenges experienced in learning English and considers the construction of the capability 'to learn English'.

Chapter 8 explores the challenge of language and understanding, primarily in the classroom environment. It presents and analyses teachers' and students' coping strategies when engaged in the dual processes of learning English and learning using English as the LOI. In particular, this chapter highlights the important roles played by translation and memorisation. Chapter 8 argues that existing practices are both caused by, and result in, capability conflicts and identifies a series of capability 'trade-offs' where students' and teachers' requirements 'now' are prioritised over strengthening 'future' capabilities. It also expresses concern that students are settling for 'partial capabilities' and that these represent adaptive preference in relation to the constraints of their environment. In closing, this chapter offers an example, that stood out from others in the data, of a teacher who had a more flexible

and inclusive approach to classroom code-switching and considers how this affected negotiations of understanding in his classroom.

Chapter 9 identifies the prevalence of fear and shame in students' experiences of schooling. Drawing on literature from the fields of psychology, philosophy and sociology, it considers the ways in which fear acts as a constraint on learning-related capabilities and encourages trade-offs between valued capabilities. Drawing on examples of students who do participate and respond to questions, despite describing feelings of fear, this chapter explores the capability of 'confidence and resilience to fear'. It is argued that there are certain resources and attributes that make it easier for some students to overcome fear than others, and thus that fear further compounds inequality in learning.

Having offered a thick description of students' experiences and negotiations of language and learning in chapters 6-9, the conclusion in chapter 10 highlights the empirical, theoretical and methodological contributions of this thesis and its implications for continued language-in-education research, policy and practice. Overall, it concludes that students' experiences of language and learning are characterised by important connections between a range of different language values and language- and education-related capabilities. It is argued that recognising and strengthening these connections would require a reframing of the LOI debate and a more holistic approach to education planning and intervention, but that the result would be more inclusive and equitable learning experiences for students in multilingual environments.

2. Language and Education in Tanzania

Tanzania has been held up as a linguistic success story (Bamgbose, 1999; Blommaert, 2014; Legère, 2006b; Swilla, 2009; Topan, 2008). In particular, it has been praised for its focus on the development of an African language, Kiswahili (Legère, 2010). Conscious efforts to expand the use of Kiswahili both before and after independence have resulted in Tanzania being one of a short list of Sub-Saharan African countries to have an African *lingua franca* that is spoken by the vast majority of people (Batibo, 1995; Prah, 2012). The use of Kiswahili was a key feature of President Nyerere's vision for the Tanzanian nation after independence from the British Empire (Batibo, 1995; Topan, 2008). Kiswahili was also central to his educational philosophy (Nyerere, 1967). As such, the histories of the development of language policy and the development of education are closely linked (Legère, 2006b).

The central role awarded to Kiswahili in primary education has ensured that Tanzania's language-in-education policy also stands out. While the majority of Sub-Saharan African countries transition to the use of a European language as the medium of instruction by the fourth or fifth year of schooling, Tanzania retains Kiswahili as the language of instruction throughout the seven years of the primary stage (Trudell, 2016a; Trudell, 2016b). Moreover, the 2014 Education and Training Policy indicated the extension of Kiswahili as a medium of instruction into secondary schooling. If this change were enacted, it would make Tanzania the only country in Sub-Saharan Africa to use an African language as a medium of instruction throughout secondary level schooling (Brock-Utne, 2014). So far, though, there are no signs of this being implemented in practice (Tibategeza and du Plessis, 2018; Vuzo, 2018).

The extended use of Kiswahili in primary schooling has not solved the 'language problem' in education in Tanzania. Although international language acquisition research suggests that it might be possible to learn a language well enough to use it as a medium of instruction within six to eight years, it has also been stressed that this is only true 'in optimal conditions' (Heugh, 2006, p. 128). This chapter will show that learning conditions in Tanzania are certainly not 'optimal' and so, instead of arriving at secondary school confident in the language of instruction,

students experience an 'abrupt' shift in to English (Clegg and Simpson, 2016; Gabrieli, Sane and Alphonce, 2018). Although, on paper, Tanzania's language-in-education policy may look progressive in comparison to other Sub-Saharan African countries, it has simply designated secondary level as the battleground for the language of instruction debate.

Building upon this brief introduction, the first part of this chapter maps the landscapes of language and education in Tanzania. This provides the context for the description of the Tanzanian language of instruction (LOI) debate that is offered in the second part of the chapter. The LOI debate is discussed in this chapter, separately from the discussion in chapter 3 of the research literature relating to LOI, because it is considered as part of the historical-political context in which questions of language and education must be understood. By exploring the arguments put forward by those that advocate for change, and those that resist change, this chapter demonstrates that much of the conflict is underpinned by prioritisation of different goals for language in and beyond education, combined with different assumptions and understandings about processes of language acquisition.

The language situation in Tanzania

The LOI debate focuses attention on English and Kiswahili, but the broader linguistic environment in Tanzania includes more than 100 ethnic community languages (ECLs), representing all four major African language families (Muzale and Rugemalira, 2008)[6]. Although Kiswahili is spoken as a mother tongue by the majority of people on Zanzibar and in coastal towns, its role as national *lingua franca* excludes it from the category of ECLs. Estimates in the 1980s were that 90% of the Tanzanian

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[6] Muzale and Rugemalira are part of the 'Languages of Tanzania' project that aims to create a language atlas and record key vocabulary and grammar for each language. Their 2008 paper discusses the challenges in gathering language information, going some way to explaining the variety in estimates of the actual number of ECLs spoken by Tanzanians. For example, Lewis, Simons and Fennig (2016) note that there are 125 languages, while Tibategeza (2010) suggests 150. The four major African language families are Bantu, Cushitic, Nilotic and Khosian. The challenge of counting the precise number of ECLs used in Tanzania is also discussed by Petzell (2012) and Legère (2010).

population spoke Kiswahili (Rubagumya, 1989; Schmied, 1985), with more recent suggestions being as high as 99% (Kimizi, 2009; Vuzo, 2018). It is very common in discussions of language-in-education in Africa to talk about the value of 'mother-tongue' instruction (for example see Alidou *et al.*, 2006; Benson, 2004). However, Kimizi (2009) argues that, for him, and many other Tanzanians, it is unhelpful to identify a 'mother-tongue' because they speak ECLs and Kiswahili with equal fluency and comfort. Instead he prefers the term 'home-languages' to distinguish ECLs, as their use is generally confined to the home domain.[7] There is no reliable estimate of the current number of English speakers in Tanzania. Based on data available in 2001, Crystal (2003, p. 64) estimated that about 11% of the population spoke English as a second language. This might be assumed to be growing with the increase in the percentage of students progressing to secondary education. However, a more recent 'guess' is that only about 5% of Tanzanians speak English 'competently' (Legère and Rosendal, 2015, p. 82), underlining Rubagumya's (1989) warning that English proficiency varies dramatically.

There has been some disagreement amongst scholars about how to categorise the relationship between the languages used in Tanzania. Work in the 1970s and 1980s looked to the popular sociolinguistic concept of 'diglossia', sometimes extended to 'triglossia', to describe the fact that Tanzania had different languages being used for different functions in society (Abdulaziz Mkilifi, 1972; Fasold, 1984). Although this terminology is also regularly used to describe the linguistic situation in Tanzania (Isingoma, 2016; Mohr, 2018; Petzell, 2012a), these categorisations have been criticised as 'less than helpful' or even wholly inaccurate by some scholars (Russell, 1990, p. 364). They argue that di-/triglossic relationships assume 'harmonious coexistence' of multiple languages to which the majority of society has access (Mekacha, 1993, p. 307), which they assert is not the case in Tanzania. Rubagumya (1989; 1991), though not entirely rejecting the use of the term 'triglossia', has insisted on its qualification to recognise the association of different

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[7] It should be acknowledged that there are some areas of Tanzania where ECLs are used by large numbers of speakers and so play broader communicative roles, even as 'interethnic lingua franca' (Mekacha, 1993, p. 313).

languages with power and status, and the inequality and social divisions that are compounded as a result. Rugemalira (2013, p. 62) upholds the need to acknowledge that Tanzania is 'a conflictual triglossic environment', pointing to a linguistic hierarchy with English at the top, Kiswahili in the middle, and ECLs at the bottom. There have also been recent suggestions that the clear distinctions between different languages may not be appropriate as there are multiple varieties of different languages being spoken, and numerous examples of languages being mixed together by speakers in Tanzania (Barasa, 2015; Blommaert, 2014; Higgins, 2009; Legère, 2010; Rosendal and Mapunda, 2014).

Despite the fact that there are more than 100 ECLs spoken in Tanzania, they do not have 'official language' status and their use in school is discouraged and stigmatised (Wedin, 2005). Petzell (2012a, p. 139) argues that, 'although the ECLs are not precisely banned, they are disapproved of', and notes that there is no official action taken to preserve these languages, which are positioned as 'backward-looking and a 'risk to national unity' (see also Petzell, 2012b). They are not used as languages of instruction, are not available for formal study at university level, and there are no newspapers or radio programmes produced in ECLs (Roy-Campbell, 2001a; Rubagumya *et al.*, 2011). The 1997 Culture Policy notes that the ECLs (or 'languages of society') are the 'foundation for our national language, Kiswahili'. However, they are not ascribed any broader societal functions, rather their value is attached to the fact that they are carriers of tradition and culture (Jamhuri ya Muungano wa Tanzania, 1997, p. 17). Rubagumya, et al. go so far as to suggest that, using the notion of linguistic citizenship, individuals who only have command of ECLs, even if they have command of more than one, can only be considered "semi-citizens". Without Kiswahili, there are multiple societal domains that they cannot access without support of a third party (Rubagumya *et al.*, 2011, p. 80).

Kiswahili is by far the most used language in Tanzania. Despite only being the first language for about 2.4 million people (Muzale and Rugemalira, 2008)[8], Blommaert (2014, p. viii) repeatedly praises Tanzania's achievement of its goal of

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[8] Despite the prevalence of Kiswahili in Tanzania, it is Sukuma, rather than Kiswahili, that is considered to have the largest number of first language speakers (Muzale and Rugemalira, 2008).

'linguistic hegemony' by extending the use of Kiswahili as the national *lingua franca*. He asserts, 'to the extent that Ujamaa was expected to turn every Tanzanian into a Swahili-speaking subject, it was an amazingly successful exercise' (Blommaert, 2014, p. 8). *Ujamaa*, was the philosophy of Tanzanian socialism and stressed the importance of national cohesion, which would be promoted through the spread of one shared language, Kiswahili (Legère and Rosendal, 2015). Comparing Tanzania to other countries, Brock-Utne and Skattum talk about Tanzania as 'exceptional', suggesting that the spread of Kiswahili has enabled Tanzania to become 'possibly the most successful country in Sub-Saharan Africa with regard to literacy in African languages' (2009, p. 34). Kiswahili is widely used in both informal and official domains, including parliament, government offices and the courts (Mtesigwa, 2009). Language choices differ in different regions across the country, and there are noticeable differences between urban and rural linguistic landscapes. But nationally, Swahili is used much more than English and is the main language heard in all public domains (Petzell, 2012a). It is also primarily Kiswahili, not English, in Tanzania that might be considered the 'killer'[9] of ECLs (Muzale and Rugemalira, 2008; Petzell, 2012a). It has been suggested that the majority of urban children are now growing up with Kiswahili as their first language (Tibategeza and du Plessis, 2012) and a 'language shift' from ECLs to Kiswahili has also been reported in some rural areas (Msanjila, 2004; Petzell, 2012b).

Evidence of the widespread use of Kiswahili should not be taken to minimise the importance of English in Tanzania. Although English is a minority language in terms of numbers of speakers, in both Tanzania and Anglophone Africa more broadly, it holds special prestige, both symbolically and practically (Blommaert, 2005; Legère, 2010; Ochieng, 2015). English carries a high level of 'linguistic capital' and is believed to be a pre-requisite for accessing well-paid employment and for international mobility (Mohr, 2018; Rubagumya, 2003; Swilla, 2009). Some are highly

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[9] The term 'killer language', along with similar concepts like 'language death' and 'linguistic genocide' are used by those that advance a language ecology approach and/or work within the linguistic rights paradigm. These approaches posit that 'language loss is morally wrong…and that language diversity is inherently good' (Makoni and Trudell, 2009, p. 33). English is considered the worst 'killer language' (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000).

critical of the high status awarded to English, seeing it as evidence of continued imperial oppression (Rugemalira, 2013; Senkoro, 2005). But others suggest that English has, in fact, shaken off its 'colonial hangover' image and taken on a more neutral role as a global *lingua franca* and the language of international business and science and technology (Ochieng, 2015). However, Blommaert (2005) and Billings (2009; 2011) warn that it is only certain forms of English that truly act as passports of social mobility. Instead, Legère worries that the increased use of English in media, business and technology, without significant improvement in attempts to develop English competence, will result in the majority of Tanzanians being 'turned into "silent observers" of development' (2010, p. 64).

This section has considered the dynamics of language use in Tanzanian society and has highlighted a number of potential areas of tension and conflict between languages, relating to the status of ECLs, Kiswahili and English. These undoubtedly have implications for attitudes towards language use in education. But education has also played a significant role in shaping language attitudes in Tanzania.

The development of language and schooling

Formal schooling has played a central role in shaping the language situation in Tanzanian society more broadly (Yahya-Othman and Batibo, 1996). Although scholars like Anangisye and Fussy (2014) are correct to assert that study of education in Tanzania should also consider pre-colonial forms of informal learning, because this study focuses on language of instruction in formal schooling, the colonial period is an appropriate starting point. Under German colonial control (1885-1919), the use of ECLs had been allowed in the early years of primary schools, moving to Kiswahili as the language of instruction in later years. Kiswahili was also used widely by the colonial administration (Abdulaziz, 1980; Pike, 1986). Kiswahili had been spread inland during the 19th century by the coastal Swahili traders and, although there was some resistance due to its association with Islam, Kiswahili was also eventually used by both Muslim and Christian institutions (Pike, 1986; Whiteley, 1956). By the time of occupation, although it took different forms in different parts of the country and

was unevenly distributed, Kiswahili was 'a ready-made *lingua franca*' for the German, and then British, administrations (Whiteley, 1956, p. 343).

It is the British form of colonial education that Anangisye and Fussy (2014) argue most influenced the subsequent development of formal schooling in the region that was to become Tanzania. The education system in Tanganyika was racially divided throughout the period and African children had fewer opportunities for schooling than European and Asian children (Anangisye and Fussy, 2014; Mbilinyi, 1982; Mushi, 2009). For Africans, the focus of the colonial administration was on lower primary education. This was designed to train workers for rural agricultural production, to develop basic literacy and accounting skills for roles that would support the system of 'indirect rule', and to spread Western, Christian values (Buchert, 1994). ECLs were used as languages of instruction in the earliest years, before a transition to Kiswahili in standard III, when English was also introduced as a subject. After the Second World War, the British administration placed greater emphasis on education and the number of European and Asian students in secondary schools grew significantly. There were still very few African students progressing to secondary level education, but there was an increase in African students progressing beyond primary to the middle level, where the language of instruction was English (Buchert, 1994, p. 63).[10] Legère (2006b) argues that the British focus on English in this period was intended to undermine Kiswahili, which they were concerned could act as a language of mass mobilisation. Thinking about the curriculum of the period, Mushi (2009, p. 77) asserts that "character training", which included school rituals, corporal punishment and how to behave towards authority, was emphasised as much as the academic curriculum (see also Cameron and Dodd, 1970). Mushi concludes that the colonial system of education created the 'ideological acceptance' of the fact that 'educated' people deserved a better place in society (Mushi, 2009, p. 77).

Both the expansion of education and the spread of Kiswahili were important features of government policy after independence, and were 'set explicitly against

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[10] See Buchert (1994), Ssekamwa and Lugumba (2001) and Mushi (2009) for more detailed discussion of the stages of educational development in the British colonial period.

the background of nation building' (Blommaert, 2014, p. 34). Tanganyika and Zanzibar had been unified in 1964, and in 1967, President Nyerere made The Arusha Declaration, perhaps the most famous statement of his philosophy of African socialism, *Ujamaa* (TANU, 1967). One of the key features of this political philosophy was 'Self-Reliance', and this also shaped the policy of Education for Self-Reliance (Nyerere, 1967), which represented a 'decisive break' from the model of colonial schooling, at least at primary level (Anangisye and Fussy, 2014, p. 378). Key to this approach were the concepts of equality and participation (Buchert, 1994), though Blommaert (2014) suggests that some of the justifications for the policy were economic as much as they were ideological. The policy focused on primary schooling, which would offer 'a complete education in itself' and would act as 'a preparation for the life which the majority of the children will lead' (Nyerere, 1967, p. 17). One of Nyerere's key goals was 'to make the education provided in all our schools much more Tanzanian in content' (Nyerere, 1967, p. 5). This included the language of instruction, which was to be Kiswahili throughout the primary stage, which was extended to include the middle level that had existed under the colonial system. Kiswahili was the obvious choice for the language of instruction because it was the 'language of liberation' and the language of the new Tanzanian national identity (Blommaert, 2014, p. 34). Pointing to the ideological underpinnings of Education for Self-Reliance, Topan (2008, p. 261) also argues that the use of Kiswahili was designed to 'remove sociolinguistic inequalities' and was key to a vision of education that should be accessible to all.

In contrast to the striking changes to primary schooling, after independence, secondary education appeared to remain 'as good as intact' (Blommaert, 2014, p. 34). The LOI remained English at this level and secondary schooling was only available to a small number. Nyerere explained that the only justification for using public money to offer secondary level education was that it would prepare young people for roles, such as teachers, doctors and engineers, in which they would work in 'service to the many' (1967, p. 17). Nyerere also defended the continued teaching of English at this level. In 1984 he made a speech to the Society for Kiswahili and Poetry where he said: 'English is the Swahili of the world...To reject English is

foolishness, not patriotism…English will be the medium of instruction in secondary schools and institutions of higher education because if it is left as only a normal subject it may die' (Nyerere, as translated and cited by Tibategeza and du Plessis, 2018, p. 95).[11] Roy-Campbell (2001a) suggests that Nyerere's stance towards English subsequently softened, and Legère (2006b) argues that, having seen the challenges that students faced using English as the language of instruction, Nyerere changed his mind completely. He quotes a statement from 1994 where Nyerere asserted that 'it is not appropriate to continue maintaining English as the language of instruction' (Legère, 2006b, p. 390). Yet, the concern that English will 'die' in Tanzania if it is no longer used as the language of instruction is a commonly asserted argument in the language of instruction debate (for example see Kadeghe, 2003), and is discussed further in the second part of this chapter.

Despite Nyerere's statements on language-in-education, there were expectations and preparations throughout his presidency for a gradual change to use Kiswahili as the language of instruction at all levels. (Brock-Utne, 2002; Polomé, 1979; Rubagumya, 1991). Nyerere was behind a number of conscious strategies to promote and develop Kiswahili. Perhaps the most high profile of these was the 1967 establishment of The National Swahili Council (best known as BAKITA[12]), through an act of parliament (Legère, 2006b; Rugemalira, 2013). Another strategy was that students at secondary level and beyond, along with civil servants, were posted to different areas of the country to force the use of Kiswahili as the language of wider communication (Polomé, 1982). However, Lwaitama and Rugemalira (1990) argue that 1983 acts as a turning point when there was a move away from the intention to transition to Kiswahili, a decision that Brock-Utne (2002) believes was taken by Nyerere himself, under the influence of the British Council.

Nyerere's ambitions for a truly transformative education system were never fully realised. Today, his educational philosophy is still invoked as a set of principles that could positively influence current education planning (Lema, Mbilinyi and

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[11] The original speech was recorded in the state-owned newspaper, *Mzalendo*, on 28th October 1984.

[12] BAKITA is an acronym for *Baraza la Kiswahili la Taifa*.

Rajani, 2004), and Nyerere himself is still affectionately referred to as '*Mwalimu*' [Teacher] (Legère, 2006b). But at the time, Education for Self-Reliance faced significant challenges of implementation. Mosha (1990, pp. 61-62) argues that the policy was implemented with 'rush and political pressure', which resulted in misinterpretation and, in some cases, suspicion of the government's motives (see also Nkonoki, 1977). Tanzania's economy was also struggling so the government had limited financial resources to support the implementation (Galabawa, 1990). The situation was further strained by the World Bank's imposition of Structural Adjustment policies on Tanzania in the 1980s and 1990s. One condition of IMF loans was a reduction of state spending on social services, including education (Mushi, 2009; Vavrus, 2003; Wedin, 2005). Although the gross enrolment ratio (GER) for primary school had reached 98% in 1980, there was a dramatic drop off to an estimated net enrolment ratio (NER) of 47% by 2002 (Wedgwood, 2005; 2007). The combination of this expansion and underfunding contributed to the quality of education becoming a grave concern for government, educationalists and the public alike (Galabawa, 1990; Mosha, 2000; Wedgwood, 2007).

The trajectory of educational development in Tanzania has undoubtedly played an important role in shaping the positions of different languages in society. Kiswahili and English played significant roles in schooling both before and after independence. This section has demonstrated that there is some uncertainty about the longer-term aspirations of the first leaders of independent Tanzania in relation to LOI at secondary level and beyond. This is partly because education, and thus language questions, were always linked to broader changes and tensions in political economy. This relationship continues as questions of language-in-education remain embroiled with concerns about the quality of education.

Expansion amidst a 'crisis' of quality

Both academic and public debates since the end of the 1990s have invoked the language of 'crisis' when talking about Tanzanian education (Galabawa, Senkoro and Lwaitama, 2000; Lwaitama, Mtalo and Mboma, 2001; Vavrus, 2003). The results of the 2012 Form 4 examination in which more than 60% of students failed to achieve

a pass in even the lowest division were termed a 'national disaster' (Domasa, 2013). Although pass rates have increased since 2012, reportedly reaching 77% in 2017 (Daily News, 2018a), there have been several changes to the system of grading in the intervening years, raising doubts about the comparability of results (Magolanga, 2013; Todd and Attfield, 2017). In May 2013, 3 months after the release of the 2012 results, prominent education campaigner, Rakesh Rajani wrote to the Prime Minister to express his disappointment with the decision to cancel the results and re-issue them using a different grading formula. Rajani had been part of the Commission to Investigate Causes of Poor Form IV Results and asserts that, having viewed exam scripts, members believed that the results were a fair representation of students' performance. In fact, he claims that 'many members of the Commission quickly realized that the core problems were not the nature of the examinations but the utter collapse of the education system' (Rajani, 2013, p. 2). Instead of making changes to the marking system, Rajani argues that the government should 'focus on issues that are, from an evidence based perspective, the key drivers of learning'. He gives six examples that include teacher motivation, transparency and accountability at different levels, and the language of instruction, which he argues should be Kiswahili (2013, pp. 4-5).

Challenges in delivering good quality education have been exacerbated by the dramatic expansion of secondary schooling. Already in 1994, Mabala talked about the educational crisis being fuelled by a 'sudden explosion of secondary education' (1994, p. 40). Between 2004 and 2008 there was another period of rapid growth under the Secondary Education Development Plan, when the number of government secondary schools increased at a rate far beyond the government's 'high growth scenario', from 828 to 3039 (United Republic of Tanzania, 2009). One major driver of this expansion was government support for community schools, based on a cost-sharing model (Mligo and Mshana, 2018; Mligo and Mwashilindi, 2017). These secondary schools are built and owned at community level, but are registered with the government, which supplies teachers and other staff along with a capitation grant for teaching resources (World Bank, 2008). These schools have been key to enabling growing numbers of students to access secondary schooling

(Mligo and Mwashilindi, 2017). The Tanzanian government reported a GER of 48.9% for lower secondary level in 2015, up from 20.2% in 2006 (United Republic of Tanzania, 2015). But community schools have also been associated with very poor quality education and even blamed for the increase in failure rates in national examinations (Bwenge, 2012; Kirui, Osman and Naisujaki, 2017; Mligo and Mshana, 2018; Sumra and Katabaro, 2014).

The expansion of secondary education has implications for language use. Although, in theory, increasing numbers of young people have the opportunity to learn English, school expansion has had a strain on the levels of available resources (Mligo and Mshana, 2018). Teaching is not seen as an attractive career in Tanzania and this has led to students with increasingly lower examination marks being admitted to teacher training college, with the related implication that many teachers themselves have a poor grasp of English (Anangisye, 2010; Kitta and Fussy, 2013). Though the use of English presents an obstacle to quality learning in all schools, Mligo and Mwashilindi (2017) demonstrate that the challenge in poorly resourced community schools is particularly acute. The result of this situation is that Kiswahili is regularly used by students and teachers at secondary level, and is often the predominant language heard around school campuses (Bwenge, 2012; Jidamva, 2012). In society more broadly, English undoubtedly retains its symbolic value, and desire for English may even be growing, as evidenced through the growth of private, English-medium schools (Ochieng, 2015). But important concerns have been raised that the level and form of English that students have access to in most Tanzanian secondary schools may do more to reproduce inequalities and keep students 'in place' than empower them to social mobility (Billings, 2011; Blommaert, 2005, p. 409; Brock-Utne, 2007b). This question of who truly benefits from English-medium education is an important theme in the language of instruction debate (Qorro, 2009b; Rajabu and Ngonyani, 1994).

The language of instruction issue in Tanzania

The LOI debate in Tanzania was given new energy with the announcement, in February 2015, of the new Education and Training Policy 2014. It was widely

reported that the policy committed to a change to use Kiswahili as the medium of instruction at all levels (Jingi, 2015; Mohammed, 2015; Trudell, 2016b). In fact, the wording of the document is more ambiguous and there is no sign of a change being implemented (Tibategeza and du Plessis, 2018). In fact, in June 2019, the Education Minister asserted in Parliament that the Government intended to protect the role of English as LOI in secondary schools. But the policy announcement and subsequent media discussion reinvigorated old arguments relating to the LOI. On 31st July 2018, with there still being no sign of change in school language practice since the announcement of the Education and Training Policy 2014, a debate was organised at the University of Dar es Salaam about the language of instruction issue in Tanzania (HakiElimu, 2018). Prominent LOI researcher, Martha Qorro, was amongst the discussants and was likely not surprised that the 'experts failed to reach a consensus' (Christopher, 2018). In 2009, she had suggested that the LOI debate had gone 'stale', and little has changed in the subsequent decade in terms of the arguments made, or language practice in schools. Rubagumya has complained that 'all too often the debates on language in education have generated more heat than light, accusations and counter-accusations' (2009, pp. 60-61). This certainly seems to have applied to the 2018 event, which included well-rehearsed charges of hypocrisy, personal interest and linguistic imperialism (Christopher, 2018). This section presents some of the key arguments in the LOI debate.

The contributors to the LOI debate can very roughly be organised into two groups. On the one side are the people who advocate for a change in practice to use Kiswahili as the medium of instruction throughout the education system (for example see Brock-Utne, 2007b; Mligo and Mwashilindi, 2017; Mwinsheikhe, 2009; Qorro, 2013; Vuzo, 2010). On the other side are those that oppose this change (Jingi, 2015; Kadeghe, 2003). The rationales underpinning these positions are explored in the rest of this chapter. Of course, in the broader debate, there is more nuance than an either/or choice between English and Kiswahili as the LOI at secondary level, and more options are discussed. These options include support for a change of LOI at primary level so that English would be used throughout the education system (Marwa, 2014; Nyamubi, 2003; Twaweza, 2015), advocacy for a greater role for ECLs

at primary level (Rubanza, 1996; Wedin, 2005), and a more explicitly bi-/multilingual approach to teaching and learning (Afitska *et al.*, 2013; Biswalo, 2010; Mohr and Ochieng, 2017; Tibategeza, 2010). But most often, the debate is presented or interpreted as a dichotomous choice between English and Kiswahili (Roy-Campbell, 2001b).

There are perhaps two main reasons why English and Kiswahili are positioned as if they are in firm opposition in the LOI debate. The first relates to the historical discussion in the first part of this chapter and the relationship between the two languages at, and immediately after, independence. As the 'language of liberation' (Blommaert, 2014, p. 34), Kiswahili was framed as the alternative to colonial oppression, of which English was a key symbol. The choice of Kiswahili as the LOI at primary level was celebrated as a positive affirmation of national identity, while use of English in this period was seen as being 'brainwashed or haunted by a colonial mentality' (Bwenge, 2012, p. 172; Legère, 2010; Roy-Campbell, 2001a). Roy-Campbell argues that fostering the dichotomy between Kiswahili and English was also a political strategy used by the Tanzanian government to 'strengthen its cultural power and consolidate its ideological hegemony' (Roy-Campbell, 2001a, p. 141). Like Blommaert (2014), though, she notes that efforts to promote Kiswahili fell short of replacing English as the prestige language. Although Yahya-Othman and Batibo described the historical 'fortunes' of English in Tanzania as a 'swinging pendulum' (1996, p. 390), attitudes towards the language were rarely wholly negative (Batibo, 1995; Bwenge, 2012; Schmied, 1985). It retained its status as the language of higher education and thus social mobility (Ochieng, 2015; Roy-Campbell, 2001b). Its more recent association with globalisation and development also means that English is viewed as a symbol of success and aspiration (Legère and Rosendal, 2015). Tanzania now has two languages playing official roles. But the historical framing of the Kiswahili-English dichotomy means that they are still positioned in conflict with one another (Rubagumya, 1991; Rugemalira, 2013).

The second reason that the conversation about LOI is often interpreted as a dichotomous choice is the pervasive belief, held by non-language experts, that the best way to learn a language is to use it as the sole LOI. Phillipson (1992) argues that

this belief relates to several false assumptions that underpinned English Language Teaching as it developed in post-colonial Africa in the 1960s. These include the 'fallacies' that the best way to learn English is monolingually, that the more time spent on instruction in English the better, no matter the quality, and that use of other languages takes away from the learning of English. Phillipson notes that, although these assumptions have been shown by research and language learning theory to be incorrect (Cummins, 1984; Cummins, 2015; García and Li, 2014), the fact that they are 'intuitively commonsensical' has led to their remaining pervasive (Phillipson, 1992, p. 210). Brock-Utne (2012) notes that these beliefs are particularly erroneous in contexts like Tanzania where the target language, English, is rarely heard outside of the classroom. Moreover, she points to the tragic irony that people who believe this 'undeniable "truth"' that the best way to learn English is to use it as the LOI are precisely those who are the most disadvantaged by the continued use of English in this role (Brock-Utne, 2012, p. 787). Through the lens of this assumption, use of Kiswahili, or any other languages, in school undermines the goal of learning English.

Bearing in mind these differences in underlying assumptions about how language learning works, as well as the oppositional relationship between English and Kiswahili, it is perhaps unsurprising that the LOI debate has not yet been resolved. The rest of this section explores the arguments that are put forward by different sides, but notes that neither side fully engages with the other side's arguments. As shown in the discussion below, the group that resists the use of Kiswahili as LOI in post-primary education too easily dismisses a growing body of empirical research about the negative effects of English-medium instruction on learning. But at the same time, considering that pro-Kiswahili advocates are aware of the misconceptions around language acquisition, they have perhaps not done enough to acknowledge the importance of English and to reassure people that a change to Kiswahili LOI does not mean the sacrifice of English.

Arguments *for* Kiswahili as the language of instruction

The main argument given for a change to Kiswahili as the LOI is the assertion that the current use of English in this role is bad for learning. Qorro argues that, in the

context of current language use in schools, 'education becomes the best recipe to learn nothing' (2009b, p. 73). Brock-Utne goes so far as to term English as the language of 'destruction' rather than instruction, arguing that it is 'destroying learning possibilities and learning outcomes for the learners' (2004, p. 60). Many of the supporters of a change to Kiswahili as the language of instruction throughout the education system come from the education and language research communities. Their advocacy is supported by a mushrooming of empirical research studies, stretching back to the 1970s (Katigula, 1976; Mlama and Matteru, 1977; Mlekwa, 1977; Moshi, 1983; Criper and Dodd, 1984; Roy-Campbell and Qorro, 1987; Vuzo, 2002b; Mkwizu, 2003; Brock-Utne, 2007b; Mwinsheikhe, 2008; Kimizi, 2009; Afitska et al., 2013; Barrett et al., 2014; Mligo and Mwashilindi, 2017). The crux of this argument is that the vast majority of students do not acquire enough English to be able to use it effectively as the language of instruction under current conditions. Areas of particular interest to researchers have included student attainment in examinations, tests and other language tasks (Bartlett and Vavrus, 2013; Brock-Utne, 2007a; Vuzo, 2008), classroom interaction (Afitska *et al.*, 2013; Rubagumya, 2008; Webb and Mkongo, 2013), and the variety and effectiveness of pedagogical strategies (Brock-Utne, 2007b; Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir, 2004; Mwinsheikhe, 2008). Concerns are raised that English as the medium of instruction creates significant challenges of understanding and comprehension, and limits students' capacity for high-order skills like critical thinking and creativity (Brock-Utne, 2007b; Nomlomo and Vuzo, 2014; Qorro, 2009b). Instead, it is argued that students become reliant on memorising and 'parroting' information (Galabawa and Senkoro, 2006, p. 46).

It is argued that the shift in LOI between primary and secondary causes a disconnection between students' prior experiences and their current schooling that means that students cannot easily draw upon their existing linguistic and subject resources (Malekela, 2003; Rubagumya, 2000; Vuzo, 2018). For example, students can no longer use the academic vocabulary they have developed in Kiswahili and must re-learn terms and concepts in English (Barrett *et al.*, 2014; Sumra and Katabaro, 2014). This 'disconnection factor' also applies between home and school

as the majority of students do not use English in their home and community settings (Vuzo, 2010, p. 16). Rubagumya (2009, p. 50) argues that this linguistic disconnection is further strengthened by the fact that, at secondary level, Kiswahili 'is seen as "a problem", which interferes with students' mastery of English'. Elsewhere, Rubagumya goes so far as to argue that 'in Tanzania, it is precisely this lack of logical connections, which threatens the quality of education' (2000, p. 113). Although the concept of disconnection has been invoked by several scholars writing about the LOI issue, the notion of connections between students' different aspects of students' lives and experiences being either hindered or facilitated by language choices has not been explored in depth in an empirical study. This thesis works to address that gap.

It has been importantly asserted that the use of English as LOI negatively affects students' emotional, social and even physical well-being. For example, Joyce-Gibbons et al. (2018) argue that, although issues such as bullying, humiliation of students and corporal punishment are not directly caused by the language of instruction, the prevalence of these kinds of practices is increased by the way that English is used in schools (see also Brock-Utne, 2007b; Malekela, 2003; Mwinsheikhe, 2009; Senkoro, 2005). Several scholars have also argued that the current language of instruction situation undermines students' confidence, self-esteem and determination (Lyakurwa, 2012; Nomlomo and Vuzo, 2014; Qorro, 2013; Vuzo, 2018). Although these concerns are often mentioned in passing, there are few examples of studies that focus on students' well-being in relation to language-in-education. This is another area of understanding that this thesis aims to contribute to.

Change to the use of Kiswahili as the language of instruction is argued to be necessary to achieve inclusive and equitable education (Galabawa, 2004; Sumra and Katabaro, 2014). Citing school-based empirical research, Vuzo (2018) argues that the LOI will be a significant contributor to Tanzania failing to meet its targets for SDG 4, in particular because it is cited as a key reason for student drop-out. Brock-Utne (2007a) demonstrates that the use of English not only leads to significantly lower student achievement overall, but it also creates a wider gap between the highest

and lowest achievers. The language issue is argued to have a particularly significant impact on inclusion in contexts where students have a diversity of specific learning needs (Possi and Milinga, 2017). Concerns have also been raised that the challenges of inequity and exclusion will become increasingly stark as the secondary education sector continues to expand. For example, Brock-Utne writes that 'there is every reason to believe that the difficulties will multiply as children from less affluent homes and less equipped primary schools will also now enter secondary schooling' (2012, p. 781; see also Mligo and Mwashilindi, 2017). It is also argued that the current situation encourages those who can afford it to choose private English-medium primary schooling, further entrenching inequality and elite privilege (Sumra and Katabaro, 2014).

Elite interests are often cited and criticised as a motivation for retaining the LOI status quo, despite clear evidence of its negative effects (Brock-Utne, 2012; 2014; Qorro, 2013; Rajabu and Ngonyani, 1994; Senkoro, 2004). It is argued that retaining English as LOI perpetuates a colonial mindset that positions English and education as 'synonymous' and devalues home languages and Kiswahili (Brock-Utne, 2013; Neke, 2005; Rubagumya, 2003; Senkoro, 2005). The association of English with education, modernity and opportunity also positions Kiswahili and ECLs, as well as knowledge and culture that sit outside of the formal schooling system, as traditional and backward (Galabawa and Senkoro, 2006; Neke, 2003; Senkoro, 2005). Brock-Utne draws upon the writing of key postcolonial critics such as Ngūgī wa Thiong'o (1986, p. 9) to argue that the prominence of English acts as a continuing form of '"spiritual subjugation"' (as cited in Brock-Utne, 2016, p. 32). She suggests that this is part of a 'hidden curriculum', further arguing that the use of English as LOI results in students learning that they are 'stupid' because they do not understand what the teacher is saying (Brock-Utne, 2007b; see also Mtesigwa, 2009; Rajabu and Ngonyani, 1994). Although few of these commentators would argue with offering English as a subject (Qorro, 2006a; Russell, 1990), they believe it has no place in the privileged position of LOI.

It is also argued that policy-makers fail to make decisions in the best interests of Tanzanian students because they are influenced by their dependency on foreign

donors (Galabawa, 2004; Rubagumya, 2009). An oft-shared example is the role of the British Council in the 1980s which is claimed to have influenced the recommendations of two studies, both of which found that levels of English were not sufficient for the language to be effectively used as LOI (Criper and Dodd, 1984; Tume ya Rais, 1982). Although the preliminary Makweta Report recommended a change to use Kiswahili as LOI, this disappeared from the final, official version of the report (Qorro, 2009b). Despite identifying significant problems with English as the LOI, the Criper and Dodd report (1984) concluded that the role of English should be emphasised and efforts be made to improve levels of English amongst teachers and students. In particular, they recommended the English Language Teaching Support Project, which would be funded by the British Government. This has been pointed to as clear evidence of donor interests moulding policy decisions (Brock-Utne, 2010; Lwaitama and Rugemalira, 1990; Rajabu and Ngonyani, 1994; Rubanza, 1996). This example is now 35 years old, but it is argued by a number of contemporary commentators that the interests of donors and the former colonial power persist in influencing language-in-education policy in Tanzania (Babaci-Wilhite, 2015a; Biswalo, 2010; Qorro, 2013; Rugemalira, 2013).

In 1994, in a paper exploring why there had not yet been a change in the medium of instruction in Tanzania, Judith Barrett suggested that 'perhaps the reason that English has been retained is that the arguments for Kiswahili have simply not been sufficiently strongly put' (Barrett, 1994, p. 3). Even if this might have been considered true in 1994 (Mwansoko, 1994; Rugemalira *et al.*, 1990), this section has demonstrated that it is certainly not the case today. But the arguments *against* Kiswahili are also strongly asserted, and have the added weight that they are in line with the beliefs and assumptions of the majority of the Tanzanian public.

Arguments *against* Kiswahili as the language of instruction

Resistance to using Kiswahili as the LOI for post-primary education comes largely from politicians and the Tanzanian public. There are also, though, a number of Tanzanian scholars who acknowledge the existing challenge with language in schools, but do not conclude that a shift to use Kiswahili as the medium of instruction

is the correct response (for example see Kadeghe, 2003; Kirui, Osman and Naisujaki, 2017; Marwa, 2014; Nyamubi, 2016). Arguments *against* the use of Kiswahili fall roughly into two groups. The first focuses on the practical challenges of implementing such a change, while the second is centred around assertions of the importance of English and the belief that the best way to learn English is to use it as the LOI. Although a preference for English LOI is popular with politicians and the Tanzanian public, the fact that it represents the status quo means that there are fewer written defences of this position. As such, this section is quite reliant on reports from the scholars referenced above as holding a pro-Kiswahili position. But as part of their arguments for change, these commentators have both offered their analysis of the barriers that they are contending with (Mtesigwa, 2009; Mulokozi, 1989; Qorro, 2009b), and presented discussions from meetings, interviews and other personal communications with those who argue against the use of Kiswahili as the language of instruction (Babaci-Wilhite, 2013; Biswalo, 2010; Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir, 2004; Neke, 2003). The outline of arguments presented in this section is indebted to these sources.

It has been argued that the cost of changing the language of instruction is simply prohibitive as it would require the creation of new teaching and learning materials as well as retraining teachers (Galabawa, 2004; Mtesigwa, 2009; Mulokozi, 1989; Qorro, 2013). Policy-makers have asserted that money is a much bigger problem for the education system than language (Telli, 2014). In 2000, the Minister for Education said that 'the little money that is available will be spent on improving the quality of education and not on the language of instruction' (as reported in Qorro, 2009b, p. 60). A study by Telli (2014) found that parents accepted the government's argument that change is too expensive, even if they would otherwise have supported Kiswahili as LOI. Undoubtedly, the Tanzanian education sector has faced financial challenges (Galabawa, 2004), but proponents of Kiswahili-medium secondary schooling are highly critical of the government's spending priorities (Mulokozi, 1989; Qorro, 2009b). Some have also challenged the government's conception of 'cost', arguing that a broader understanding is required that distinguishes between costs and expenditures and takes into account the

opportunity costs of large numbers of students dropping out of school and failing to learn (Babaci-Wilhite, 2013; Galabawa and Senkoro, 2006).

It has been asserted that Kiswahili simply is not up to the task of acting as language of instruction in the higher levels of education. For example, in a study conducted by Afitska et al. (2013, p. 162) Tanzanian teachers and head teachers argued that Kiswahili was 'not sufficiently developed to function as LOI throughout schooling'. But Bgoya (2001) argues that it is precisely the reluctance to use Kiswahili as a language of instruction at higher levels that limits the development of specialist academic and scientific vocabulary. Kiswahili advocates have further countered this argument by pointing out that significant amounts of work have already been done to develop and modernise the language and to translate teaching resources (Mulokozi, 1989; Mutasa, 2003; Mwansoko, 1994). But Yahya-Othman (1990) notes that this work is only useful if it can be disseminated and used, something that is impossible when there is no provision for the use of Kiswahili as LOI. Kadeghe (2003, p. 69) argues that this new Kiswahili 'technical register' is so far from day-to-day Kiswahili that it is similar to learning another language for students. Problems with the quality of students' academic Kiswahili have also been highlighted elsewhere (Msanjila, 2005). Kadeghe (2003) points to these challenges with Kiswahili as evidence that it would make an equally ineffective LOI, arguing that time and resources might as well be focused on improving students' English. But others dismiss his conclusions and have blamed this problem on the fact that students' development of Kiswahili is truncated at the point of shift to English-medium instruction (Msanjila, 2005; Rubagumya, 2000; Tibategeza, 2010).

These practical arguments perhaps hold secondary weight to assertions that English must remain the LOI because of its value and importance. English is frequently heralded as the global language of international business, science and technology (Marwa, 2014; Ochieng, 2015). Critics of Kiswahili-medium secondary schooling often point to a fear that the 'loss' of English would result in Tanzania being 'left behind in a global context where English dominates' (Kadeghe, 2003, p. 63). Marwa (2014, p. 1266) frames the choice between Kiswahili and English as LOI as a choice between 'cultural identity' and 'long term economic prospect'. At an

individual level, employment opportunities and access to ICT have been listed as key advantages of English (Bwenge, 2012; Galabawa and Senkoro, 2006; Mohr, 2018; Ochieng, 2015; Swilla, 2009). Retaining English as LOI has been described as a necessity, commensurate with Tanzania being a democratic country, to ensure that everyone has access to English and thus these opportunities (Mulokozi, 1989). This vision of educational equity is quite different to the one provided by Kiswahili-medium advocates who point to empirical research that demonstrates English LOI acting as a barrier to educational inclusion. Some pro-Kiswahili writers are particularly critical of the 'importance of English' argument. For example, Neke's tone is dismissive and mocking when he writes that 'proponents of English in Tanzania argue that denying the majority an education through English is tantamount to condemning them to a life of servitude' (2005, p. 78). However, others do acknowledge that English gives Tanzanians access to the status of 'global citizens' and its potentially related advantages (Rubagumya *et al.*, 2011, p. 80).

The fear that is expressed about losing these opportunities if English were no longer LOI is based on the assumption, already discussed above, that the use of Kiswahili as LOI would result in the rejection and 'death' of English (Galabawa and Senkoro, 2006; Kadeghe, 2003; Neke, 2003). Though advocates of Kiswahili-medium schooling argue that this is a misconception, this narrative is pervasive. In the discussion surrounding the 2014 Education and Training Policy, one commentator announced that the inclusion of Kiswahili as a language of instruction meant that English was being 'dumped' (Mohammed, 2015). But even as early as 1990, Russell noted that there was 'no-one arguing against the teaching of English as a *subject*' (Russell, 1990, p. 373). In fact, Qorro, who was once an English teacher herself, has been vocal in her support for improving the quality of English language teaching. She just does not believe this can, or should, be done by using English as the medium of instruction (Qorro, 2006a). For those who believe that a greater role for Kiswahili will mean the sacrifice of English, though, the preferred solution to the language problem is to change the LOI in primary schools to English to give students a longer time to acquire the language (Marwa, 2014; Twaweza, 2015). Qorro (2013) writes that the government actually had a draft policy in 2009 that would have supported

this approach.

The symbolic role of English as the language of education has proved difficult to challenge. In a newspaper article, cited by Neke (2003, p. 119), Professor Maghimbi states emphatically that, 'for us knowledge is in English'. Tibategeza (2010, p. 229) suggests that many Tanzanian elites have come to believe that 'real education can only be obtained in a world language such as English', while Neke (2003) demonstrates similar beliefs from interviews with Tanzanian teachers. Use of English is also widely considered to be a sign of educational quality (Jidamva, 2012; Rugemalira, 2005). Those advocating for Kiswahili-medium are all too aware of the association of English with knowledge and education, but they argue that this is something that should be challenged and changed (Bgoya, 2001; Mtesigwa, 2009; Neke, 2005). Qorro (2009b, p. 78), for example, notes regretfully that 'the use of FLME [foreign language medium education] has resulted in 90% of intellectual production in Africa being stored in foreign language forts'. But she, like Neke (2005), argues that there is nothing inherent to English that makes it better suited as a language of science and technology, but that the problem is the lack of 'political will' to promote Kiswahili in this role.

Policy-makers have dismissed the consideration of a change to use Kiswahili as the LOI by arguing that it is not what the Tanzanian public wants. Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir (2004) discuss a meeting with the 2001 Minister for Education, who they quote as saying: 'The Tanzanian community is not thinking about this language issue. I hear it from professors. I don't hear it from the community. The day I hear it from the community I shall start thinking about it' (2004, p. 70). Babaci-Wilhite (2013, p. 129) reports that, in her interviews with officials from the Tanzanian and Zanzibari Ministries of Education, she was told that 'the government should respect parental choices since Tanzania is a democracy'. Several attitude surveys have shown that students and parents would prefer English as the LOI, even when they acknowledge the difficulties associated learning this way (Qorro, 2009b; Senkoro, 2005; Twaweza, 2015). However, Babaci-Wilhite also argues that parental preferences are based on 'imperfect information' about how languages are most effectively learned and suggests that the government officials seemed to be aware

of this but felt it was not their responsibility to provide information (2013, p. 129).

Proponents for retaining English as the LOI point to a variety of practical and political reasons for their position. However, perhaps the predominant and most widely-made argument is based on beliefs about the importance of English and its potential benefits. When this is combined with the assumption that the best way to learn English is to use it as the LOI, it is perhaps understandable that some people may be suspicious of the motivations of the pro-Kiswahili lobby. Any proposed changes to the LOI issue will need to address public understandings of language acquisition, but they will also have to ensure that they acknowledge the important role that English plays in people's lives and aspirations. One potential response to these challenges is to consider a multilingual approach.

Arguments for a multilingual approach

A multilingual approach has been proposed as a way to break the deadlock in the language of instruction debate. Biswalo (2010, p. 164) describes a bilingual approach as 'a reasonable compromise' between the warring sides of the Tanzanian LOI debate. Many of the arguments made for the use of Kiswahili as the language of instruction are also relevant to arguments for a multilingual approach. But, where the majority of the voices calling for a shift to Kiswahili have focused on Kiswahili as the main language of instruction, with English being learned as a separate subject, there are also some voices for the use of two or more languages concurrently as languages of instruction (Afitska *et al.*, 2013; Issa Mohamed and Banda, 2008; Roy-Campbell, 2001a; Tibategeza, 2010; Wedin, 2010; William and Ndabakurane, 2017). However, there are different suggestions offered about what this might look like, as well as different explanations for why a multilingual approach is advocated. Like Kiswahili-medium, a multilingual approach also faces a significant challenge when it comes up against the belief that use of other languages 'confuses' students and negatively affects the learning of English (Tibategeza, 2010, p. 240).

For some, the main reason for suggesting a bi-/multilingual approach is that it would better reflect existing language preferences and language use (Kinyaduka

and Kiwara, 2013; Mohr and Ochieng, 2017). These arguments recognise the prevalence of Kiswahili in Tanzanian society and schools, which is important because it acts as a counterbalance to some of the arguments in the section above that seem to imply that English should be prioritised over Kiswahili. But neither Kinyaduka and Kiwara (2013) nor Mohr and Ochieng (2017) have offered discussion of what a bilingual approach to teaching and learning might look like, or addressed how it might be in tension with beliefs about the best way to learn English being monolingually.

A more robust argument for a multilingual approach has focused on its pedagogical potential. Drawing on theories and understandings of language acquisition and bilingualism (including Creese and Blackledge, 2010; Cummins, 1984; García, 2009), some have argued for the use of multiple languages as a strategy to support and enhance learning. Tibategeza (2010) argues that, although the term 'bilingual' has been used to refer to the use of two different languages of instruction at different stages in the education system in Tanzania, this represents what has been termed a 'subtractive' or 'transitional' bilingual model. When students switch to English as the medium of instruction, development of their Kiswahili language skills ceases. Instead, an 'additive' or 'maintenance' bilingual model is proposed, with both English and Kiswahili being used as languages of instruction (see also Biswalo, 2010; Roy-Campbell, 2001a). Tibategeza (2010) suggests that this could be achieved by using different languages of instruction for different subjects.

Others have advocated for a more integrative model where two languages are used in one lesson and teachers and students can switch between languages to allow them to negotiate meaning (Afitska *et al.*, 2013; Issa Mohamed and Banda, 2008). Biswalo (2010, p. 170) has argued that this type of approach would work to 'formally and academically enhance what most of the country's schools are already doing: code-switching', linking back to the suggestion that bilingual learning better reflects the reality of school language practice. But although Afitska et al. also argue for the value of a multilingual approach, they note that bilingual practice is a 'distinct specialist pedagogy' (2013, p. 159), and so an approach that simply labels existing code-switching as bilingual practice may not achieve the desired benefits.

Arguments for a multilingual approach do appear to address some of the concerns raised by advocates for Kiswahili-medium. A multilingual approach allows for a language with which students are familiar to be used to facilitate understanding. An extended, official role for Kiswahili as a language of instruction would also legitimise the language's use and value in post-primary education (Afitska *et al.*, 2013). Focus on multilingual practice may also work to challenge the assumption that the language used as LOI for the process of learning is the language that will automatically be strengthened as the outcome of learning. However, calls for this type of approach are relatively recent and so have not yet permeated the historical battle lines of the Kiswahili versus English debate. The message of this group of commentators is also far from unanimous, perhaps limiting the impact it can currently have on the discussion. Several of the pro-Kiswahili lobby have been vocal supporters of recognising and encouraging multilingualism in Tanzania and Africa more broadly (Brock-Utne, 2016; Rubagumya, 2009; Rubagumya *et al.*, 2011; Rugemalira, 2013). But it has been suggested that the existing language-in-education policy has been framed by the Tanzanian government as supporting the development of bilingual citizens (Biswalo, 2010; Qorro, 2009a; Tibategeza, 2010). Qorro (2009a) highlights the painful irony that the Tanzanian approach has, in fact, positioned multilingualism as a 'problem' that interferes with the monolingual acquisition of English. Fair concerns have also been raised about the fact that many of the concepts that underpin writing about bilingual and multilingual practice have been developed in affluent, Western contexts where the linguistic situation is very different to Tanzania and other African countries (Prah and Brock-Utne, 2009). These issues should not necessarily result in the dismissal of a multilingual approach being appropriate for Tanzania, but they make it clear that there is more work to be done in this area. Advocates of multilingual pedagogy will need to build a contextualised evidence base that can respond to both the questions and concerns of those who argue for both Kiswahili as the sole LOI *and* English as the sole LOI.

New hope for change? The 2014 Education and Training Policy

The language statements in the 2014 Education and Training Policy could be interpreted as paving the way for a change to school language practice (Jamhuri ya Muungano wa Tanzania, 2014). When the 2014 Education and Training Policy was announced in February 2015, it was declared in the public media to mean a change in the LOI to extend the use of Kiswahili to the end of lower secondary schooling (Jingi, 2015; Mohammed, 2015). This has, in turn, been reported as Tanzanian national policy in international documents (Trudell, 2016a; Trudell, 2016b). But, in fact, the sections of the policy that deal with language are exemplary in their ambiguity. Shartiely (2016, p. 217) suggests that the policy is 'contradictory' as it declares firstly that, 'the national Kiswahili language shall be used for teaching and learning at all levels of education and training', but then goes on to say that, 'the government will continue with the mechanism to strengthen the use of English in teaching and learning' (Jamhuri ya Muungano wa Tanzania, 2014).[13] Compared to the previous Education and Training Policy (United Republic of Tanzania, 1995) the designation of the LOI is certainly not as clear. The 1995 policy read: 'The medium of instruction for secondary education shall continue to be English…and Kiswahili shall be a compulsory subject' (p. 45). This ambiguity seems to allow plenty of space for stalling, back-tracking and re-interpreting the document. This is perhaps already being observed in the Minister for Education's June 2019 reassuring of Tanzanian MPs that English would remain the LOI in secondary schools (The Citizen, 2019). So far, it seems doubtful that the language statements from the 2014 Education and Training Policy will act as a catalyst for meaningful change in practice. Based on analysis of previous policy documents and declarations of change that have failed to transform practice, and pointing to the issues of public misconceptions and lack of political will that have been discussed in the chapter above, Tibategeza and du Plessis (2018, p. 88) write, 'we are sceptical of its implementation'. This scepticism currently seems well-founded.

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[13] The policy document is only available in Kiswahili, so this is Shartiely's own translation. Very similar translations are found in Mohr and Ochieng (2017) and Tibategeza and du Plessis (2018).

But the 2014 Education and Training Policy could also represent an opportunity. The policy statements about language are not necessarily contradictory. The 2014 policy could be read as allowing for both English and Kiswahili to be used as languages of instruction (Human Rights Watch, 2017; Mkumbo, 2015; Mohr and Ochieng, 2017). If both languages are sanctioned as official languages of instruction, it could go some way to legitimising the common practice of code-switching in Tanzanian classrooms. However, the fact that there is no provision for changing the language of examination, which remains English, raises significant doubts about the commitment to a multilingual approach (Human Rights Watch, 2017). Mkumbo (2015) describes the policy as 'a compromise to please the two sides of the debate', but states, 'I can bet that English will continue to be used as a medium of instruction' because of the entrenched attitudes and beliefs surrounding the language. The wording of the 2014 policy offers an opportunity for change, either to Kiswahili as the LOI with English as a subject, or to the use of two languages of instruction. But the discussion in this chapter has highlighted that changes in practice are unlikely to be implemented without significant efforts to engage with and alter long-held public beliefs about language.

This chapter has briefly mapped the historical development and present-day landscapes of language and education in Tanzania and has demonstrated that, although Kiswahili, English and ECLs all perform significant functions in Tanzania, they do not always do so harmoniously. Instead, there are conflicts and tensions between languages relating both to their historical positions and their function and distribution in contemporary Tanzanian society. This context is important for understanding not only the current situation in which questions relating to language-in-education are being asked, but also the events and ideologies that may have influenced contributors on both sides of the Tanzanian LOI debate. This chapter has explored the arguments that frequently recur in the LOI debate and has suggested that one of the reasons why interlocutors have failed to reach areas of agreement is that the arguments of different groups are underpinned by different assumptions and understandings about the process of language acquisition, as well as different

priorities for language outcomes in and beyond education. The debate has become stuck in its framing as a battle, and ultimately a choice, between English and Kiswahili as the sole LOI. This has blinkered some commentators to a body of empirical evidence that suggests that the use of English as LOI might not be the most effective means of achieving desired language-related outcomes. With the context of this debate in mind, the next chapter explores the empirical research that has been conducted looking at the LOI question. It is critical of those who dismiss this compelling body of evidence about the negative impacts of continued use of English as LOI. But it also argues that, by focusing so much on the processes of communication and learning, those advocating for Kiswahili-medium post-primary schooling have perhaps not done enough to acknowledge the multiple roles that language plays in students' lives. As a result, their arguments have failed to reassure the Tanzanian public that their concerns and values relating to English are recognised, and that aspirations relating to English could still be preserved despite a change in LOI.

3. Multiple Roles for Language in Learning

Language plays multiple roles in society and, as a result, there are multiple ways in which language is valued by individuals and communities. The previous chapter argued that, although this fact has in many ways shaped the language-in-education tug-of-war as different groups have prioritised different language roles and outcomes, the debate has not adequately acknowledged or engaged with these multiple meanings of language. Two key barriers were highlighted that currently prevent multiple language roles being facilitated within language-in-education planning and practice in Tanzania. The first is the positioning of Kiswahili, English and ECLs in tension with each other. This relates to the second barrier which is the framing of the language question as a choice between languages, a perception that is exacerbated by the pervasive belief that using any other language threatens students' ability to learn English. When people feel they must make a choice between languages, they are also led to prioritise some language roles over others. Within the discourse of the language of instruction debate, these choices and priorities may seem very clear. For example, multiple studies show students, teachers and parents expressing a preference for English because of its perceived importance (Nyamubi, 2016; Qorro, 2005; Senkoro, 2005; Twaweza, 2015). But in the micro-level language choices that individuals make on a daily basis, these priorities may not appear so definite. Because this thesis explores both students' broader narratives around language, and their daily language choices, it is crucial to consider the multiple roles that language plays.

It is not new to argue that language plays multiple roles. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, the famous Kenyan commentator on language in Africa, argues that 'language, any language, has a dual character: it is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture' (1986, p. 13). Nigerian scholar Ayo Bamgbose identifies two different trends in language planning in post-colonial Africa, between viewing '*language-as-a-tool*' and '*language-as-a-symbol*', thus distinguishing between the practical-functional roles and the imaginative roles language takes (1999, p. 15). The distinction between language as a form of communication and language as a form of symbolic power has also been a central theme in the French philosopher-sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu's

theoretical work, which was informed by ethnographic study of culture, education and language in France and Algiers (Bourdieu, 1991; Grenfell *et al.*, 2012). Bourdieu's theoretical concepts, in particular the extension of 'capital' to refer to different sources of power, have been used to inform analysis in numerous studies of language and education, both in Africa and more broadly (Babaci-Wilhite, 2015a; Kiramba, 2018; Makalela, 2015b; Shank Lauwo, 2018a; Vavrus, 2002b; Widin, 2010). For example, writing about the linguistic landscape in Tanzania, Rubagumya et al. (2011, p. 79) describe language as a 'source of cultural, social and economic capital', further underlining the fact that language performs multiple functions. These multiple language roles pose a particular challenge for language planners as, 'issues of feasibility, popular aspiration, cultural identities, globalisation and development…often pull policy in different directions' (Ferguson, 2013, p. 17). This is definitely the case in Tanzania. The language beliefs underpinning the Tanzanian language of instruction debate, mean that policy-makers and the public feel that they must make choices between languages, and thus between different functions of language. These choices and tensions influence students' experiences of language-in-education on a daily basis.

This chapter builds a framework for exploring the multiple meanings of language, based around five language roles: 'language as communication'; 'language as aspiration'; 'language as culture'; 'language as being'; and 'language as social (in)justice'. These particular roles have been identified and selected for their relevance to students' experiences of negotiating language-in-education in multilingual, postcolonial contexts. Four of these language roles are clearly visible in different arguments posited in the LOI debate. However, the significance of 'language as being' importantly emerged from the data from this study, and its inclusion in this framework responds to a perceived absence in the LOI literature. In developing these language roles, this chapter takes a composite approach, drawing from multiple relevant sub-disciplines within a variety of fields, including postcolonial studies, applied linguistics and sociolinguistics. This approach enables this chapter to present a picture of plural language meanings that encompasses multiple angles and perspectives. The five language roles discussed in this chapter

are, of course, not an exhaustive list. Neither are these different roles always clearly distinguishable from one another. But because the argument made here is that certain roles are neglected, or even dismissed, by different contributors to the LOI debate, it is important to consider each role individually, while highlighting connections. This chapter brings together commentary about the roles of language with discussion of the empirical literature about language-in-education to explore what is known about these different language roles in relation to the student experience.

Language as communication

> Education is about building knowledge and disseminating it to fellow human beings. As they build and disseminate knowledge, human beings use language as a means of communication. Thus, in order for the majority of Tanzanian people to participate meaningfully in education, that education has to be conducted in the language they understand. (Qorro, 2013, p. 41)

The largest body of empirical research into language of instruction has focused on the communicative role of language. This is perhaps to be expected considering the importance of effective communication to the process of learning (Afitska *et al.*, 2013; Bamgbose, 1992; Qorro, 2006a; Wolff, 2006). As Qorro asserts above, for communication, and thus learning, to be effective, it must be in a language that is understood and in which students and teachers can express themselves (see also Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir, 2003; Clegg, 2007). It has been repeatedly asserted that the majority of African students, and many teachers, do not have sufficient command of the official language of instruction in schools to be able to communicate effectively enough to learn using that language (Brock-Utne, 2014; Dutcher, 2004; Obanya, 1980; Rea-Dickens and Yu, 2013). Empirical research across a variety of Sub-Saharan African contexts has also found that teachers themselves freely highlight the problem that inadequate command of English creates for classroom communication and interaction (Afitska *et al.*, 2013; Jidamva, 2012; Kirui, Osman and Naisujaki, 2017; Probyn, 2001).

Effective communication in the context of learning does not only refer to having enough fluency in a shared language to be able to talk to another person, but it also requires the effective communication and understanding of the meaning of words and concepts in the context of the subject being studied. In order to highlight this difference, many language-in-education researchers have looked to language acquisition theory and, in particular, the distinction between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) offered by Cummins (1979; 2008; 2016)[14]. This distinction has been used to explain a phenomenon observed in both African contexts (Halaoui, 2003; Sampa, 2003), and in the USA (Ramirez *et al.*, 1991; Thomas and Collier, 2002), that students learning through an unfamiliar LOI in the early years of primary schooling can initially seem like they are progressing well, but as the cognitive demand of tasks increases, students begin to struggle because they are not equipped for the technical vocabulary and cognitive demands of using that language for academic study (Heugh, 2006). This is one of the reasons why there have been calls to extend the use of the mother-tongue as LOI in African schools. Evidence suggests that at least 6-8 years of mother tongue instruction would be necessary, with the European language taught as a subject, before students would be ready to transition to a European LOI, though there is a great deal of uncertainty attached to this estimate, with suggestions that the length of time needed may increase in more poorly-resourced contexts (Heugh, 2006). Moreover, for many, the 'mother-tongue' LOI of primary schooling may not actually be the student's first language, but a local language of wider communication. Both the resource and linguistic contexts may contribute to the fact that empirical data from Tanzania has shown that students are not ready to use English as the medium of academic study for secondary schooling, despite seven years of instruction in Kiswahili (Barrett *et al.*, 2014; Nomlomo and Vuzo, 2014; Qorro, 2006b).

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[14] For a selection of language-in-education researchers that make reference to the BICS/CALP distinction, see Clegg and Simpson (2016), Layton (2013), Madonsela (2015), Mokgwathi and Webb (2013), Niyibizi (2015), Rubagumya (2009), Tikly (2016).

Discussions of the most appropriate stage for transition from mother-tongue to use of a European LOI are premised on the assumption of a single instructional medium. But empirical studies from a wide variety of contexts report that multiple languages are being used, unofficially, in classrooms to support effective communication and understanding (Kiramba, 2019; Mafela, 2009; Probyn, 2009). Although strategies such as code-switching (moving between the official LOI and a more familiar language) do allow classroom practice to continue, many commentators are critical of forms of code-switching that act as reactive coping strategies for teachers and students struggling with the LOI. These often take the form of direct translation into a local language without a structured attempt to support language development in the in the official LOI (Chen and Rubinstein-Avila, 2018; Clegg and Simpson, 2016; Mokgwathi and Webb, 2013). More recently there has been growing interest amongst scholars of Sub-Saharan schooling in a form of multilingual teaching and learning that has been termed 'translanguaging' (Bagwasi, 2017; Cummins, 2015; Heugh, 2015; Makalela, 2015b; Probyn, 2015; Shank Lauwo, 2018b). Advocates of translanguaging suggest that, at a linguistic level, there are no borders between languages and that 'there is only one linguistic system' (García and Li, 2014, p. 14). They encourage flexible but purposive interaction and connection between different languages, arguing that this would strengthen the weaker language as well as facilitate understanding of the content being learned (Clegg and Simpson, 2016; Creese and Blackledge, 2010; García and Li, 2014). Empirical research into translanguaging in African classrooms is a relatively recent phenomenon and has so far returned mixed findings. For example, although Krause and Prinsloo (2016) have argued from their research in a South African primary school that translanguaging is not a new approach but rather a new term for existing patterns of multilingual language use, a study of eight secondary teachers in another South African school found that only one was using languages in a way that would be considered translanguaging (Probyn, 2015). Discussions and debates about the differences between translanguaging and other forms of classroom code-switching have the potential to deepen understandings of how multiple languages can be used in classrooms to improve communication and support language development.

In the Tanzanian context, as with many other Sub-Saharan African countries, there is one LOI that should, officially, be the only language used in the classroom. For Tanzanian students, at the transition to secondary school, this language switches from Kiswahili to English. Sharing data from a study of students' experiences of the transition to secondary school, Joyce-Gibbons et al. (2018) shares a quote from a student from one of the four surveyed schools in the Tanga region of Tanzania that demonstrates the impact of the shift in language:

> *'In primary school we were taught about English. After reaching secondary school we must be taught in English. So it becomes difficult to talk with our fellow students and even to negotiate with teachers becomes a problem.'*
> *(Joyce-Gibbons et al., 2018, p. 1156)*

The importance of students having sufficient knowledge of English to be able to use it as the language of instruction has encouraged a number of researchers in Tanzania to measure students' language skills (Criper and Dodd, 1984; Mlama and Matteru, 1977; Roy-Campbell and Qorro, 1987; Rubagumya, Jones and Mwansoko, 1999). Though studies have sought to answer slightly different questions, they all agree that the vast majority of students' command of English is inadequate for effective academic study. This conclusion also appears to be upheld by the results of national learning surveys that were conducted annually between 2011 and 2015 and showed that around 50% of students in the final year of primary school were unable to read a text in English that was at the level expected of a student in their second year of primary school (Sumra, 2018, p. 7; Uwezo, 2011; 2012). A number of studies have also surveyed students about English as the LOI and their perceived levels of English proficiency, finding that the majority of students report that the use of English presents challenges for communication and learning (Kinyaduka and Kiwara, 2013; Makewa, Role and Tuguta, 2013; Mligo and Mwashilindi, 2017; Rubagumya, 1989). Useful though these findings are for identifying a problem, on their own, they offer limited insight into precisely how the language presents an obstacle to learning, or how students are negotiating these challenges.

Several studies have compared student outcomes when English and Kiswahili are used. Following a research design that had been used in South Africa (Desai, 2001), Mkwizu (2002) and Vuzo (2002b) both compared short stories written by

students in English and Kiswahili. The analysis of these stories is discussed by Brock-Utne (2007a, p. 520) who states that while 'all the students expressed themselves adequately at all grade levels in Kiswahili', many of the English stories were 'largely incomprehensible'. Both studies also found that, although there were differences between students in different years of secondary schooling, the improvements were small and certainly not as much as you might expect from the extra years of using the language (see also Brock-Utne, 2007a). Malekela (2004) compared students' performance in the national examinations (CSEE) taken by students at the end of the four years of secondary education. He looked specifically at the subject examinations for English and Kiswahili and found that results in both languages were poor, with fewer than 50% of students achieving 41% or above in Kiswahili in the years 1998-2001. But the English results were worse with fewer than 25% of students getting 41% or above in the same years. These findings certainly suggest that students would perform better if they were tested in Kiswahili instead of English. But, along with the findings of other studies that found mistakes in students' Kiswahili or lack of knowledge of academic vocabulary, Malekela's analysis suggests that if Kiswahili were to become the LOI, the change would need to be accompanied by efforts to develop students' academic Kiswahili skills (Kadeghe, 2003; Msanjila, 2005; Vuzo, 2002a; Wedin, 2010).

Researchers have also been interested in comparing the learning outcomes of students who have been taught using different languages of instruction. There are two main types of study that fall into this category. The first are short-term quasi-experimental studies where the same subject content has been taught to different groups using different languages (Galabawa and Lwaitama, 2005; Mwinsheikhe, 2008; Vuzo, 2008). For example, as part of Mwinsheikhe's (2008) study, 3 groups of students were taught biology under different conditions for 6 weeks. For one group, the LOI was English only. The second group was taught in Kiswahili only and for the third group (which was considered the control group) the teacher was allowed to code-switch between English and Kiswahili. Mwinsheikhe found that students performed better when only Kiswahili was used as LOI. Moreover, the use of

Kiswahili as the only LOI was shown to decrease the gap between the highest and lowest achievers (Mwinsheikhe, 2008; 2009).

The second group of studies comparing English and Kiswahili-medium instruction have looked at the achievement of students educated at different types of primary schools (Bakahwemama, 2010; Bikongoro, 2015; Komba and Bosco, 2015). All of these have shown that students who have attended English-medium primary schools perform better, but only Bakahwemama (2010) acknowledges that the difference in achievement is most likely caused by factors other than the language that students are taught in. English-medium primary schools are all private schools, are thus better resourced, and are more likely to cater to students who have access to additional support with English outside school. Because of this, Rubagumya (2009, p. 59) labels studies comparing students taught in English and Kiswahili-medium schools as 'futile'. But they do perhaps show that, given certain conditions, students can learn English to a higher level.

Beyond analysis of student performance, crucial insight into communication challenges associated with the use of English as LOI has been gained through classroom observation and interaction analysis. It has been argued that students' ability to engage in dialogue with the teacher and other members of a class is a critical component of meaningful, quality learning (Webb and Mkongo, 2013). But numerous examples have been shared from lessons where classroom communication and student participation has been limited by the use of English as LOI (Qorro, 2013; Rubagumya, 2008; Webb and Mkongo, 2013). This phenomenon is particularly visible where the studies have compared both English-medium and Kiswahili-medium classroom dialogue (Afitska *et al.*, 2013; Brock-Utne, 2007a; Brock-Utne, 2007b; Mwinsheikhe, 2009; Vuzo, 2008). Observers of both secondary school and university classrooms in Tanzania and other Sub-Saharan African settings have described students as passive and have noted students' silence in response to teachers' questions when English is being used (Brock-Utne, 2007b; Issa Mohamed and Banda, 2008; Kiramba, 2019; Muthwii and Kioko, 2003; Opoku-Amankwa, 2009; Vuzo, 2010). This is contrary to interaction in familiar languages which is observed to be faster-paced and more active, with students asking as well as answering

questions (Brock-Utne, 2007b; Halvorsen, 2018; Msimanga and Lelliott, 2014; Mwinsheikhe, 2009).

In the face of communication difficulties posed by the use of English as the LOI, researchers have identified strategies that are commonly used by teachers to enable lessons to continue. Studies have repeatedly observed the predominance of rote learning and the use of 'safe-talk' to compensate for students' and teachers' weaknesses in English (Brock-Utne, 2004; Mwinsheikhe, 2009; Nomlomo and Vuzo, 2014; Rubagumya, 2008; Vuzo, 2010). The category of 'safe-talk' includes repetition, chorus responses and heavily teacher-controlled patterns of interaction and has been identified in multiple African contexts (Chick, 1996; Chimbutane, 2011; Hornberger and Chick, 2001; Ngwaru, 2011; Rubagumya, 2009). In contrast, it has been observed that when the class discussion is either fully, or partially, in Kiswahili, more varied patterns of interaction are seen and students are more likely to give longer and more developed answers (Rubagumya, 2008). Coping strategies are not limited to spoken interaction. Several researchers have suggested that the majority of writing done in Tanzanian secondary classrooms consists of the copying of notes for memorisation (Brock-Utne, 2004; Brock-Utne, 2007b; Qorro, 1999; Rubagumya, 2003). Another important finding has been that, when teachers are struggling to cope with teaching in English and are becoming frustrated with students' reluctance or inability to answer questions, they are much more likely to use negative reinforcement, such as making students stand for long periods of time, in an attempt to force them to answer (Mwinsheikhe, 2009; Rubagumya, 1991). However, although Mwinsheikhe (2008, p. 137) suggests that 'little learning (if any) can take place when students harbour fear of being punished', there has been limited investigation of how this type of strategy affects students' experiences of learning.

The other key coping strategy, that was discussed earlier in this section, and is consistently observed at all educational levels is code-switching (Afitska *et al.*, 2013; Shartiely, 2016; Webb and Mkongo, 2013; Wedin, 2010). In fact, Mwinsheikhe (2009) found this to be the most common strategy employed by teachers in her study of language use in secondary science classrooms. This is despite the fact that code-switching is perceived by many teachers to act as a hindrance to the learning of

English, if not believed to be officially prohibited (Jidamva, 2012; Mligo and Mwashilindi, 2017; Rea-Dickens and Yu, 2013). The practice of teachers using a combination of English and a familiar language has been shown to improve the quality of classroom talk and student engagement in Tanzania and elsewhere (Kiramba, 2019; Mkimbili, 2019; Mokgwathi and Webb, 2013; Rubagumya, 1994; Shartiely, 2016; Webb and Mkongo, 2013). Bilingual textbooks for mathematics and biology have also been shown to support students' learning and improve their participation, confidence and independence in community secondary schools in the Lindi, Dodoma and Morogoro regions of Tanzania (Gabrieli, Sane and Alphonce, 2018; William and Ndabakurane, 2017). However, in quasi-experimental studies where code-switching was the condition in the control group, this was not found to improve student outcomes as much as the use of Kiswahili only (Mwinsheikhe, 2008; Vuzo, 2008). In fact, based on his research, Rubagumya (2000) has warned that code-switching can be counterproductive. In particular, he argues that code-switching can reinforce unequal power dynamics between languages because it tends to be teacher-controlled and limited to verbal translation, while the official written notes remain in English (Rubagumya, 1994; 2008). All of these concerns can perhaps be taken as evidence to support assertions that, for code-switching to be effective, it cannot be allowed to continue haphazardly. Instead, pedagogy must be deliberately planned and teachers specially trained (Clegg and Afitska, 2011; Clegg and Simpson, 2016; Vuzo, 2010).

School and classroom based research in Tanzania clearly shows that students and teachers struggle to use English as an effective form of communication. Even though researchers have identified a number of coping strategies that are commonly employed, quasi-experimental studies in particular suggest that these do not adequately compensate for the ways in which using English as the language of instruction constrains understanding, expression and participation. Moreover, the coping strategies that are discussed, such as 'safe-talk' and code-switching, are overwhelmingly controlled by teachers. Much less is known about how students negotiate their own experiences of learning. Although the data discussed above paints a bleak picture, it is important to acknowledge that there are some students

and teachers who are managing (Afitska *et al.*, 2013), but they are not the norm. Moreover, language acquisition research does not suggest that a foreign language like English can *never* function effectively as a language of instruction (Heugh, 2006). But the conditions that would be conducive to building sufficient competence in English to be able to use it as the LOI by the beginning of secondary schooling are unachievable under the constraints of the Tanzanian education system that were discussed in the previous chapter, especially not for all students. This is one of the reasons why language is considered to play a role as a form of social (in)justice, to be discussed later in this chapter. So far, this section has focused on the communicative role of language for learning, but it is important to acknowledge that language does not stop at the school gates and this is not the only context in which students need to be able to communicate.

Language as communication beyond schooling

Research into language of instruction has understandably focused on classrooms. But school is not the only context in which students need and want to communicate effectively. To explore all of the ways in which language is valued by students for its communicative role is outside of the scope of this thesis. But it is important to revisit the fact, introduced in the previous chapter, that in Tanzania, multilingualism is not only a fact of life, but it is also a necessity for people who want to be able to access different economic, social and political domains. Rubagumya et al (2011) frame this quite vividly in their discussion of 'linguistic citizenship'. They explain that those who only have access to ethnic community languages (ECLs), whether it be one or more, cannot fully participate in economic or political life outside their locality, and so are labelled 'semi-citizens'. To become a full 'Tanzanian citizen', it is argued that Kiswahili is a necessity. These limitations on ECLs as forms of communication may go some way to explaining findings that many ECLs in Tanzania are in decline as younger generations concentrate on Kiswahili (Lipembe, 2010; Msanjila, 2004; Rosendal and Mapunda, 2014). Kiswahili is associated with day-to-day communication in urban areas, participation in national institutions such as general elections, and access to

primary education. The empirical research discussed above suggested that, although students are generally much more able to understand and to express themselves in Kiswahili, complete competency in Kiswahili should not simply be assumed, especially when it comes to academic language (Kadeghe, 2003; Kajoro, 2016; Malekela, 2004; Msanjila, 2005). Research in primary schools has also drawn attention to the fact that students acquire Kiswahili at different stages and paces, depending on their home language and the roles that different languages play in their homes and communities (Malmberg and Sumra, 1998; Mapunda, 2013; Wedin, 2005).

Despite the majority of Tanzanians being multilingual (Kimizi, 2009), even someone who speaks 'only' ECLs and Kiswahili will still be excluded from domains where English is the predominant language of communication. These domains include secondary education, higher education, and the offices of international companies (Rubagumya *et al.*, 2011). Qorro (2003, p. 187) argues that it is not only the physical spaces of education that require English, but also that the knowledge that is meant to be accessible through formal schooling at these levels is 'locked away in language forts'. In particular, she gives the example of scientific knowledge as well as the discourses of development and individual and national improvement (see also Prah, 2012). Some have included ICT and the internet in the list of spaces that require English for access (Crystal, 2003; Ochieng, 2015). Although there is some evidence that the use of Kiswahili as a language of technology and online communication has been growing (Halvorsen, 2010; Legère, 2006a), analysis of language on the internet shows that Kiswahili still represents less than 0.1% of web content compared English, which is the language of more than 50% of webpages (Walubengo, 2017). Reflecting on his own language attitudes research in Tanzania, Schmied (2008, p. 156) suggests that it is considered 'too obvious that English is the international language' and that arguments based around the importance of English are 'uncontroversial'. This was certainly the position of the pro-English LOI advocates discussed in the previous chapter. As things stand, it is undeniable that full 'global citizenship' requires English (Rubagumya *et al.*, 2011, p. 80). Being able to communicate in English, in its role as 'international language' or 'global *lingua*

franca' (Jenkins, Baker and Dewey, 2017; Mauranen and Ranta, 2009; Nyamubi, 2016; Sharifan, 2009), potentially offers access to the largest domain and broadest set of opportunities. However, this does not mean that this is 'uncontroversial'. International literature in the field of English as a Lingua Franca has been criticised for its association with uncritical narratives of globalisation and neglect of issues like ideology and power (O'Regan, 2014). The discussion of the Tanzanian LOI debate in chapter 2 also demonstrated that some commentators do not believe that English should hold this global status and argue that Kiswahili, and other African languages, could and should play a much more significant international role (Moshi, 2006; Qorro, 2009b). However, in its current position, it is not surprising that English is viewed as playing both an important role as a language of wider communication and as a symbol of aspiration.

Language as aspiration

> English, moreover, is not only a language of socio-economic
> aspiration, but a concept, an idea attractive to the young,
> because it indexes desirable identities. (Ferguson, 2013, p. 18).

Language plays an aspirational role that is, of course, closely related to its communicative role. People aspire to be able to communicate in certain languages because of the functions that these languages will allow them to perform. But the aspirational role of language is not contingent on the ability to communicate. Similarly, not all languages of communication will be considered to fulfil an aspirational role. In the quotation above, Ferguson suggests that English in Africa acts as aspiration in two key ways. Firstly, it has instrumental value as a means to accessing opportunities for socio-economic advancement, in particular employment. Secondly, it has a symbolic value as it carries with it assumption of a certain status or belonging to desirable groups. Conversely, in most cases, ethnic community languages perform neither of these functions and so are more likely to be positioned negatively, perhaps even as a hindrance to individual aspirations (Ferguson, 2013; Mapunda, 2013). The previous chapter showed how those who wish to retain English

as the sole LOI have even positioned Kiswahili as 'anti-aspiration' when it is considered to threaten or interfere with the opportunity to learn English.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the majority of people are proficient in multiple African languages, with fewer than 10% proficient in English (Prah and Brock-Utne, 2009). Yet, in an evaluation of the position of English in Africa at the turn of the millennium, Bobda (2002, p. 579) argued that 'no foreseeable development seems likely to threaten the position of European languages in general, and that of English in particular'. Commentators have repeatedly identified a strong desire for English that seems to hold true across a variety of African contexts despite differences in the historical positions of languages and their legal protections (Coleman, 2011; Dowling and Krause, 2019; Ferguson, 2013; Mohr and Ochieng, 2017). In fact, writing in an overview paper, but with personal experience from empirical research in education in Kenya and Uganda, Muthwii and Kioko (2003, p. 99) argue that 'the aspiration to acquire English is almost fanatical'. Although many commentators criticise these positive attitudes as manifestations of 'linguistic imperialism' (Bamgbose, 1991; Neke, 2003; Phillipson, 2008), others have argued that dismissing positive expressions towards English as a form of 'false consciousness' ignores individual agency (Juffermans, 2015; Pennycook, 2000).

Positive attitudes towards English and a strong desire to acquire the language have repeatedly been predominant findings of language attitudes research in Tanzania (Mlekwa, 1977; Mohr and Ochieng, 2017; Neke, 2003; Nyamubi, 2003; 2016; Schmied, 1985; Senkoro, 2005). There is also evidence from a number of African countries that, where possible, parents are choosing schools for their children where they can begin English-medium instruction as early as possible (Brock-Utne, 2008; Chavez, 2016; Clegg and Simpson, 2016; Muthwii, 2002; Rubagumya, 2003; Rugemalira, 2005). In a Tanzanian citizens' survey, 63% of parents said that they would prefer English to be the LOI from the beginning of the school system (Twaweza, 2015). Some of the explanations for this preference were identified in the previous chapter and include both the fact that it is believed that students will learn English better if they start earlier and the association of English with educational quality, a perception that is reinforced by the fact that English-

medium primary schools are privately-run and, as a result, generally better resourced (Jidamva, 2012; Muthwii and Kioko, 2003).

This empirical research about language attitudes demonstrates that desire for English remains strong, even when participants also identify significant challenges and frustrations with the practical use of English, (Kinyaduka and Kiwara, 2013; Mtana, 2013; Persson, 2013). It is this tension that has led Senkoro (2004, p. 49) to suggest that that 'the results of most of the research done are very perplexing and contradictory' (see also Senkoro, 2005). But Schmied (1985) has argued that these seemingly conflicting attitudes are because the symbolic value of English and its practical application are viewed separately. Rubagumya (1989) applies this separation to his analysis of research with secondary school students in Tanzania, explaining that students:

> 'see English as a status symbol and would like to identify themselves with those capable of using it (absolute prestige); but when it comes to communicative competence, they admit that Kiswahili satisfies their needs more than English does (relative prestige)' (Rubagumya, 1989, p. 113).

The previous chapter demonstrated that those who insist that English should remain the sole LOI seem to overlook the empirical evidence that the use of English hampers learning. This conceptual separation of the aspirational and communicative roles of language encourages pro-English advocates to focus on *what* language is being used rather *how* or *whether* that language supports the longer-term aspiration of knowing and using English. Students take on the aspirational identity of 'English speakers', even if the communicative reality is that the use of English as LOI limits learning both of English and other subjects.

It has been suggested that promoting connections between the aspirational and communicative roles of language could improve students' learning. Nyamubi (2016) argues that policymakers should look to convert students' positive attitudes towards, and aspirations for, English into motivation and effort to improve their English language skills. Based on a study that administered attitudes surveys and English language tests to secondary school students in the Morogoro region of Tanzania, Nyamubi (2016) claims a statistically significant relationship between positive attitudes to English and test performance. Although more investigation of

students' attitudes and motivations is definitely important, the causal link he suggests might be questioned by the findings of other studies conducted by Nyamubi in which he identifies the linguistic background of students as a key factor in performance (2003; 2019). It seems possible that students who were exposed to English earlier, and thus use it more competently and confidently, also exhibit more positive attitudes towards the language. Nyamubi's research raises important questions about how different aspects of students' language attitudes co-exist and how they interact with students' broader study attitudes and behaviours. But this is a gap that statistical surveys alone cannot adequately address.

The separation of the symbolic and the practical may also partly explain why the positive attitudes and the desire for English remain so strong despite the fact that only a small number of people will actually realise the benefits associated with English. Although not focused on language, studies in Tanzania have identified a mismatch between students' employment aspirations and the realities of the labour market (Al-Samarrai and Bennell, 2007; Helgesson, 2006; Mukyanuzi, 2003; Posti-Ahokas and Palojoki, 2014). Moreover, Qorro (2013, p. 36) argues that the association between the ability to speak English and better-paid employment is an 'artificial requirement' because the majority of Tanzanian workplaces use Kiswahili as their working language. Studies of the types of English that Tanzanians most-commonly acquire have also led to concerns about whether it would enable the kind of access to opportunities to which the speakers aspire (Blommaert, 2005). For example, Billings (2009; 2014) studied Tanzanian beauty contests, finding that the ability to answer questions in English was crucial for marking contestants out as educated and enabling success. As the competition progressed from local to regional and then to the national level, though, the majority of candidates found that their aspirations were limited by a 'glass ceiling' that related to their limited linguistic competence and style of speaking English. But despite the fact that aspirations relating to the benefits of English might not be realised, Ferguson (2013, p. 18) reminds that 'this demand for English cannot be regarded as irrational'. Though the aspirations of young people in education have been explored in research in Tanzania, these studies have not specifically included language in their questions or analysis

(DeJaeghere, 2018; Dohrn, 2017; Okkolin, 2017; Posti-Ahokas and Palojoki, 2014). Two notable exceptions to this are the separate ethnographic studies of schooling in different communities in the Kilimanjaro region of northern Tanzania conducted by Vavrus (2002b; 2003) and Stambach (2000). Both of these studies observed that English held an aspirational role that was not always attached to a specific future plan, but rather to general opportunities for mobility and escaping the difficulties of village life. Vavrus (2002b) also identifies a tension between students' aspirations relating to English and the cultural role of language, which is discussed in the next section.

The empirical research literature clearly demonstrates that English plays a key aspirational role and that desire for English is widespread. English plays an instrumental role as a pre-requisite for accessing opportunities to which people aspire. It also plays a related, but discrete, symbolic role as a marker of aspiration. But studies have also shown that positive attitudes towards English for its aspirational role are only part of the story. These sit alongside a socio-economic reality in which post-education opportunities are uncertain. Positive aspirations also rub shoulders with more ambivalent attitudes towards the difficulties associated with use of English in practice. The relationship between language attitudes and behaviours is also insufficiently researched to draw conclusions about students' experiences of negotiating their aspirations for language within the process of language learning. Ethnographic studies also remind that the aspirational role of language is just one part of a larger picture of sometimes competing influences and desires. One of these is the tension between 'modernity', which is associated with English and aspiration, and 'tradition', which is associated with the cultural role of language.

Language as culture

> …more than the fact that language is essential for the daily
> relations between humans in their communities and societies, it
> is also our prime cultural tool. (Senkoro, 2004, p. 47).

This cultural role of language has been identified by numerous commentators writing about various African contexts (Brock-Utne, 2006; Fanon, 1967; Makoni *et*

al., 2003; Mazrui and Mazrui, 1998; Mkandawire, 2005). In the quote above, Senkoro (2004) argues that language plays not only an important communicative role, but also that it acts as a carrier of culture. Language, he suggests, is the tool through which cultural knowledge, practices and histories are passed down through generations. Making a similar argument, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) notes that, although language in its general sense is a universalizing feature of humanity, particular languages are associated with particular groups of practices and values, and so can be considered to delineate as well as communicate the cultures of different communities. In this way, language acts as a marker of group identity (Pavlenko and Norton, 2007; Simpson, 2008). Although this association of language with culture might initially seem benign, within Ngũgĩ's discussion of 'language as culture' lies an historical, political, economic and psychological battleground. The continued prominence of European languages in Africa is positioned both as a conscious attempt to starve out African languages, and with them to undermine the cultural expression, knowledge production and confidence of African people and communities (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 2009). Writing specifically about LOI in education, Senkoro (2004, p. 47) likens the continued use of English as an instructional medium to 'cultural enslavement'. The significance of the role of language in these forms of oppression has meant that language is also seen as a crucial feature of attempts to decolonise African education (Lin and Martin, 2005; Prah, 2017; Roy-Campbell, 2019; Tikly, 2020). Importantly, Benson (2018, p. 224) argues that the use of African languages in education is not simply a matter of enabling better communication, but rather she asserts that the prioritisation of African languages is required as part of a 'larger paradigm shift' relating to an 'African Renaissance', characterised by the restoration of value to, and celebration of, African language, knowledge and culture (see also Alexander, 2003; Diop, 1996).

These broader critiques in relation to language and culture in Africa both talk to, and have influenced, Tanzanian LOI research and debate. The previous chapter discussed the relationship between language and national and cultural identity in the Tanzanian context. It highlighted the central role played by Kiswahili in strengthening a national Tanzanian identity (Topan, 2008), but also acknowledged

the importance of ECLs to ethnic group identities, pointing to concerns about whether ethnic identities may fade over time with the shift towards more first-language Kiswahili speakers (Batibo, 2013; Blommaert, 1999; 2014; Muzale and Rugemalira, 2008; Rosendal, 2017). It is perhaps important to note that, although some commentators have been very critical of English as the killer of African cultures, this has been challenged in more recent years as people point out that it is the expansion of African *linguae francae* that has had more influence on the decline of ethnic community languages (Mazrui, 2004; Petzell, 2012a). Mazrui (2004, p. 4) suggests that this might be related to the fact that European languages are primarily acquired through formal schooling, and so this 'tended to reduce their immediate capacity to replace the African languages around them'. This clear separation between the primacy of English in education, and mostly African languages outside of schooling, points to a key concern among LOI researchers.

Critics of the use of English as the LOI in Tanzanian post-primary education argue that it creates a divide and a disconnection between the language and culture of home and the language and culture of school. On a practical level, this makes learning more difficult because students are not encouraged to make connections between new learning and existing content knowledge and linguistic resources (Malekela, 2003; Qorro, 1999; Rubagumya, 2000; Vuzo, 2010). It is further argued that this separation results in education that lacks cultural relevance (Qorro, 2013). For example, concerns have been raised about the cultural and contextual relevance of teaching and learning resources, such as textbooks, and the examples used in examination questions (Bartlett and Vavrus, 2013; Brock-Utne, 2006). Although an analysis of textbooks used in Tanzanian secondary schools found that at least some of the texts used examples that would be familiar to Tanzanian students, it concluded that more could be done to enhance local relevance (Barrett *et al.*, 2014). Where projects have attempted to improve the linguistic and cultural relevance of education in particular communities in Tanzania, and elsewhere in Africa, they have reported improvements in educational quality. But projects have been small-scale and focused on the primary level (Aikman, 2011; Hays and Siegrühn, 2005; Hogan, 2008; Trudell, 2005).

On a symbolic level, it is argued that the decision not to use African languages in schooling sends a message that African cultures are not good enough or modern enough for education and educated people (Brock-Utne, 2007b; Galabawa and Senkoro, 2006; Okonkwo, 1983). School does not represent the cultures of students' homes and communities, but it is not culture-less. School instead becomes the site of its own 'culture', associated with the use of English. Ethnographic research in Tanzania has looked at students' negotiations of these different spaces and cultures and has found that students acknowledged that they make choices between these different cultures and that these choices were demonstrated through language (Stambach, 2000). For example, Vavrus (2002b, p. 379) found that students recognised that their use of English carried a 'cultural cost' but were willing to make that sacrifice for the opportunities they hoped it would offer. Stambach (2000, p. 97) found that some young people had a desire for English because it associated them with a culture of modernity and autonomy and set them apart from those who used only Kiswahili, 'the language that kept people in the backwaters of tradition'.

The association of English with being modern and educated seems to position other languages as traditional and uneducated. But there is empirical research suggesting that this dichotomy is too simple and fails to recognise the complex nature of young people's negotiations of language and identity. In particular there has been significant interest in expressions of a 'youth culture' through the development of Tanzanian hip-hop and *Bongo Fleva* music, with researchers noting conscious and strategic language mixing (Englert, 2008; Perullo, 2005; Suriano, 2007). These studies have looked mostly at urban youth who are not in formal education and so there is a need to consider whether some of these observations are also relevant to young people in rural and/or school contexts. Mugane (2018b, p. 149) identifies an important distinction in Africa between standard, 'vertical' English that is the 'passport to academic advancement' and 'horizontal' English which is much more prevalent and regularly adapted to suit local needs (see also Blommaert, 2005). This distinction may mean the linguistic creativity seen in non-formal contexts is not welcomed or beneficial in formal schooling. But, importantly, these studies challenge the idea that a single language is always associated with a

single culture and suggest that identities may be comprised of a dynamic mix of overlapping cultures, associated with different combinations of language. This is one of the reasons why the next section of this chapter introduces another language role that undoubtedly overlaps with 'language as culture' but draws more attention to individual, lived negotiations of language and multiple cultural identities.

Language as 'being'

> It is in language that people find their mental home, their
> definitional relationship to the external world. (Prah, 1998, p. 2)

Elements of the role of 'language as being' could perhaps be absorbed under the umbrella of 'language as culture'. In fact, Ngũgĩ (1986, p. 17) writes that 'culture carries…the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world'. But the empirical evidence discussed in the previous section suggested that individuals may exist at the intersection of multiple cultures, negotiating different combinations depending on the context or situation. As such, this chapter offers the role of 'language as being' to better represent experiences of living and negotiating different aspects of language(s) and culture(s) that are complex, potentially conflicting, and may be different for each individual (Higgins, 2011; Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004; Zhu and Li, 2016). This notion of 'language as being' perhaps sits most comfortably with a view of language as a social practice (Banda, 2009; Blommaert, 2010; Heller, 2007). Working from within this perspective, Juffermans (2015) discusses the concept of 'languaging', explaining that:

> 'languaging reflects a human turn in applied and sociolinguistics, i.e. a move away from languages (in plural) as linguistic systems that are used by people, towards language (in singular or as a verb) as a sociolinguistic system that is shaped by and also shapes people.' (Juffermans, 2015, p. 8)

This conceptualisation of language does not view students as making choices between different, boundaried, languages and related cultures, but rather as dynamic agents, negotiating their way through social spaces and identities and drawing on a range of linguistic resources (Swain, 2006). This view of language is closely related to the pedagogical approach of 'translanguaging' that was introduced as part of the discussion of 'language as communication' (Juffermans, 2015).

By considering language as a social practice and a lived experience, the role of 'language as being' also encompasses the emotional and relational aspects of language that might relate to Prah's description above of a 'mental home'. Importantly, 'language as being' also encompasses the ways in which language shapes relationships between the self and others (Pavlenko, 2005). There are, of course, overlaps with other language roles. For example, 'language as being' and 'language as aspiration' are brought together when discourses and perceptions about the status of different languages affect either self-perception, or the way that individuals are perceived, or believe that they are perceived, by others (Zotzmann and O'Regan, 2016). Demonstrating connections between language roles, Possi and Milinga (2017, p. 29) write that language 'is a means of communication; a process that allows individuals to express their ideas, feelings, perceptions and opinions to others'. But, as the preceding discussion has shown, language is not only the vehicle for these thoughts. It can also be the object of those thoughts. The experience of using language can also trigger certain emotions and reactions. The research evidence about language of instruction as it is currently presented contains hints that these reactions could be important to students' negotiations of language in schooling, but there is significant scope for developing more thorough understanding of the role of 'language as being'.

Some references have already been made to empirical studies exploring individuals' negotiations of language and identity in Tanzania and elsewhere (Englert, 2008; Higgins, 2011), but there are very few examples that specifically focus on the role of 'language as being' when looking at issues of language-in-education. One example is offered by Wilder and Mseemmaa (2019) who describe the learning experience of a single secondary student from a school in the Arusha region. They argue that her experience of learning is currently characterised by 'unresponsive pedagogy' that fails to recognise the linguistic and knowledge resources that she brings to the classroom. The authors consider how different orientations to literacy teaching might impact upon her sense of being, which they suggest is currently tinged with shame and a sense of inadequacy. Observations have also been made in the context of other research questions that point to students' experiences relating

to language. For example, several studies have commented on students' levels of confidence and self-esteem, noting that these are generally low when English is used and noticeably higher in Kiswahili contexts (Lyakurwa, 2012; Nomlomo and Vuzo, 2014). Galabawa and Senkoro (2006, p. 48) noted that students looked 'happy and assured' in observations of Kiswahili-medium lessons. Malmberg and Sumra (1998) found that primary school students who used Kiswahili both at home and school, rather than a different language at home, reported more positive schooling experiences. Some studies have raised concerns about negative emotions, such as fear and anxiety, being felt by students in the school context (Joyce-Gibbons et al., 2018; Malmberg and Sumra, 1998; Mwinsheikhe, 2009). Makewa, Role and Tuguta (2013), Opoku-Amankwa (2009) and Madonsela (2015) have linked feelings of anxiety specifically to situations where English is used in schools in Tanzania, Ghana and South Africa respectively. In Tanzania, studies have also been conducted looking at students' explanations of their own academic performance, with particular interest on whether they cite personal, internal factors or external factors for underperformance (Mkumbo and Amani, 2012). For example, Lyakurwa (2012) found that secondary school students who perceived themselves to be intelligent were more likely to blame external factors for hampering success. These observations offer some insight into students' experiences of 'being' when surrounded by or using different languages but there is a lot of space for developing better understanding of these experiences and the way that different emotions and mindsets affect learning.

'Language as being' not only encompasses individual experiences, but also shines a spotlight on relationships. Learning, in this case in schools and classrooms, is a 'social process…mediated by language' (Barrett and Bainton, 2016, p. 393). As such, although some experiences of language may be internal to an individual, many are constructed as an interaction with others. The section about 'language as communication' discussed the observation of teachers asking questions, but being met with silence (Brock-Utne, 2007b; Issa Mohamed and Banda, 2008; Qorro, 2006a). In this situation, the relationship between the teacher and students is affected. Mwinsheike (2009, p. 228) talks about students feeling anxious and

teachers feeling frustrated, perhaps even resorting to punishment or 'negative reinforcement'. In contrast, observations from Kiswahili-medium lessons suggested that questions were answered willingly and researchers observed that both teachers and students were much more positive and upbeat in their demeanour (Mwinsheikhe, 2008; Vuzo, 2008). Existing understanding of this relational nature of students' experiences of language in schooling can only be inferred from observations in studies with different foci. For example, in a study of social and emotional competencies that were considered important for primary students starting school in Mtwara region, Jukes et al. (2018) remarked on the importance placed on competencies related to social relationships and social responsibility. Returning to the secondary school age-group, a longitudinal study of young people in vocational training programmes in Tanzania and Uganda found that students' feelings about themselves and their experiences were intimately related to the responses of others (DeJaeghere, 2019). Analysing this data using the concept of recognition, DeJaeghere draws upon empirical studies with students in South African universities which also highlight the influence of relationships and the assumptions and reactions of others to individual students' experiences of education (Calitz, 2018; Walker, Wilson-Strydom and Calitz, 2016; Wilson-Strydom and Walker, 2015). These studies highlight examples relating to students' self-esteem and their willingness to contribute in different learning situations and so it seems likely that their observations may also be relevant to students' experiences of language in Tanzania, but further study is necessary. These studies also raise key questions about relationality and social justice in education, an issue that has a strong relationship with language and is the focus of the final language role to be explored in this chapter.

Language as social (in)justice

> A key finding of the research is that when the foreign language,
> English in this case, is used…a small group of students succeed
> while the vast majority sinks (Brock-Utne, 2007a, p. 509).

There have been numerous assertions that the language-in-education policies in Tanzania, but also elsewhere in Africa and other postcolonial contexts, are unjust

(Brock-Utne, 2010; Canagarajah, 2005; Halvorsen, 2018; Holmarsdottir, 2005; Pitman, Majhanovich and Brock-Utne, 2010; Roy-Campbell, 2001b). Many of these arguments draw from the discussions above around the use of European languages devaluing African languages and cultures and the perpetuation of colonial structures of power and inequality (Babaci-Wilhite, Geo-JaJa and Lou, 2012; Biswalo, 2010; Brock-Utne, 2000; Kamwangamalu, 2018; Neke, 2005). It has also been demonstrated empirically that the use of a European LOI is related to greater inequality, both in student performance and income (Coyne, 2015). For example, the study that Brock-Utne (2007a) is referring to above found that, when students were tested in English and Kiswahili, not only was English performance lower overall, but there was a much wider gap in achievement between the highest performing and lowest performing students (see also Galabawa and Lwaitama, 2005). A study comparing the secondary school achievement of students who had been educated in Kiswahili-medium and English-medium primary schools also found that the achievement gap between these groups of students increased as students progressed in secondary education (Komba and Bosco, 2015). Questions are rightly asked about who actually benefits from the current situation (Bgoya, 2001; Brock-Utne, 2003; Clegg and Simpson, 2016; Myers-Scotton, 1993; Qorro, 2013). Brock-Utne's (2007a) and Galabawa and Lwaitama's (2005) studies show that, although many students perform poorly when English is the LOI, some students do succeed (see also Afitska *et al.*, 2013). But the empirical evidence suggests that the opportunities for success are not equal.

It is argued that English as the language of instruction, in Tanzania and more widely, perpetuates social injustice because it reinforces inequalities between students (Alexander, 1999; Brock-Utne, 2012; Kuchah, 2018; Tikly, 2016). A recent Tanzanian study, for example, found strong links between students' socio-economic status, their exposure to English outside of school and their performance on English assessments (Nyamubi, 2019). The link between school performance and an 'English language support system' outside of school was also observed in studies in Tanzania by Roy-Campbell and Qorro (1987, p. 175) and Qorro (2006b), and on Zanzibar by Rea-Dickens and Yu (2013). The link between more support and improved

performance might seem like a common-sense observation, but Rubagumya (2009) has been highly critical of the fact that some studies have drawn conclusions about the effectiveness of English and Kiswahili as LOI at primary level without acknowledging the socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds of the students who have access to private English-medium primary schooling (for example Bikongoro, 2015; Komba and Bosco, 2015). The lack of consideration of students' backgrounds in these studies is in sharp contrast to Komba's (2012) analysis of 'gainers' and 'losers' at primary level in Tanzania, which she argues is tightly related to socio-economic background and family involvement. Inequalities that affect learning at the primary level mean that students are certainly not approaching secondary level schooling, and the change of LOI, on an even playing field.

Another way that language has been considered to enable social justice, or perpetuate social injustice in education is through its potential to include or exclude learners. Arguments about the way that language can include or exclude an individual or group from different domains and opportunities in society have already been discussed in the previous chapter, and as part of the discussions of 'language as communication' and 'language as aspiration' (Bamgbose, 2000; Rubagumya *et al.*, 2011). Empirical research has also raised concerns, though, about language functioning as a tool for exclusion in the classroom. Drawing from classroom observation data, Vuzo (2008; 2010) notes that the language of instruction excludes a large number of students from classroom dialogue. She explains that, 'this is because the learners' knowledge, life experiences and language resources are excluded from the classroom discourse' (2010, p. 25; see also Wilder and Msseemmaa, 2019). Similar observations about students' lack of participation have also been made in studies discussed in other sections of this chapter (Rubagumya, 2008; Webb and Mkongo, 2013). Writing about classrooms in Kenya, Kiramba (2018) argues that the insistence on monolingual use of English is not only about whether or not students can understand and respond to questions, but rather it is an issue of epistemic justice because students are being excluded from the process of knowledge production and negotiation. Issues of language and epistemic justice are central themes of debates about the decolonisation of education in Africa, and that

were referred to as part of the discussion of 'language as culture' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018; Prah, 2017; Roy-Campbell, 2019; Tikly, 2020). Reflecting on the requirement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 that education should be 'inclusive and equitable', Vuzo (2018) wanted to explore the longer-term impacts of the classroom marginalisation she had observed and found that the language of instruction was a significant factor in school drop-outs, meaning that students were not just excluded from classroom dialogue, but from education altogether (see also Joyce-Gibbons *et al.*, 2018).

One of the proposed solutions for redressing the existing role of language in creating and reinforcing social injustice in education is to encourage and create space for the use of multiple languages (Brock-Utne, 2016; Skutnabb-Kangas *et al.*, 2009; Tikly, 2016). For example, writing about her observations of classroom practice in South Africa, Probyn (2009, p. 134) argues that 'classroom codeswitching is not merely a matter of linguistic interest, but it is also closely tied to issues of social justice' (see also Klu *et al.*, 2013; Mafela, 2009). When considering 'language as communication', more recent interest in the concept of translanguaging was discussed. It was shown that it has been argued that this flexible but purposive approach to the use of multiple languages as a pedagogical strategy has the potential to enable effective classroom communication and understanding whilst also supporting language development (Clegg and Simpson, 2016; Creese and Blackledge, 2010; García and Li, 2014). But beyond those benefits, translanguaging redresses concerns about linguistic and epistemic exclusion because it encourages individuals to draw on their full language and knowledge repertoires. In an action research project in a community library in northern Tanzania, this was shown to support social justice goals because it disrupts linguistic hierarchies and allows speakers greater agency (Shank Lauwo, 2018a). It has been noted that, in order to disrupt language hierarchies in formal education, an approach like translanguaging is necessary because, in contrast to multilingual approaches that aim to aid transition to a European LOI, translanguaging values flexible language use at all levels of education (Odugu and Lemieux, 2019). It has also been suggested that perceiving languages as interconnected is more in line with the traditional African value system of *ubuntu,* to

which a sense of justice and fairness in relationships with others and the community is central (Brock-Utne, 2016; Makalela, 2015a; Shank Lauwo, 2018b).

There are important warnings that promoting translanguaging is not the same as allowing existing multilingual coping strategies to continue unregulated. Clegg and Simpson (2016, p. 364) warn that, although code-switching forms part of translanguaging, 'there is a world of difference between this unstructured use of code-switching and the judicious and planned use of two languages in translanguaging'. Others have argued that although code-switching and translanguaging may look similar, they should be thought of as quite discrete because they are based on different theoretical assumptions (Lin, 2020). The identification of 'codes' that might be alternated between suggests a theoretical understanding of languages as boundaried, 'named language categories' (Vogel and García, 2017, p. 4). But translanguaging views these categories as socially and politically constructed (Makoni and Pennycook, 2007), often recognising ways in which language categories have contributed to marginalisation (Kleyn and García, 2019). Thus, although it has been argued that the notion of translanguaging more accurately describes the fluid linguistic practice of multilingual Africans in their day-to-day lives (Heugh, 2015), this is not necessarily the form of language practice observed in African classrooms which are heavily influenced by language categorization and language hierarchies (Kiramba, 2018; Makoe and McKinney, 2014). This is a key consideration for those who look to theories and strategies for translanguaging developed in Western contexts as a potential solution to the LOI question in Africa. For translanguaging to function in African classrooms, it may require not only training of teachers in specific pedagogical strategies (Clegg and Afitska, 2011), but also a shift in teachers' beliefs about language away from viewing the use of non-LOI language as a hindrance towards viewing all linguistic resources as useful for learning (Kleyn and García, 2019). Since the majority of studies of classroom dialogue in Tanzania have focused on its limitations, it is not known how many positive examples of multilingual practice there might be in Tanzanian schools.

Much of the empirical evidence suggests that language currently works against the goal of social justice as it has been shown to strengthen and reproduce

inequalities. But, though research into translanguaging in education in Africa is only an emerging field, it does offer some examples of language acting to redress imbalances. The fact that this discussion of 'language as social (in)justice' has been brief in comparison to other sections of this chapter should not be assumed to mean that this role of language is any less important. In fact, the relationship between language and social justice is so significant that it will be re-visited in the next chapter as part of the exploration of the capability approach, language and education.

Multiple language roles vs. the monolingual ideal

This chapter has argued that language plays multiple roles in students' lives. The empirical evidence about language-in-education in Tanzania and other parts of Sub-Saharan Africa shows that language not only acts as a form of communication, but languages can also represent and function as aspirations and carriers of culture. Moreover, language is intimately related to students' senses of being, partly because it is a medium through which they negotiate complex identities and relationships, but also because language is experienced, and those experiences can evoke a variety of emotions. Finally, this chapter considered the role that language can play either in enabling or obstructing social justice. As this thesis aims to construct a holistic picture of students' experiences of language and learning, it is crucial that it recognises and explores these different language roles and the connections and relationships between them.

Language performs these multiple roles simultaneously. But the discussion in this chapter has demonstrated that it is not always the same language that fulfills all of these functions. This fact becomes problematic when students, and the societies in which they live, feel that they must make choices between languages. In order to make these choices, individuals and communities must also decide which language roles they most value and thus want to prioritise. The previous chapter argued that a significant barrier to meaningful debate about language of instruction in Tanzania is the fact that those arguing different positions have prioritised different language roles, without adequately engaging with the consequences for other functions and meanings of language. This chapter has shown, for example, that those who

advocate for a change in LOI to use Kiswahili have built an impressive collection of empirical studies focused on the effectiveness of language as a form of communication. On the other hand, those who reject the suggestion of a move away from English have tended to dismiss this evidence, instead asserting the importance of 'language as aspiration'.

The opportunity for the multiple language roles discussed in this chapter to peacefully coexist hits a monumental hurdle when it comes up against the monolingual ideal. Empirical studies have repeatedly found that teachers either aim to hide or deny their multilingual practice, or explain it with recourse to the linguistic shortcomings of their students (Jidamva, 2012; Mligo and Mwashilindi, 2017; Probyn, 2009). Numerous researchers have noted that their school-based observations included signs that stated, 'Speak English Only' or 'No English, No Service', or that they saw students being chastised, or even physically punished, for using languages other than English in the classroom or elsewhere in the school environment (Joyce-Gibbons *et al.*, 2018; Malekela, 2003; Mwinsheikhe, 2008; Tibategeza, 2010). This is despite the fact that studies have repeatedly reported that Kiswahili use is both commonplace and crucial to facilitating understanding in the classroom (Kinyaduka and Kiwara, 2013; Mligo and Mwashilindi, 2017; Nomlomo and Vuzo, 2014). Wolff (2002, p. 136) may be right that 'English Only' in African schools is a 'myth', but it is one that is reinforced by well-entrenched school level rules, attitudes and behaviour. This has a profound impact on students' experiences of language in education and their daily efforts to negotiate the tensions between different languages and language roles.

Identifying and developing understanding of the ways that different language roles shape students' experiences of language and learning is an important aim for this thesis. But, on its own, it is not enough to affect change in language-in-education policies and practices that are underpinned by entrenched views about which LOI will enable the outcomes that are considered highest priority. So, this thesis looks to present its empirical findings within a conceptual framework that supports the analysis of the empirical data, helping both to demonstrate how different languages influence students' experiences of learning, as well as how these enable or constrain

the achievement of the language-related outcomes that are valued as part of the multiple language roles. The next chapter introduces the capability approach and explores its potential for supporting both the conceptual work of this thesis and broader exploration and theorisation of language-in-education issues.

4. The Capability Approach as a Framework for Understanding Language in Education

Where the previous chapter identified *what* roles language plays in students' lives, this chapter turns to look more closely at the mechanics of *how* language plays these roles. It has been suggested that there is a need for a conceptual framework to support the analysis of empirical data about students' experiences of language and learning in a way that both recognises the multiple roles played by language and evaluates the relationship between language-in-education processes and desired language-related outcomes. A rich conceptual vocabulary is considered crucial for fulfilling the aim of building a detailed and holistic picture that takes adequate account of the complexity and heterogeneity of students' experiences of language and learning. Moreover, a clear analytical frame is required to enable the findings of this study to usefully talk back to the LOI debate and address some the conflicts and suspicions between groups advocating for different languages to be used and prioritised. This chapter introduces the capability approach as a useful set of conceptual and analytical tools for responding to these needs and explains why it is considered beneficial to approach language-in-education issues from a capabilities perspective.

The capability approach is a framework for the assessment of well-being that was initially introduced by Amartya Sen in 1979 (Sen, 1980). Since then it has been discussed, critiqued and developed by scholars across a broad variety of fields, including economics, philosophy, political science and education, to name just a few. In 2017, Ingrid Robeyns published an introductory text in which she offers a generalised definition and outline of the capability approach, based both on Sen's work and the work of other scholars in the past 35 years (Robeyns, 2017). Here she describes the capability approach as 'a flexible and multipurpose framework' (p. 24), but one that always focuses on 'what people can do and be (their capabilities) and what they are actually achieving in terms of beings and doings (their functionings)' (p. 9). The capability approach does not specify narrow sets of outcomes against

which well-being should be measured, such as wealth or reported satisfaction or happiness, but rather views well-being as multidimensional and related to the extent to which people have the necessary capabilities to 'lead the kind of lives they value – and have reason to value' (Sen, 1999, p. 18). As such, the capability approach has been promoted, and in some cases is now well-established, as an alternative to more traditional and mainstream approaches across a wide variety of fields, for example as a challenge to income-based measures of poverty in development studies (Alkire, 2002; 2005; Nussbaum, 2000; Sen, 1999; Stewart and Deneulin, 2002), or as a counter to human capital discourses in the field of education (Robeyns, 2006; Tikly and Barrett, 2011; Walker and Unterhalter, 2007).

There are other theoretical approaches to issues of language-in-education that have made important contributions to research and commentary relating to LOI and which have influenced the positions discussed in the previous chapters. For example, the language rights (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000), linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992) and postcolonial language discourses (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1986) have been particularly important in discussions of 'language as culture' and 'language as social (in)justice', while framings of language-as-a-resource (Ruíz, 2010) and language as social practice (Heller, 2007) have played significant roles in highlighting the benefits of mother-tongue and multilingual school language practice for effective communication and epistemic justice. This chapter does not deny the value of these perspectives, but notes that these other approaches tend to focus attention on a limited number of language roles. A capabilities analysis has the potential to engage with these different critiques while emphasising the importance of ensuring a multidimensional perspective that keeps all of the multiple meanings of language in view.

This chapter begins by introducing some of the core features of the capability approach and demonstrating how they can support engagement with the key conceptual problems and tensions outlined in previous chapters. It then explores how a capabilities perspective can play a valuable role in broadening the focus of the study of language of instruction issues to build a more holistic picture of students' experiences and negotiations of language and learning that allows for diversity and

complexity and highlights connections and relationships. Finally, this chapter concludes by considering what the capability approach might have to say about the challenge of the monolingual ideal that plays such a powerful role in public attitudes, yet is underpinned by misconceptions about effective language learning.

How the capability approach addresses challenges in the language of instruction debate

The key distinction at the heart of the capability approach is between the concepts of 'capabilities' and 'functionings'. Robeyns (2016, p. 405) explains that 'capabilities aim to capture what people are able to do and to be and functionings point at the corresponding achievements'. It is argued that, if we only focus on what an individual has actually achieved, this does not enable us to adequately consider 'the real alternatives we have' and thus 'a person's freedom to achieve well-being' (1992, p. 49). Walker and Unterhalter (2007, p. 5) explain this distinction using the example of two Kenyan school students who perform poorly in mathematics. One experiences good quality education with a high level of support but chooses to spend more time on other things, while the other is interested and dedicated to her study of mathematics, but attends a poorly resourced school that does not have a specialist mathematics teacher and does not have support outside of school. Walker and Unterhalter explain that, 'if we look only at functioning in these two examples – performance in examinations – we see equal...outcomes. But while the functionings of the students are the same, their capabilities are different'. This example could equally apply to students who performed poorly in a language exam for different reasons, in which case it begins to become clear how the capability approach can help with the analysis of different students' experiences of language and learning. Of course, this thesis is not only concerned with students' capabilities and functionings in relation to passing exams. Rather, there is a broad range of capabilities relevant to the different language roles discussed in the previous chapter that might include 'getting a well-paid job', 'being respected for being educated',

'being part of a community that shares a common culture', and 'having good relationships with classmates'.

Many of the empirical studies of language-in-education discussed in the previous chapter present examples of students and teachers failing to achieve functionings that they value, but they do still demonstrate functioning. For example, if a student who wants to participate in class struggles to find the correct words in English and ends up sitting down embarrassed, she has still enacted a functioning, albeit not the one she wanted to achieve. Situations such as this highlight the fact that the concept of functioning applies to all possible outcomes, whether these might be considered positive or negative for a person and that, 'functionings are constitutive elements of well-being but also ill-being' (Robeyns, 2016, p. 406). However, there is disagreement amongst scholars of the approach as to whether the potential to achieve a negative outcome should be classed as a capability. For example, Alkire (2005, p. 121) writes that 'capabilities are, by definition, limited to functionings of value'. Others suggest that the term 'capability' should remain a 'value-neutral' category (Robeyns, 2017, p. 41), but that there is then a responsibility to distinguish between those capabilities that are 'valuable', and thus should be encouraged and supported, and those that are 'non-valuable' either because they are harmful or unimportant (Stewart and Deneulin, 2002, p. 67). The latter approach perhaps offers more analytical clarity, particularly when what is considered valuable may be different in different contexts. But the importance of identifying what is valued should not be underestimated, particularly when the capability approach is being used to evaluate well-being against this benchmark. Judgments of value emerge from individuals themselves, but also the values present in social contexts. By specifying that we should look not only at capabilities that people value, but also those that they 'have reason to value', Sen (1999, p. 18) also opens up a space for interrogation of individual and community values and asking how and why different 'beings' and 'doings' are valued. This is particularly useful for the study of LOI where some of the arguments discussed in chapter 2 present language values, particularly around the importance of English, as unquestionable.

The previous chapters highlighted a series of challenges that limit progress in the LOI debate in Tanzania. They argued that one of the factors preventing meaningful debate about LOI in Tanzania, and elsewhere, is the fact that those arguing for different positions prioritise different language roles. Alongside this was a tension between those who argued that the use of English acted as an obstacle to learning and those who asserted that the use of English would enable future potential benefits and opportunities. Throughout the discussion both of arguments for and against a change to use Kiswahili as the LOI in post-primary education, and of empirical research relating to language in schools, it also became clear that diversity in students' life situations can result in inequality in their experiences of language-in-education. This section builds upon the key distinction between capabilities and functionings to present other key features of the capability approach and demonstrate how they can speak to these specific, language-related challenges.

Multiple language roles

One key challenge for working with the issue of language-in-education, as set out in chapter 3, is the fact that language plays multiple roles. In capabilities terms, it can be said that there are multiple reasons why people value language and its related capabilities and functionings. In multilingual contexts, like Tanzania, it is often different languages that play different roles, and so, as Rubagumya et al. (2011) argue through the notion of linguistic citizenship, individuals require proficiency in more than one language in order for all the capabilities they value to become achieved functionings. This presents a significant challenge for language research and planning because choosing to focus either on an individual language, or an individual language role, can often result in other languages or language roles falling out of focus, whether intentionally or not.

The capability approach explicitly aims to avoid this narrowing of focus. Robeyns (2017, p. 56) identifies the recognition of the fact that a person holds multiple values, which she terms 'value pluralism', as part of the 'core' of the capability approach. This assertion that individual well-being is comprised of multiple, valued functionings has been very influential, for example in the design of

measures of development like the Human Development Index, the Human Development Reports and the Millennium and Sustainable Development Goals, all of which recognise poverty and development as multidimensional (Alkire, 2018; Alkire and Foster, 2011; Fukuda-Parr, 2003; Martinetti, 2000). Robeyns (2017) warns prospective users of the capability approach against attempts to narrow focus to a single capability or functioning. This poses a challenge to researchers who strive to offer clarity of analysis while at the same time representing the complexities of people's experiences. As such, it is sometimes necessary to temporarily isolate a single capability or functioning for consideration, but the concept of value pluralism reminds that this analysis must always be placed back into the context of the broader picture of capabilities and functionings and their numerous interconnections. As such, an approach to the study of language-in-education influenced by the capability approach would consider an analysis that focused on just one language role to be incomplete. It would not only emphasise the importance of considering all valued functionings relating to language, but also the relationships and interactions between these capabilities and functionings.

Language as both 'problem' and 'resource'

Language roles are groupings of the language-related capabilities that people value. A large part of the disagreement explored in the previous two chapters has centred around differing opinions and understandings of *how* language(s) can enable or constrain valued capabilities such as 'participating in class' or 'getting a good job'. In relation to these goals, language(s) have been positioned in different ways. For example, those advocating for a change to Kiswahili as the LOI present English as limiting or preventing students from achieving valued functionings that constitute learning. In contrast, those who argue for retaining English as the LOI position the language as a desirable resource necessary for access to a variety of future opportunities. However, both of these approaches propose a single LOI, which in turn represents a narrowing of capabilities for students who may value using the non-LOI language in school. The capability approach importantly offers a common vocabulary and set of conceptual tools for considering the relationship between

language(s), capabilities and functionings that can accommodate and evaluate situations when language(s) and language policies and practice act as both enabling and constraining factors.

This is important because there has been tension in the broader fields of language-in-education and language planning, in both the Global South and the Global North, between framings of language as a 'problem' and language as a 'resource' (Hamid, 2016; Hornberger, 2002; Ridge, 2004; Roy-Campbell, 2001a; Ruíz, 1984; 2010). The 'language-as-problem' orientation commonly positions multilingualism as a challenge to be overcome in education systems and is closely associated with a monolingual ideal (Hult and Hornberger, 2016). The discourse of 'language-as-resource' has been an important counter to 'language-as-problem' and has been used to promote multilingualism and linguistic and cultural diversity (Ruíz, 2010), but it has also been criticised for encouraging an instrumental view of language as a means to economic and material benefits (Petrovic, 2005; Ricento, 2005). The capability approach challenges the narrative that language acts as *either* 'problem' *or* 'resource' by asking the questions, *problem for what?* and *resource for what?,* and evaluating the contribution of language(s) in relation to different valued capabilities.

Focusing analysis of language-in-education around capabilities helps to foreground the distinction between 'ends' (the beings and doings that a person values and wants to be able to achieve) and the 'means' (the resources and circumstances that would enable that person to have the capability to be and do those things). Although the ends/means distinction in humanities and social science long pre-dates the capability approach, Robeyns (2017, p. 48) suggests that it is an important feature of capability analysis because we can only really evaluate the 'means' if we are clear about what the valued 'end' is. This distinction is also particularly relevant to questions of LOI where assumptions are often made that the best way to achieve an outcome where students can speak and use English is to use English as the sole means of instruction and to frame African languages as a 'problem' in schooling (Kamwangamalu, 2003). However, the empirical research presented in chapter 3 demonstrated that, when capabilities or potential outcomes

such as 'participating in class' and 'passing examinations' are used as the starting point for analysis, the use of English as the means to achieving these ends is shown to be problematic.

Of course, the categorisation of ends and means are not static. Neither should the identification of ends and means be taken to suggest that education is only viewed as being of instrumental value. But even when the process of education is viewed as intrinsically valuable, it is because it promotes and enables certain valued capabilities. For example, some students may value 'speaking English' in and of itself because it offers a sense of challenge and enjoyment. However, the previous chapters have shown that 'speaking English' is often valued as a means to enabling other capabilities, for example 'being employed in a good job'. Recognising that some capabilities are primarily sought because they help to enable the achievement of other capabilities, Richardson (2015, p. 170) argues that we should be more explicit about what the 'final ends' in any analysis are, stating that 'it matters which ends are to be sought for the sake of which'. In the case of language-in-education this may lead us to question whether 'being employed in a good job' is a 'final end' or whether students value that capability for other aspects of well-being that it might enable. The ability to capture this dynamism, the relationships between capabilities, and the potential diversity of 'ends' and 'means' is of particular significance to this thesis which aims to acknowledge and accommodate the plurality of students' language-related values.

Once the distinction between 'ends' and 'means' has been made, the capability approach draws on further conceptual tools to analyse the different components of the 'means' that constitute any capability. The concept of 'means' includes, but is not limited to, resources or inputs. Rather, Sen (1992, p. 27) highlights the importance of considering 'personal diversities in the possibility of converting primary goods (including incomes) into achievements of well-being'. For example, if the parents of a student buy their child a physics textbook, but that student does not have enough knowledge of English to access the language the book uses, they will not be able to use the book to achieve the functioning of passing the examination. The abilities or opportunities that a person has to transform inputs or

resources into capabilities and functionings are commonly termed *conversion factors* and Robeyns (2017, p. 46) notes that, once we recognise their presence and influence, 'it becomes clear that they are a very pervasive phenomenon'. Conversion factors are broad-ranging. For our student, then, knowledge of English is a necessary conversion factor, but there could be other barriers to conversion, for example if they did not have access to light that would enable them to study in the evenings, or if they were female and living in a household that expected girls to perform all the chores, leaving no time for study. This example also shows that the conversion factors relating to specific functionings are not uniform but will vary depending on the individual in question and their personal characteristics and circumstances. Although this contributes to a very complex picture of the 'means' that constitute capabilities and functionings, it is the failure to recognise this complexity and diversity that can lead to the failure of policies or interventions to adequately address individual needs.

There is another approach to thinking about the 'means' of capability construction and the notion of conversion that is particularly useful for the analysis of skills, such as the ability to use different languages. In her work, Nussbaum (2000, pp. 84-85; 2011, pp. 20-23) distinguishes between 'basic capabilities', 'internal capabilities' and 'combined capabilities'. This helps to focus attention on the fact that capabilities are about more than a person's natural abilities. Although there is some confusion caused by the use of the term 'capabilities' for all categories (Robeyns, 2017, pp. 93-94)[15], the key point is that a person's 'combined capabilities' are comprised of a combination of: their innate potential to do or be something (basic capabilities); which can then grow or be nurtured into the related, developed skill (internal capabilities); plus a set of external circumstances that can enable or

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[15] Robeyns (2017, pp. 93-94) argues that, because the most commonly accepted usage of the term 'capability' refers to the 'real opportunity to do something', this equates to Nussbaum's term 'combined capability'. By this understanding, Nussbaum's 'basic capabilities' and 'internal capabilities' are not, in fact, capabilities because they do not, on their own, represent a real opportunity to complete a functioning. Robeyns recognises that Nussbaum's conceptual distinctions are very useful, but suggests they would have been better termed 'innate human characteristics' (basic capabilities) and 'internal characteristics' or 'skills, talents, character traits and abilities' (internal capabilities).

constrain both the opportunities to develop internal capabilities, and the ability to use internal capabilities as conversion factors for the achievement of other related functionings. Tikly (2016) explains that this is particularly relevant to the consideration of language when he writes:

> 'a basic capability can be defined as the innate capacity to develop linguistic competence in one or more languages. The development of these skills requires, however, access to specific opportunities to develop this innate capacity and the removal of barriers to these opportunities. In the case of language acquisition this might relate to opportunities and barriers at a number of levels from the immediate pedagogical environment to the home and community and the wider education system' (Tikly, 2016, p. 413).

This can perhaps be usefully extended to note that, even when an individual has had opportunities to develop their language skills, if this is not in itself the 'final end' but is rather a means to achieving other functionings, they may face further barriers to having the full 'combined capability'. This might be the case if our student with the physics textbook did speak enough English to access the book, but could not find time to study.

This section has explored some of the key analytical tools offered by and commonly used within the capability approach and has considered how they can be used to understand the mechanics of *how* language relates to the different valued capabilities. These tools and concepts support a detailed analysis that demonstrates that language is neither solely a 'problem', nor solely a 'resource', but can function in different ways depending on the capabilities under consideration and the different inputs, basic and internal capabilities and conversion factors available to different individuals. The ability to manage this heterogeneity is a strength of the capability approach that makes it particularly well suited to analysis of diversity and inequality.

Diversity and inequality

The empirical research discussed in the previous chapter demonstrated that students' lives differ, their linguistic abilities are different, and that they have access to different opportunities to learn language. The concepts and tools used within capability approach help to highlight this heterogeneity and offer a framework for conceptualising the myriad of factors that influence a student's capabilities and

functionings (McCowan, 2011; Terzi, 2014). Writing about difference in the context of education, Walker and Unterhalter (2007) write:

> 'Learners differ in intersecting dimensions. These include personal differences such as enthusiasm for academic study or artistic ability; environmental differences such as wealth or whether children live in a society with a history of education inequalities such as the UK or greater equalities such as Sweden; and social differences, for example, the extent to which race, ethnic, or gender differences are salient with regard to the experience of education.' (Walker and Unterhalter, 2007, p. 10).

Based on the empirical data explored in the previous chapter and the capabilities literature discussed so far, the diagram in figure 4.1 demonstrates some of the layers or dimensions of difference that are relevant to the study of language-in-education. It is certainly not designed to be an exhaustive representation of possible differences, but it demonstrates just how important an account of diversity and complexity is to developing a broader understanding of students' experiences of language and learning.
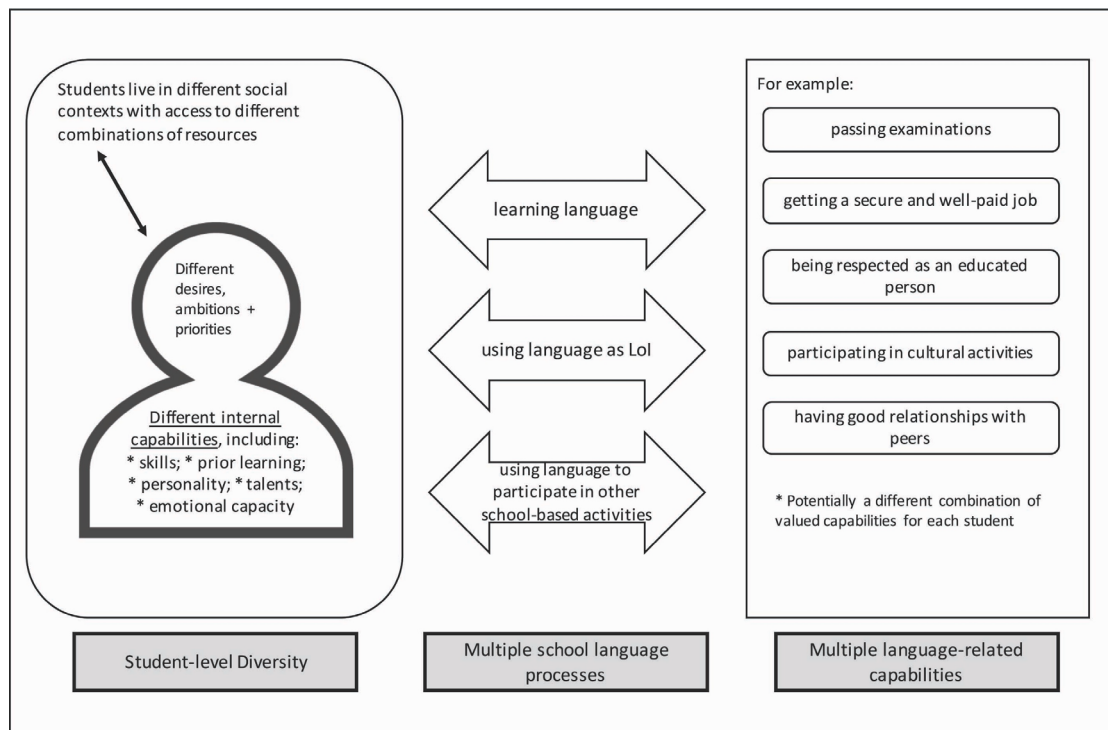
Figure 4.1: Layers of diversity relating to language-in-education.

People differ. So do the contexts that they live in. This observation is equally true for Tanzanian students. They have different internal capabilities, skills and talents, as well as different personalities, desires and ambitions. They come from different

backgrounds and so enter the school environment with different levels of material, social, emotional and linguistic resources to draw upon. They arrive at secondary school with different experiences of schooling at primary level, including different experiences of engagement with language(s). It is also crucial to recognise that consideration of language-in-education is not restricted to one singular process (Barrett and Bainton, 2016). Rather, it includes at least three separate, but clearly inter-related, processes: the process of learning language; the process of using language as the communicative medium to learn other subjects; and the process of using language to interact outside of formal learning situations. All of these layers of difference underpin different related capabilities or 'ends', and of the possible capabilities, different students will have different preferences and priorities as to which functionings they consider most valuable.

The focus on capabilities also draws attention to situations in which difference relates to inequality. Walker and Unterhalter's example of the two Kenyan students, discussed above, has already shown that a comparison of achieved functionings will not tell us whether students had equal opportunities to achieve those functionings. Writing about the experiences of South African university students, Wilson-Strydom (2015c, p. 152) explains that 'the capabilities approach provides a means for researching the processes underlying both different and similar outcomes (functionings)…in a manner that may otherwise be masked'. Her use of the word 'processes' to describe the mechanisms underpinning capabilities and functionings is important because it reminds that there is not a simple correlation between individuals with different material resources having different capabilities. In fact, Shorten (2017) has specifically advocated for the use of the capability approach to shift conceptions of linguistic disadvantage away from material inputs. Instead, Wilson-Strydom's term, 'processes' also includes the different forms of conversion factors that may enable or constrain students' capabilities. Thus, when Nyamubi (2019) identified a statistical correlation between parental socio-economic status and students' performance in English, a capabilities analysis would seek to explore this potential relationship and the variety of factors that might be related to socio-economic status and that could influence different students' capabilities. It is

perhaps the ability of the capability approach to simultaneously promote a complex account of human diversity and support the analysis of a multi-faceted process of capability construction that has led to its popularity amongst scholars interested in issues of social justice, inequality and disadvantage (Robeyns, 2017, p. 115).

The capability approach is increasingly being referenced as valuable to discussions of language, inequality and social justice. It has influenced both theoretical work (Lewis, 2017; Shorten, 2017; Tikly, 2016) and has been used in the analysis of empirical research across a variety of contexts, including Zanzibar (Babaci-Wilhite, 2015b), Ghana (Bronwin, 2016), Turkey (Cin and Walker, 2016), India (Mohanty, 2009; 2017) and Pakistan (Tamim, 2013). Capabilities is by no means the only approach to thinking about and tackling these issues, though, and it is particularly important to recognise the central role that has been played by the notion of linguistic rights in broadening the focus of language planning discourses beyond instrumental, economic benefits (Gandolfo, 2009; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson and Rannut, 1995). When considering language-in-education policy, the linguistic rights discourse, and related charters, have been particularly influential in advocating for access to mother tongue education. For example, the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights states that all people have 'the right for their own language to be taught' (UNESCO, 1996, p. 5 Article 3.2). In the African context, the Asmara Declaration on African Languages and Literatures (2000) specifically states: 'All African children have the unalienable right to attend school and learn their mother tongues and every effort should be made to develop African languages at all levels of education'. However, in practice, these declarations are not always realised, or policies are practised unevenly (Musau, 2003; Trudell, 2016b). Concerns have been raised that rights-based approaches do not adequately acknowledge diversity and are too government-focused (McCowan, 2011; Tikly, 2016; Tikly and Barrett, 2011). It has also been suggested that the legal approach of rights can result in policy-makers 'being contented when they have strictly followed the roles that a limited interpretation of rights imposes on them' (Robeyns, 2006, p. 70).

Concerns that rights-based approaches to language-in-education have not resulted in language justice have encouraged several scholars to turn to the capability approach for a broader understanding of the capabilities and functionings that would comprise justice with regard to language-in-education (Ansari, 2016; New and Kyuchukov, 2018; Tamim, 2014; Tikly, 2016). For example, in the context of Pakistan, Tamim (2014) analyses and compares the experiences of students who have come from different backgrounds. In particular, her analysis considers differences between those educated in private, English-medium schools, who were from middle-income backgrounds, and those educated in Urdu-medium government schools who were from families with lower incomes. Tamim suggests that some forms of analysis might view the opportunity of government school students to be educated in a language they are familiar with as a positive fulfilment of their linguistic rights. However, she argues that a focus on capabilities highlights that Urdu-medium schooling did not actually support students' aspirations in higher education or broader society, stating that it 'became a '"stigma" and "shame" when it was rendered largely 'irrelevant' by the wider language policy…hence restricting their participation in valued dimensions' (Tamim, 2014, p. 294). Tamim also observed that students from Urdu-medium schools, although they knew some English, were faced with an English-medium learning environment for the first time, complete with classmates who were much more confident using English. This negatively impacted on their sense of self-efficacy and on their participation (see also Ansari, 2016; Mohanty, 2017; Shamim, 2011).

This example demonstrates that the differences in material resources between privately-educated students and those educated in government schools were compounded by different language policies in the different types of schools, resulting in the strengthening of inequality. In Tanzania, this split system exists at the primary level. The previous chapter showed that some scholars are highly critical of research comparing the examination performance of students who have attended English-medium and Kiswahili-medium primary schools because the material circumstances of both the students' families and the schools are so different (Rubagumya, 2009). Tamim's example, however, highlights the importance of

exploring the broader differences in capabilities between the two groups of students as a route to better understanding the relationships between diversity in resources, educational experiences and educational and linguistic inequality and injustice.

This section has explored how the concepts of value pluralism, conversion, and diversity and inequality can help to address challenges that have been identified in the reviews of the language of instruction literature and debate in chapters 2 and 3. The next section considers how the capability approach might contribute to extending the scope of language of instruction research.

Constructing a multidimensional and connected picture of capabilities, language and learning

Thus far, this chapter has introduced key features of the capability approach and demonstrated how they can usefully support an analysis of language-in-education that pays greater attention to diversity, both of students' reasons for valuing language(s) and of students' individual circumstances. This section aims to demonstrate how these concepts might be brought together to build a more holistic picture of language-in-education that both highlights the multidimensional nature of students' experiences and the importance of recognising the connections between different dimensions. The overall research question that guides this thesis, though, is not only about providing a detailed description of the school language environment. Instead it focuses on the ways in which students negotiate that environment, and so the first part of this section offers a discussion of the capability approach and student agency.

Student negotiations – agency and structure

This thesis is focused around students' negotiations of their school language environment and, thus, this study is underpinned by an assumption of student agency. This is another reason why the capability approach is an appropriate framework for this study. The importance of human agency sits at the heart of Sen's explanations of the capability approach and refers to 'a person's ability to act on

behalf of what he or she values and has reason to value' (Alkire, 2008, p. 2; see also Sen, 1992; 1999). Sen argues that 'agency freedom' should be considered separately from 'well-being freedom' because he notes that a person may exercise their agency in relation to a functioning that they value, but which does not directly contribute to their well-being (Sen, 1992, pp. 56-7). Aiming to bring together all of Sen's different comments about agency into one definition, Crocker offers an outline of 'Sen's ideal of agency', which includes the requirements that: a person must freely decide for themselves to do something; there must be a reason for doing something; and a person must play a role in the achievement of their goal (Crocker, 2008, p. 157).

But the ideal of full agentic freedom is rarely the reality as individuals make choices in social contexts that include a wide range of structural factors that may influence and constrain their choices. For example, in the case of language-in-education, students make daily language choices within a language environment that ascribes different languages with different values and presents norms and expectations for language use. But the recognition of individual agency acknowledges the fact that these constraints are not necessarily deterministic, but rather can often be navigated and negotiated (Khader, 2012). But not all people experience the same levels of agency, or are in the same 'negotiation position' (Okkolin, 2017, p. 95). Abilities to negotiate structural constraints differ according to personal characteristics and the resources that people have access to. For the analysis in this thesis of students' negotiations of their school language environments, Kleine's Choice Framework (2010; 2013) is considered to be a useful visualisation and conceptualisation of the interaction between structure, agency, resources and capabilities. It is reproduced in figure 4.2.

The Choice Framework was initially created as a tool for the analysis of information and communication technologies in development in Chile, but Kleine (2013) notes that its relevance is not limited to this geographic or thematic area. For example, the framework has been applied in the context of secondary education in East Africa to look at the use of mobile technology by female students in Nairobi, Kenya (Zelezny-Green, 2014; 2017).

STRUCTURE

- institutions and organizations
- discourses
- policies and programs
- formal and informal laws
  including:
  - ▸ Norms on usage of space
  - ▸ Norms on usage of time
- technologies and innovations
  including: access to ICTs
  - ▸ availability of ICTs
  - ▸ affordability of ICTs
  - ▸ skills needed for ICTs

AGENCY

SR
He   CR
ER   Age Gender Ethnicity etc.   NR
PsR   MR
In   Ti   FR   GR

CAPABILITIES

DEGREES OF EMPOWERMENT

- existence of choice
- sense of choice
- use of choice
- achievement of choice

DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

Primary: Choice
Secondary, as chosen by individual, for example:

- easier communication
- increased knowledge
- better/more social relationships
- healthy environment
- increased income
- increased mobility
- more voice
- more autonomy
- etc.

ACHIEVED FUNCTIONINGS

Key:
ER = Educational Resources   *SR = Social Resources*
PsR = Psychological Resources   *NR = Natural Resources*
In = Information   *MR = Material Resources*
FR = Financial Resources   *GR = Geographical Resources*
CR = Cultural Resources   *He = Health*
Ti = Time

Figure 4-2: The Choice Framework (Kleine, 2013, p.44), based on Kleine (2011), Alsop and Heinsohn (2005) and DFID (1999).

The Choice Framework clearly presents an individual's choice (situated in the central box under the title 'degrees of empowerment') as an outcome of an interaction or negotiation between agency, which is presented as related to both personal characteristics and resources, and structural influences. Moreover, the Choice Framework includes four categories of choice to indicate different ways in which individual choices might be constrained. For example, if the societal context were that only boys were admitted to secondary education, the option of continuing with education might not even exist for girls. Or, in a system where continuation to secondary level is contingent on an examination, a student could choose that they want to extend their education, but experience constraint in achieving that choice because they did not pass the entrance exam.

The notion of 'sense of choice' is also important and points to the concept of adaptive preference, which has been used to describe 'the phenomenon whereby the subjective assessment of one's well-being is out of line with the objective situation' (Robeyns, 2017, p. 137). For example, there may be a situation where a

student has a choice between continuing with education, which would objectively improve her well-being in the longer-term, and entering into an early marriage. But because of expectations and pressure from her family and community, she does not subjectively perceive this as a choice and feels she must drop-out of school to get married. Kleine (2013, p. 33) asserts that these 'self-censored choices…have particularly strong links to social norms and discourses as well as psychological resources like self-confidence'. This suggests that, if the student who felt she had no choice but to get married had a different resource profile, including a higher level of self-confidence, she might have felt that negotiating and challenging expectations that she drop-out of school was an available option. Looking at the resources listed as part of the Choice Framework, an obvious adaptation to improve its relevance for the analysis of language-in-education is to include 'language resources' as a separate category.

Any Choice Framework for language-in-education would include as part of 'structure' the hegemonic discourse about the superiority of English speakers. The previous chapter showed that this narrative undoubtedly influences individual preferences. But Khader (2012, p. 315) cautions against assuming that oppressive or unequal power structures result in 'completely eclipsed autonomy' and, instead, she offers examples of adaptive preference where individuals do exercise their agency and negotiate within the constraints of their situations. Khader (2013, p. 313) discusses two examples of adaptive preference (AP) that seem particularly relevant to the question of language preferences. 'APs caused by forced tradeoffs' refer to situations where a person might consciously express a preference that perpetuates ill-being, because they feel they are being forced to make a choice between two (or more) capabilities (2013, p. 318). In the case of language of instruction, this might apply to the situation where students and parents know that English as LOI negatively impacts on well-being in schooling because it makes learning more difficult, but they express a preference to trade-off the possibility of learning more easily because they value the opportunity of learning English more. Resource constraints mean that parents cannot afford to send their children to English-medium primary schools, which many believe would improve their learning at

secondary school, and so they believe that the trade-off between ease of learning 'now' and knowing English 'later' is inevitable. But the belief that this trade-off is inevitable is rooted in another form of AP that Khader (2013, p. 318) terms 'deprivation-perpetuation caused by factual misrepresentation'. In the case of language preferences, this 'factual misrepresentation' is the misconception that the best way to learn English is to use it as LOI. This relates to one of the resources that Kleine has included in the Choice Framework, 'information'. Unterhalter (2012b, p. 340) has also pointed the potential of 'informational limitations' to result in trade-offs that might have been viewed differently if a wider informational base were considered. Perhaps, if the Tanzanian public had better access to accurate and up-to-date information about language acquisition, they might be better equipped to negotiate historical language narratives, which might result in different choices about language-in-education. The final section of this chapter returns to this question as part of a discussion of public deliberation and decision-making.

The multidimensionality of capabilities in education

It is also central to this thesis that it is acknowledged that students' experiences of negotiating their school language environments are multidimensional. Considering the argument presented about multiple language roles explored in chapter 3, it should be clear that students are not only involved in linguistic, communicative negotiations, but are also negotiating between immediate demands and aspirations for their futures, negotiating their own, dynamic identities, and negotiating the numerous different interactions and relationships encompassed in being part of a social environment.

One approach that has been both popular and effective in developing a more holistic picture of the breadth of capabilities involved in education in different contexts has been to generate situated capabilities lists (for example see Crosbie, 2014; Mutanga and Walker, 2015; Walker, 2006a; 2006b; 2007; Wilson-Strydom, 2015b; 2016). These also represent attempts to consider how the conceptual offerings of the capability approach might be operationalised in practice, and Walker's (2006a; 2006b; 2007) work in this area has been particularly influential. This

thesis does not aim to test or to generate a list of capabilities relating to language-in-education. But looking briefly at examples of lists that have been generated for other contexts (see figure 4.3) offers an appreciation of how the capability approach can contribute to a broader, multi-dimensional view of students' experiences.
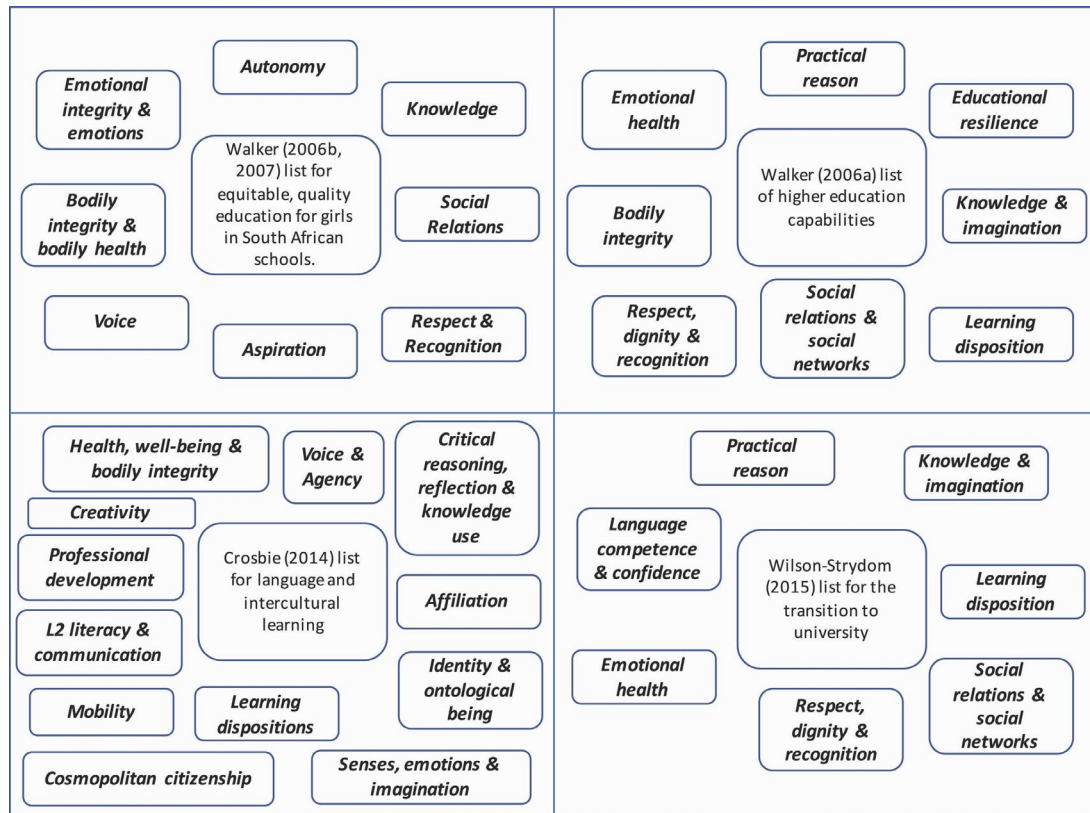
Figure 4-3: 4 examples of capabilities lists for different educational contexts (Crosbie, 2013; 2014; Walker, 2006a; 2006b; 2007; Wilson-Strydom, 2015b). For full definitions of capabilities, see Appendix A.

The first important observation about the four examples of capabilities lists presented in figure 4.3 is that, although there are some clear similarities, each list is different. Two of the lists included above were created by Walker, but they are different because they were generated with specific reference to particular contexts and communities of learners. One of Walker's lists was generated in relation to the issue of gender equity and quality education for girls in South African secondary schools (Walker, 2006b), while the other was created for higher education and developed with reference to data from a variety of country contexts (Walker, 2006a). Wilson-Strydom's (2015b) study used Walker's higher education list as a starting

point, but tested and adapted it with reference to wider literatures about university access and qualitative data about transition from South African schools and universities. Crosbie's (2013; 2014) list is designed with specific reference to learners of English as a Second Language in an Irish university. It draws from Nussbaum's list of central capabilities, which was designed to offer a universal list of capabilities, akin to a declaration of human rights. Nussbaum (2011, pp. 32-34) argues that a threshold level of each capability is necessary for a life of 'human dignity'. Crosbie's list has also been tested and adapted to different contexts, for example in Imperiale's (2017; 2018) work with English language teachers in the Gaza strip.

Taking a closer look at these lists of capabilities for different educational settings, it can be observed that they potentially encompass all five of the language roles discussed in the previous chapter. For example, the discussion of 'language as communication' raised concerns about students not being able to access or participate in learning because of the LOI. In Walker's list for gender equity in South African schools, this might be encompassed under the capability of 'voice'. It is interesting, though, that in Walker's higher education list, 'voice' is not a separate capability, but rather considered part of the capability of 'respect, dignity and recognition'. When this list was applied to the study of the experiences of two different groups of learners in South African universities (Mutanga and Walker, 2015; Wilson-Strydom, 2015b; 2016), the concept of 'voice' presented in this way was not considered to adequately address concerns about the language of learning. Both studies added a language capability to their lists, pointing to the work of Wolff and de Shalit (2007, pp. 60-61) who added the 'functioning of being able to communicate, including being able to speak the local language' to their account of disadvantage when it emerged from empirical data as a common theme in individuals' experiences. Although Walker (2006b) explicitly mentions language under 'respect and recognition', it seems to take on an identity role more like the one discussed under 'language as culture' in the previous chapter. These capability lists are perhaps most illuminating in relation to the role of 'language as being' as they suggest that consideration of this language role may require attention to be

paid to several capabilities including 'bodily integrity and bodily health', 'emotional integrity and emotions', 'respect and recognition' and 'social relations'.

This brief discussion of capabilities lists has been included here because it is asserted that they usefully highlight the multidimensional nature of well-being in educational settings. However, the nature of a list means that it does not necessarily highlight the importance of connections and relationships between different capabilities.

Connections and relationships

Capabilities lists are, of course, not the only way that commentators have broadened the scope of factors that are considered to be important to particular educational questions and contexts. Particularly relevant to this study, Tikly (2016, p. 420; 2020) has demonstrated that 'linguistic capability' sits at the overlap of multiple different 'environments' that have the potential to enable or constrain students' language ability. These include the 'school environment', the 'home/community environment' and the 'system environment', which he presents in the form of a venn diagram. Tikly positions all three of these overlapping spaces within a 'wider policy environment' and a 'socio-economic/historical context'. This demonstration of the variety of relevant influences reminds that, although this current study is focused on the school environment in two Tanzanian secondary schools, it must also recognise that the school language environment is at least partly created through its connections with other social environments. By presenting his discussion of relevant spaces in a venn diagram rather than as a list, Tikly begins to demonstrate the connections and relationships between the different environments. Identifying and analysing these connections and relationships is central to developing a more holistic understanding of students' experiences of language and learning.

Another potentially useful set of concepts for considering relationships between capabilities is offered by Wolff and de-Shalit in their capability-based theory of disadvantage, in which they explore how different capabilities, or the absence of capabilities, can form 'clusters' (2007, p. 10). Wolff and de-Shalit (2007,

pp. 133-134) offer the concept of *corrosive disadvantage* to describe 'where a disadvantage in one functioning leads to disadvantages in others', and *fertile functioning* to demonstrate how success in achieving one functioning can 'lead to improvements in other functionings'. These are useful concepts for the study of language-in-education where not knowing the LOI undoubtedly prevents students from achieving other valued capabilities such as participating in class or passing examinations. Similarly, having a strong grasp of the LOI not only enables students to achieve these demonstrable learning outcomes, but may also expand capabilities such as 'being confident' or 'building positive relationships with teachers'. Being able to identify the connections between capabilities, but also to consider how they influence one another, supports a deepening of understanding in relation to students' negotiations of their school language environments.

One form of connection that is central to this study is the temporal relationship between capabilities in the present and capabilities in the future. The discussion of agency above mentioned the situation where students and parents may choose to trade off their ease of learning in the present, because they believe the use of English as LOI will support their aspirations for the future. This connection and relationship between 'now' capabilities and functionings and 'future' capabilities and functionings is a key feature of education and learning, and indeed of many forms decision-making (Crocker, 2008), but, considering its significance, it is perhaps not given enough explicit attention in writing about the capability approach. Walker (2006b, p. 177) has identified the relationship between functionings at different points of time as being influential in the process of education and has pointed to Comim's (2003, p. 1) argument that the capability approach must consider 'becoming' as a future-focused concept, as well as 'being' and 'doing' in the present, to adequately conceptualise the dynamic nature of human development and capability expansion. The relationship between 'being' and 'becoming' in education has been considered in relation to questions around how far it is permissible to restrict children's agency and constrain their 'being' in order to ensure that they develop the capabilities that will support forms of 'becoming' that are assumed to be valuable for the future (Bessant, 2014; Biggeri, Ballet and Comim,

2011; Saito, 2003; Walker and Unterhalter, 2007). This study, though, accepts the premise of schooling for future capabilities, and concentrates its analysis on how the concept of a temporal connections between capabilities affects the daily micro-decisions taken by students and teachers about their capabilities for 'being', and explores students' perceptions of the relationships between valued capabilities at different points in time.

One final area of connection that it is important to recognise at the outset of this study is the connection between people. Education is a social experience and all of the capabilities lists discussed above included recognition of the role of social relationships and networks. Similarly, language in the context of education is most commonly used as a form of communication between different people, whether in its spoken or written forms. The capability approach has faced some criticism from scholars who argue that it is too individualistic and does not adequately acknowledge the central role of social relationships (Evans, 2002; Hoffmann and Metz, 2017; Stewart and Deneulin, 2002), and debate around the relational nature of capabilities is still active. For example, Hoffman and Metz (2017) problematise a tendency to position relationships as instrumental to capability expansion, and particularly to consider lack of social connection as capability deprivation, arguing that this threatens the compatibility of the capability approach with philosophies of interdependence, such as the African *Ubuntu* ethic. DeJaeghere (2019) argues that, though there have been significant contributions, particularly from scholars drawing on feminist and postcolonial critiques, to recognising and theorising social relations and structures within the capability approach (Calitz, 2018; Smith and Seward, 2009), there remains a tension between the normative individualism that Robeyn's (2017, p. 57) identifies as a core principle of the capability approach, and a relational ontology. This study holds these developing discussions in mind as it considers the role of connections between people in students' experiences and negotiations of language and learning.

Capabilities and decision-making for language-in-education

Those seeking change in language of instruction policy and practice, in both Tanzania and other parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, face the challenge of strongly held public beliefs about the benefits of English, and the assumption, based upon a set of misconceptions, that the best way to learn English is to use it as the LOI (Brock-Utne, 2012; Phillipson, 1992). In interviews with Tanzanian government officials, Babaci-Wilhite (2010; 2013) found that policy-makers insisted that they could only be guided by parental choice, even when they knew that parents had formed their preferences on the basis of 'imperfect information' (2013, p. 129). In fact, policy-makers asserted that it was not their responsibility to provide more accurate information to the public. Writing about research into multilingualism and language learning, Heugh (2006, p. 57) argues that 'experts' have a responsibility to keep up-to-date with research. She writes: 'What we know of the research today is substantially different from what we knew in 1955, 1985 or 1995'. But these developments in understanding are either not reaching the majority of the Tanzanian public, or are not reaching them in a form that influences attitudes and preferences. The capability approach speaks to this problem in two main ways – firstly through acknowledgement of the relationship between structure and agency, discussed above, and secondly through Sen's focus on the importance of the process of public deliberation in identifying valued capabilities.

Protecting individual agency whilst ensuring that individuals are well-informed is one of the reasons for Sen's insistence on the importance of democratic processes, including public reasoning and deliberation (Sen, 2004). He writes that all members of a society 'should be able to be active in the decisions regarding what to preserve and what to let go', stressing that this opportunity should not be restricted to those in positions of power (Sen, 1999, p. 242). Those in control of LOI policy and practice in Tanzania have framed their inaction towards change as democratic, claiming that it respects public attitudes (Babaci-Wilhite, 2013; Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir, 2004), but their implied definition of 'democratic process' differs to

that advanced by most proponents of the capability approach. Citing Drèze and Sen (2002, p. 379), Deneulin (2009, p. 201) writes that, 'for the human development and capability approach, democracy is first and foremost "government by discussion"'. Crocker (2006; 2007; 2008) has written about how Sen's ideas about democracy might be effectively implemented in development practice and points to the potential of deliberative democracy. As well as creating a much wider basis for participation in processes of decision-making and value formation, Crocker notes that 'deliberative exercises provide information on the issues to less informed or less educated participants' (2007, p. 451). This is a missing element in the Tanzanian LOI debate and in the policy-makers' relationship with the Tanzanian public.

Although public attitudes have been canvassed by researchers or through surveys like *Sauti za Wananchi* (Twaweza, 2015), there has not been a concerted effort to disseminate up-to-date knowledge and to expand the discussion. The debate has played out in the national media, but Qorro (2004) argues that advocates for Kiswahili as LOI have tended to be reactive rather than proactive. She calls for better networking between interested organisations both within Tanzania and across different African countries as both a route to strengthening the voice and expanding the spread of knowledge. Qorro (2004; 2009b) also notes that dissemination of information will be more effective if written in languages that the public understand. Senkoro (2004) argues that more should be done to enable information to reach communities and suggests the use of community-level media and theatre. Though stopping short of full public participation, Mtesigwa (2009, p. 76) argues for the establishment of 'language boards' that would be comprised of a mix of experts from different relevant fields and other stakeholders and would make decisions based on 'thorough knowledge'. Mtesigwa advocates particularly for the value of ethnographic research in developing the knowledge-base that would inform language-in-education decisions. This thesis contributes to the body of information that can inform these processes of public deliberation.

A process of public reasoning and deliberation that includes the sharing of accurate and up-to-date understandings of processes of language acquisition has the potential to shift public opinion about LOI. But Crocker (2008) argues that, although

Sen builds a strong argument for the importance of democratic processes, he does not say enough about how these ideals of participation would be realised (see also Alkire, 2002). In particular, concerns have been raised about how realistic the ambition of equitable political participation is in the context of the inequalities that are present in most societies (Deneulin, 2009, p. 200). This is certainly a concern in relation to questions of language-in-education. Chapter 2 shared examples of arguments that questioned the motivations of Tanzanian policy-makers, suggesting that protection of the status quo is motivated by elite interests, not genuine concern for the best interests of the Tanzanian public. Despite the potential challenges, it is important not to abandon the aspiration of public participation and deliberation, particularly as it may shift the locus of the LOI debate away from academics, policy-makers and national-level media. Writing specifically about the Tanzanian case, Marwa (2014, p. 1268) stresses the importance of the public in influencing change, arguing: 'the answer to whether there is a solution to [sic] policy dilemma is yes, but it depends on the location of the pivotal weight on the preference of the majority and political authority between the two options'. Marwa implies, however, that concerns about individual and national economic development will cause preferences to converge on the use of English as LOI from the beginning of primary schooling. Certainly, the discussion of the role of 'language as aspiration' in the previous chapter showed that survey research has repeatedly demonstrated a preference for increased use of English. But the notions of democracy and deliberation that are associated with the capability approach urge us to go beyond 'a mere aggregation of citizen preferences' (Crocker, 2008, p. 307). Instead we should consider the process of preference and value formation and open it up to participatory public reasoning, informed by a fuller understanding of the empirical evidence and the full range of arguments about language-in-education.

This thesis seeks to expand the information base that can be used to support public deliberation and decision-making relating to the LOI in Tanzania. It argues that one of the reasons that existing studies have failed to change public attitudes, despite the fact that they demonstrate that the use of English as the LOI has a negative effect

on learning, is that they fail to adequately acknowledge the multiple roles that language plays and to reassure the public that their aspirations for language can still be protected and supported by an alternative approach to language-in-education. This chapter has demonstrated that the capability approach has a useful contribution to make to the study of language and learning because it offers a range of concepts and tools that support the recognition of plural language values and help to manage the analysis of the diversity and complexity of processes involved in language use and learning. The capability approach both requires and facilitates the consideration of the multidimensional nature of language-in-education as well as the connections between different aspects of students' experiences of language and learning. Crucially, for a study focused on students' negotiations of their language environments, the capability approach insists that attention be paid to an account of agency and to ways in which students' agency might be enabled and constrained. The capability approach offers a framework for conceptualising and better understanding *how* language performs its multiple roles in students' lives.

5. Researching Language and Learning from an Ethnographic Perspective

> Qualitative research is conducted not to confirm or disconfirm earlier findings, but rather to contribute to a process of continuous revision and enrichment of understanding of the experience or form of action under study. (Elliot, Fischer and Rennie, 1994; as cited in Lincoln, 1995, p. 278).

The preceding chapters have discussed a significant body of research relating to the language of instruction in Tanzanian secondary schools. The aim of this thesis is not to challenge this scholarship, but rather to broaden the scope of language-in-education research to offer a more holistic understanding of students' experiences of negotiating language and the multiple roles that it plays in their lives. In doing so, it hopes to offer an additional layer of analysis that may help to connect and explain observations of students' language attitudes and behaviours that may otherwise be considered 'perplexing' or 'contradictory' (Halvorsen, 2009; Senkoro, 2005). This study is underpinned by the view that students' experiences of language and learning are complex and diverse and agrees with Blommaert and Jie's (2010, pp. 85-6) assertion that, 'if fieldwork doesn't start from assumptions of complexity, it is bound to miss the whole point'. The previous chapter offered an argument for the usefulness of the capability approach and its conceptual tools for illustrating and analysing this complexity and heterogeneity. Both the nature of the questions under investigation and the use of the capability approach have influenced the methodological design of this study, which takes an ethnographic perspective and draws from seven months of school-based fieldwork divided between two sites in the Morogoro region of central Tanzania.

I did not enter the field determined that the capability approach was the *only* appropriate framework through which to approach this study of language and schooling, but my previous experiences working in Tanzania and visiting Tanzanian secondary schools, combined with some preliminary engagement as part of Masters level study applying the concept of capabilities to the challenges faced by Tanzanian students, had convinced me of the potential relevance and usefulness of the

capability approach in this context. These experiences also left me determined to undertake a longer period of fieldwork during which I would have more time to observe behaviour, build relationships and develop the linguistic competence in Kiswahili that would be necessary to access a sufficiently detailed and full account of students' perspectives and experiences. My previous work had also convinced me that language could not be studied as an issue in isolation, but that it would be crucial to recognise the multiple ways in which language choices and attitudes are embedded in social, historical, political and economic environments, the dynamics of which are highlighted by taking a social constructionist epistemological stance and conducting field research from an ethnographic perspective.

Social constructionism

This thesis offers an account of what language means to students, and their negotiations of language in relation to education. In doing so, it emphasises multiple sources of diversity in students' experiences. But it also points to areas of similarity and consensus, where language beliefs and practices are moulded by broader social attitudes and expectations. This aligns with the social constructionist epistemological stance that underpins this research. Social constructionism asserts that 'our knowledge of the world' and the understandings and meanings that constitute that knowledge 'are not derived from the nature of the world as it really is', but are constructed between people (Burr, 2003, p. 4). Social constructionism does not deny the existence of external realities, but rather holds that these cannot be made sense of without engaging in a process of meaning construction. Gergen explains that:

> …constructionists don't try to rule on what is or is not fundamentally real. Whatever is, simply is. However, the moment we begin to describe or specify what there is – what is truly or objectively real – we enter a world of discourse. In effect, we are participating in one tradition among many – and thus a way of life and a set of value preferences (Gergen, 2015, p. 219).

Crotty (1998, p. 54) reiterates the importance of acknowledging that individuals do not construct meaning individually, starting with a clean slate. Rather, he writes that 'we are all born into a world of meaning' and it is crucial to understand human perspectives in their historical and social contexts.

Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis have offered some of the broader context which situates this study and influences the meanings that students attach to different languages and language practices, including the powerful narratives surrounding the value and importance of English, and assumptions about effective language learning. Burr (2003, p. 2) writes that 'social constructionism insists that we take a critical stance toward our taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world'. In identifying and highlighting ways in which the influences of dominant language discourses are problematic for students' learning and well-being, this thesis seeks to do just that. But rather than seeing these hegemonic discourses from a determinist perspective, the position taken in this thesis allows space for exploring agency (McNay, 2000). McNay writes:

> It is crucial to conceptualize these creative or productive aspects immanent to agency in order to explain how, when faced with complexity and difference, individuals may respond in unanticipated and innovative ways which may hinder, reinforce or catalyse social change (McNay, 2000, p. 5).

Recognising agency points to one important reason why the meanings that individual students construct may diverge. Another reason was discussed in chapter 4, which pointed to multiple dimensions of potential diversity that mean that the precise make-up of the social worlds that individual students are born into also differ. Social constructionism recognises that these differences result in 'multiple *truths*' and that 'for any situation multiple constructions are possible' (Gergen, 2015, pp. 11-12). The acknowledgement of the plural nature of meaning, both between and within individuals, is central to the understanding of students' experiences developed through this thesis.

For generating an account that recognises multiple perspectives and seeks to understand them as rooted in social and historical context, ethnography is a productive and appropriate methodology. But not all ethnographic studies are

inherently social constructionist. In fact ethnography has also been extensively used to generate naturalistic accounts that aim for accurately 'capturing social reality' (Holstein and Gubrium, 2008, p. 374). Holstein and Gubrium (2008) suggest that the key difference between naturalistic and constructionist ethnography can be illustrated by considering the former as focusing on *what* questions, and the latter asking *how* questions. They explain:

> Although still deeply interested in what is going on, constructionist sensibilities also raise questions about the processes through which social realities are constructed and sustained (Holstein and Gubrium, 2008, p. 375).

This certainly describes the aim of this study. Although this thesis presents examples of the *what*, including patterns of language use (chapter 7) and practical strategies for negotiating understanding (chapter 8), it also asks *how* the social world of the school language environment shapes students' language attitudes, values and behaviours, and explores the process of negotiation between individual student agency and social and historical structures and discourses.

An ethnographic perspective

> Ethnographies...allow us to see how language practices are connected to the very real conditions of people's lives, to discover how and why language matters to people in their own terms, and to watch processes unfold over time. They allow us to see complexity and connections, to understand the history and geography of language. They allow us to tell a story; not someone else's story exactly, but our own story of some slice of experience, a story which illuminates social processes and generates explanations for why people do and think the things they do (Heller, 2008, p. 250).

The overall question that guides this research asks: *how do students negotiate their school language environments?* To support this overarching enquiry, this study is also guided by the following sub-questions:

1) *How do students value the different languages they use?*

2) *What are the challenges that students face when trying to learn English, and when learning using English as the language of instruction?*

3) What strategies do students employ to negotiate these challenges, and how do these strategies enable or constrain their capabilities?

4) How do teachers enable or constrain students' negotiation of language and learning?

To be able answer these questions requires not only the generation of knowledge around students' perspectives and actions related to language in learning, but also that the researcher develop an appreciation of the dynamics of the context in which these negotiations are taking place. The definition of the 'language environment' that informs this study includes both the observable patterns of language use and the broader sociological features of language practice, including underlying structures of power that influence attitudes and behaviours (Grin and Vaillancourt, 1997; Shorten, 2017). The potential for an ethnographic perspective to support researchers to 'uncover patterns of dynamic heteroglossic linguistic ecologies' has been celebrated (Gilmore, 2011, p. 122), and as a result, ethnography is an increasingly popular methodology for the study of language policy and practice (Blommaert and Jie, 2010; Chimbutane, 2011; Copland and Creese, 2015; Grenfell *et al.*, 2012; Heath and Street, 2008; Hornberger and Johnson, 2007; McCarty, 2011). Hornberger and Johnson (2007, p. 510) state a preference for the use of ethnography because they argue that some critiques of language planning can be too focused on the 'hegemonic power of policies', without allowing space to adequately recognise individual agency. This is crucial for this study and its interest in student agency, indicated both by the research questions and the inclusion of the capability approach.

This study may not constitute 'an ethnography' in the traditional anthropological sense. Wolcott (2005, p. 69) writes that ethnographic fieldwork requires long-term engagement, suggesting that 'two years (or more) was once the standard'. He continues and acknowledges, though, that the realities of modern academic life mean that 'the ideal has been shortened to half that time at best'. Practical realities and constraints meant that the main fieldwork for this study was conducted over seven months, from January to August 2015. This length of time was shaped by the Tanzanian research permit process, the Tanzanian school year and

examination schedules, and the fact that the October 2015 Tanzanian Presidential election had the potential to limit my research access to schools (Owens, 2003). However, this field research built upon almost 3 years of cumulative experience in Tanzania between 2006 and 2013, including short visits to more than 200 secondary schools. In addition, between August and November 2014 I was based in Dar-es-Salaam while I studied Kiswahili and sought the relevant research permissions. These previous visits are considered part of the ethnographic stage referred to as 'casing the joint' (Troman, 2002, p. 109), and contributed significantly to my understanding and framing of the research problem. Similarly, Tao (2016, p. 26) points to the value of her previous experiences in Tanzania for providing 'an informal set of data and reflections that prompted an informal analysis' and pointed her towards frameworks she thought would be appropriate for her ethnographic study of teachers' behaviour. Although practical considerations in some ways acted as pre-defined bookends for the field research, there could have been a possibility of extending my research permit and returning for a further visit to the schools. However, this was not considered to be necessary as I felt that the data generated during the seven month stay offered sufficient conceptual depth to consider that 'saturation' had been achieved (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Nelson, 2016).

The fieldwork site for this study was limited to the boundaries of two secondary schools. Although I did occasionally walk part of the way home with groups of students, this study did not aim to survey the practices and perspectives of the broader communities in which the schools were situated.[16] This was partly delineated by the research question which focused specifically on the school language environment. But there were also practical limitations as neither school was situated in a clear community as urban students travelled from all over Morogoro town and the rural school served three villages and was situated some distance from each of them. However, this study recognises the importance of Tikly's reminder that there are overlaps between the school, home, and wider social environments. The recognition that social behaviours and meanings are shaped

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[16] Stambach's (2000) research about meanings of education in a community on Mount Kilimanjaro is an example of a more traditional anthropological study of education in Tanzania.

through being embedded in all of these environments is certainly part of the 'ethnographic perspective' (Bloome, 2012, p. 11).

I did not approach my field research with a fixed plan already in place. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 21) argue that, although research design is an important element of any ethnographic study, it is not a stage that is both begun and completed *before* going into the field, but rather 'it is a reflexive process that operates throughout every stage of a project'. Although this has resulted in ethnographic research being termed as 'messy', it has also been associated with words such as 'flexible' and 'imaginative' (Brewer, 2000, p. 56; Pawson, 1999, p. 32; Troman, 2002, p. 100). In advance of entering the field, I had read widely about language and education in Tanzania and beyond, aligning myself with Delamont's (2008, p. 40) assertion, influenced by Malinowksi (1922), that 'good fieldwork comes from being interested in some aspects of the setting and its actors, and on having some foreshadowed problems grounded in social science'. Both before and during fieldwork I sought out literature from across multiple relevant fields, aiming to increase my awareness of different possible approaches to language-in-education issues. But despite this, I aimed to remain open-minded, as I did not want 'preconceived ideas' to shape my research, something that Malinowski (1922, p. 8) argued renders work 'worthless'. This chapter, then, explores the intentions, reflections, adaptations and limitations involved in designing and carrying out this study.

Whose voices does this study represent?

The focus of this research is on the experiences and perspectives of students, and so they are considered the principal participants in this research. However, ethnographic approaches demand full immersion in a research site (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007), and schools are not only comprised of students, but also teachers and other school staff. Moreover, the discussion of the capability approach in the previous chapter highlighted the connections between different people and their capabilities, and so the inclusion of teachers in particular, both as participants in the

research and as the focus of one of the research questions, recognises the potential importance of their role in shaping students' experiences of their language environments. The interpretivist epistemological position that shapes this research also highlights the inevitable influence of the researcher on the knowledge constructed through social research (Atkinson, 2015). As a result, the discussion in this section of the participants who have shaped the data generated as part of this study includes a reflection on my positionality as a researcher and the influence this has on both the creation of the data and its analysis and interpretation.

Students

The semi-structured interviews that were conducted as part of this study, both by myself as the lead researcher, and by a team of student researchers, capture the distinct voices of 146 individual students from across two schools.[17] But because data was also generated through lesson observation and participant observation, the total number of students who contributed to this study is much higher. Because the numbers of students enrolled across both schools exceeded 2000, it would have been impossible to include the perspectives of all students in this study. Within the school sites, the method for selecting which classes to observe or which students to interview was driven initially by 'opportunity sampling' (Delamont, 2002, p. 83), though the sampling process was left 'open and flexible' to allow for creativity and for it to evolve with the needs of the research (Coyne, 1997, p. 630; Glaser, 1978; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Based on my knowledge of the Tanzanian education system, I had decided that a focus on Form 1 would be particularly illuminating in terms of student language negotiations because the first year of secondary school sees the dramatic shift to English as the medium of instruction. Form 2 also emerged as a focus year group, partly because of the enthusiasm demonstrated by some of the Form 2 teachers. Where the opportunity arose, I also observed lessons across other year groups (Forms 3 and 4 at the rural school and Forms 3-6 in town where they also had an Advanced Level campus). At the urban school, identified in this

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[17] For a full list of the interviews completed as part of this study, see appendix B.

study with the pseudonym, 'Mlimani School', the class sizes were very large, and so I identified one class in each of Form 1 and Form 2 where I would spend the most time. This allowed me to get to know a more manageable number of students. As classes at this stage were not streamed by ability, I did not have to worry too much about which class was chosen, and so I allowed the focus classes to emerge naturally. In Form 1, I focused on the class I had taught for 8 weeks at the beginning of the year. In Form 2, I focused on the class I happened to have spent most time observing in the first few months. At the rural school, known henceforth by the pseudonym, 'Kijijini School', significantly smaller class sizes meant it was easier to manage more varied patterns of observation. Moreover, some teachers in this rural setting were quite wary of my presence and so I was particularly conscious to only attend lessons where I had either been invited or I had approached the teacher to request permission in advance.

The logistics of arranging interviews in large part determined the approach to sampling that was possible. In the first few weeks in school, it became quickly apparent that creating opportunities for interviewing small groups of students would be challenging. Students spent the majority of their time in the classroom and I had made the ethical decision not to take students out of lessons. During breaks, there was so much noise and movement of people that it was impossible to find a space quiet enough to conduct an interview without other students and teachers interrupting. At the end of school the majority of students left immediately as many had long journeys home. However, I also observed that there were reasonably regular occasions when teachers did not arrive for their lessons and so students were in the classroom chatting or completing homework. I took these opportunities to visit classrooms and to ask for volunteers to take part in interviews. Students usually came in groups of 2-3 friends, which helped them to feel comfortable. On occasion I approached particular students who had caught my attention during observations and asked them if they would like to take part, but I always made it clear that they were free to say no. I used this more 'purposive' sampling strategy to allow me to follow up on particular events I had observed and to try to ensure that a range of students' voices were captured in the data, including students who appeared more

disengaged in the learning process or to be struggling with the language of instruction (Patton, 1990).

It was important in the design and execution of this research that I create a space for student agency and participation in the research process. This was partly because of the prioritisation of these within the capability approach and the aims and research questions for the study that focused on students' experiences and perspectives. But it was also influenced by my personal beliefs about the value of student participation, cemented through my previous teaching and NGO-based experiences. In addition to identifying target classes, I ensured that I remained open to any students who approached me or participated in extra-curricular activities I was involved in. Particularly in the later stages of the research, I tried to position myself in an obvious and approachable place during breaks in the school day so that students could approach me if they wanted. This was particularly successful at Mlimani School where some students were more confident about approaching me than at Kijijini School, though even at the rural school, eventually some students did come to talk to me, often to ask questions about schooling in the UK.

The inclusion of a team of student researchers was a key feature of the research design. In addition to the points made above in relation to the capability approach and research questions, the desire to collaborate with students in the generation and analysis of data was also influenced by discussions in the broader research methodology literature around issues of power and participation in relation to giving 'voice' (Kellet, 2010; Robinson and Taylor, 2012; Robinson-Pant and Singal, 2013). Limitations were imposed, however, upon the extent to which students could be true research collaborators in this project, in part by the requirements of doctoral study, but also by students' availability. The students who became more involved with this project were preparing for significant national examinations and several of them were also active school prefects and volunteers. I had to be conscious of the demands I placed on their time (Zelezny-Green and Kleine, 2019). In total there were 10 student researchers, the majority of whom were Advanced Level students from the urban school, though there were also two Form Four students from the rural school. In both schools I visited classes to ask for volunteers and held meetings to

explain in more detail what I was doing. Though not by design, the student researchers were students who spoke English more confidently and were interested in working with me as an opportunity to improve their English. As a result, interaction with the student researchers was predominantly in English, but with regular switching to Kiswahili when students disagreed about the translations for certain terms and ideas.

I had initially hoped that empowering students to take the lead in some data generation activities might help to flatten some of the power relations between researcher and participants as they would have more equal status with their peers (Maunder *et al.*, 2013). However, it became clear when working with the student researchers that issues of power remained very pertinent. Their positionality as good English speakers relative to other students, as well as the fact that urban Advanced Level students held the status of being educationally successful, meant that there was a clear hierarchy between the student researchers and younger students as they were situated '*within* complex pre-existing relations of power' (Gallagher, 2008, p. 147). This manifested itself in interviews with some of the student researchers taking on the role of 'advisor' and explaining to younger students what they needed to do to improve their English. But the research itself also created new opportunities for negotiations of power. At one of the workshops, I overheard one of the student researchers suggest to younger students that the reason that the student researchers were helping me was because I couldn't understand Kiswahili. In preparation for this workshop, we had talked extensively about the role of the student researchers in the project and I had been working with these students for almost six months, so they knew that I had sufficient competence in Kiswahili to talk to students. But the student researcher, Salim, had emerged as a kind of leader of the group, and so I felt that his downgrading of my language ability was part of his negotiation and elevation of his own status through the project. These observations meant that, as well as my own positionality as a researcher, I had to be aware of, and reflect on, the positionality and influence of the student researchers.

Teachers

Although the focus of this study is students' experiences, the structures of schooling mean that these are shaped in significant ways by teachers. This is reflected in the inclusion of a research question that asks how teachers help to either enable or constrain students' negotiations of their language environments. The majority of the data that responds to this question came either from lesson observations, or from students' discussions of teachers. However, my understanding of the field sites and of some of the broader patterns of student behaviour was importantly informed by, mostly informal, conversations with teachers. Teachers often sat either inside the staff rooms, or in the shade outside, discussing their work and other issues of mutual interest, such as politics. I was welcomed into these conversations and my perspective was frequently sought, though I was careful not to express opinions in relation to the research questions. Several teachers of English were extremely welcoming and were enthusiastic to discuss how I could contribute to their lessons. Being qualified to teach secondary history myself, some of the conversations I had after I had observed lessons with two history teachers, one from each school, were the most personally fascinating informal discussions in the research, especially when they wanted to discuss the similarities and differences between the UK and Tanzanian history curricula and historical perspectives on events. Particularly because of my age and position as a teacher, I was assumed to align more naturally with the group of teachers, and in each school a teacher was asked to look after me initially and to introduce me to the school. As the field work progressed, I spent less time with teachers, but their support continued to be greatly appreciated, particularly for some of the research activities that I designed. For example, the inter-school workshops required not only school and parental permission for younger students to take part, but also logistical support with organising transport. Despite the importance of teachers to this study and their representation in the wider data set, particularly in observation notes and fieldnotes, the majority of data presented in this thesis was generated with students, reflecting the research focus on students' experiences.

Researcher

Some of the ways in which my positionality as the researcher influenced conversations with teachers and students, and thus influenced the data generated as part of this study have already been mentioned above. In fact, the use of the term 'data generation' rather than 'data collection' is a conscious choice in recognition of the belief that the researcher plays an active role in constructing the data in the study (Mason, 2002, p. 52). That is why this discussion of researcher positionality is situated within the section introducing the voices in this study. Recognition of the influence of the researcher on the research is not, however, assumed to be a limitation of ethnographic methodology. Rather than '"contaminating" what is observed', the relationships built between the researcher and community with whom they are engaged are 'the very source of learning and observation' (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 2011, p. 4). Recognition of this means a commitment to 'the fundamental principle of reflexivity' (Atkinson, 2015, p. 26; Ball, 1990).

There were multiple ways in which different parts of my identity influenced this research, some of which, for example being accepted as a fellow teacher, have already been mentioned. I am a white, British female and a native English speaker engaged in research in and about a context where English confers a significant amount of status (as was discussed in chapter 2 and 3). Of course, my position as an 'outsider' or 'guest' also influenced the way I was viewed and treated. But the fact that language held a particular power was evidenced when, towards the end of my stay, the urban school received a volunteer teacher from Japan. She was treated quite differently and was often sat apart from the other teachers because she did not speak English well and was still a Kiswahili beginner. The Tanzanian teachers found this bemusing as they were unsure how to communicate. By contrast, I was invited to be a special guest at English debates and competitions and was frequently praised for speaking 'Standard English' rather than American English or other variations, such as from Kenya or Nigeria. As an ethnographer, this 'expert' status was less desirable, but it was in some ways balanced by my identity as a language learner in relation to Kiswahili. Many teachers, and some students, relished the

opportunity to act as Kiswahili teacher, taking great enjoyment in testing the limits of my evolving language skills and catching me out with words that I did not know.

My outsider/learner identity also allowed me the opportunity to ask questions about social practices and attitudes in a way that might not be afforded a member of the community who might be assumed to have knowledge of implicit norms and assumptions. However, it must also be recognised that the 'stories' that were presented to me were not the only possible stories (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003), and were constructed in relation to assumptions about what I would want to know and what students and teachers thought I might be able to do. For example, there were situations where I became aware that teachers' and students' choice of language may have been affected by expectations about what I would want to see or about how individuals themselves wanted to be seen. There was also a tendency for both students and teachers to draw my attention to the challenges of the circumstances that they were working in, including providing extensive lists of missing resources. I then had to be careful to discuss the purpose and stages of the research project and explain that I was not in a position to influence school funding or support. An awareness of this tendency also meant that I had to remain attentive to examples of agency and negotiation of challenges that might not have been so explicitly presented. One of the ways that I tried to become aware of the potential influences of my positionality on the narratives that were presented to me was to engage in a wide range of data generation activities, and this is the subject of the next section.

Data generation, organisation and analysis

O'Reilly writes that 'over the decades, ethnography has been shown to involve the application of any number of the full range of methods available to a researcher', including 'watching, experiencing, absorbing, living, breathing and inquiring' (2012, p. 1). To some extent, the fieldwork for this study represented a process of learning about, and experimenting with, different methods of data generation. Although I had read about methods commonly associated with ethnographic research, such as participant observation and different forms of interviewing, I had to learn how these

would work in my fieldwork context. I started slowly, focusing initially on negotiating access, building relationships and observing the rhythms and 'rules' of school life. But over the course of the seven months in the field, I used a wide range of methods, and different variations on methods, to generate a rich body of data that approached issues of language-in-education and students' experiences from multiple perspectives. Though the range of methods grew over the course of the research, the focus narrowed, as the result of an ongoing process of engagement with the data, reflection and analysis.

Negotiating access

The negotiation of access in this study can be divided into two stages – the formal process of obtaining the requisite permissions to conduct research, and the more informal stages of building relationships that would help me to learn about students' experiences. The formal stages included requesting a statement of support for my project from the University of Dar-es-Salaam,[18] and applying for research permits from the Tanzanian Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH) and from the Tanzanian Immigration Service. When I had obtained the national-level permits, I was able to travel to Morogoro to formally request permission from the Regional Administrative Secretary, the Regional Education Officer and the District Executive Director and District Education Officer for the Morogoro Urban, where Mlimani School is situated. I did not approach the relevant officials for Morogoro Rural district until the third month in the field as I wanted to be confident that I would be able to access data in the desired depth before committing to a second school. The selection of schools was made in discussion with both the Regional and District Education Officers, based on a number of criteria, including the type of school, perceived openness of the Head Teacher to being involved in research, and practical accessibility of the schools.

With these formal permissions in place, I was allowed to enter the school sites, but as Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 43) remind, 'access is not simply a

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matter of physical presence or absence'. Although observation alone may have allowed me to make some conclusions about language practice, it would not have allowed me to access data pertaining to students' perspectives on their language experience, or their explanations of *why* they made the choices they did in relation to language. It was crucial that I could build relationships with both students and staff that would allow me to ask questions and would allow participants to feel comfortable talking to me. The first strategy I used to develop these relationships was to allow time. The majority of the semi-structured interviews that formed part of this study were not conducted until the last two months. Initially I took time to watch and to be present as much as possible, allowing students and teachers to get used to my being there, and allowing me to informally participate in school activities and conversations. I spent time in classrooms, ran English clubs and taught English for eight weeks to a Form One class at Mlimani School. It was also important that I spent time in the initial stages in the staff rooms at both schools as I had to build trust with the teachers in order to be invited into their classrooms. As has been noted above, our shared identity as 'teachers' helped with this, as did positioning myself as a learner. Many teachers took time to explain features of their respective schools, the Tanzanian education system, and their own challenges and strategies when undertaking their work.

Many of the relationships that I built in these early stages would not have been possible without the use of Kiswahili. The predominance of Kiswahili in school activities also meant that, without a working knowledge of the language, my understanding of the situations I was observing would have been severely limited. It would also have dramatically restricted the number of people that I could talk to. Even when teachers, and some students, spoke English well, it was regularly commented upon that my commitment to learning Kiswahili, even when I made mistakes, demonstrated a genuine interest in Tanzanian culture. This seemed to increase people's willingness and enthusiasm to help me to continue to learn. My position as both an outsider and a language learner also encouraged participants to explain their perspectives more fully than they might have otherwise done, because they assumed that I had little to no knowledge of their situation. In the later stages

of the research, the fact that I shared the positionality of 'language learner' with students also enriched our discussions and my understanding of the data.[19] The benefits of this 'language learner' status in building rapport and a sense of shared experience with both students and teachers are perceived, in the context of this study, to have outweighed the limitations imposed by my linguistic shortcomings. Although there were numerous occasions when I failed to understand, or expressed my question poorly, participants were patient with me revising my attempts or asking them to explain again.

Observation and fieldnotes

Blommaert and Jie's (2010, p. 2) ethnographic fieldwork guide adopts as its 'motto' a quote from Hymes (1981, p. 84), who writes, 'caustically': 'Some social research seems incredibly to assume that what there is to find out can be found out by asking'. Although asking, or interviewing, certainly falls amongst the methods associated with ethnographic data generation, it is observation that is perhaps the ethnographer's most significant tool. Watching enables the researcher to identify patterns of behaviour that people might not deem to be important enough to talk about, or might not even be fully aware of (Blommaert and Jie, 2010).

Observation takes various different forms, but it is participant observation that acts as the 'starting point' for the majority of ethnographers (Schensul and LeCompte, 2013, p. 83). Participant observation involves the researcher in the day-to-day activities of their fieldwork site and recognises that the researcher cannot be a 'detached', 'neutral' or 'passive' observer, but plays a role in the situations that they are observing (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 2011, pp. 3-4). This might be a very active role, such as when I was teaching English lessons, but even when the researcher takes on a more passive 'watching' role, there is a recognition that their presence still influences the situation, as was the case for the teachers discussed above who adapted their language choices because I was observing their lessons.

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[19] I have written a fuller reflection on the influence of my positionality, particularly with reference to language, on the relationships built and research generated as part of this study (Adamson, 2020).

Although I consider every time I was present at either school, or involved in any activity with students and teachers from the schools, to count as participant observation, I did also conduct 51 slightly more formal lesson observations across a variety of subjects and year groups. I did not have a targeted observation protocol, but rather, I began by writing detailed but general, descriptive notes. These became more focused on language use, and then on particular aspects of language in the classroom as I tightened my focus through the process of fieldwork (Delamont, 2002). In the rural school, where class sizes were more manageable, I also completed participation maps to gather more accurate data about how many students were responding to teachers' questions (see appendix D). This process of observation beginning with more broad description and narrowing its focus over time is a common feature of ethnographic research, firstly because researchers cannot know initially exactly what they are seeing in an unfamiliar setting, and secondly because a rigid protocol could risk limiting the observer's focus (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Hammersley, 2006; Stake, 1995).

Lesson observations were arranged in two ways. Either I was invited by a teacher or made an arrangement in advance to attend an individual lesson, or I sought permission to spend a whole day with one class, briefly speaking to the new teacher at the beginning of each lesson and leaving the room if they were not comfortable with my observing. Spending full days in 'class pursuit' were particularly useful for developing an appreciation of the variety of situations and challenges students experienced in different subjects and with different teachers. It also allowed me to observe students in their 'down-time' either between lessons or when teachers were absent. These also proved to be good opportunities for informally chatting to students. The longer I was present, more students felt comfortable to approach and talk to me.

In addition to trying to be present and available in classrooms, in the second half of the fieldwork I also aimed to establish a regular spot in the school grounds where I would sit when I was not involved in other activities. I had observed and had explained to me the concept of 'kijiweni', associated particularly with Tanzanian youth (Reuster-Jahn and Kießling, 2006, p. 7). Literally, this translates as 'at the small

stone', but the best meaning I could negotiate was 'meeting place', though it also carries the significance that it is a place where people regularly meet to discuss issues of interest. By returning to the same spot, I was aiming to establish my own 'kijiweni' and over time some students did come regularly to talk to me during their breaks.

Alongside and interconnected with participant observation, the writing of fieldnotes is a key feature of the ethnographic approach (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 2011, p. 1) and enabled me to construct an account of observations and conversations that might not be captured by other data generation activities. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 142) note that fieldnote writing 'is not an especially esoteric activity', but that the quality of fieldnotes can significantly impact on the overall quality of research. Yet they clarify that choices must be made about what to note, usually guided by the researcher's foreshadowed problems (Wolfinger, 2002), and so in this case I was focused on issues and practices relating to language. In figuring out how I would approach the process of fieldnote writing, I followed Heath and Street's (2008, p. 77) advice to separate descriptive fieldnotes and reflections into separate columns (see appendix E for an example). This is intended to ensure that the researcher focuses on '*the observations themselves* rather than the low-level inferences derived from the observations' (Pelto and Pelto, 1978, p. 71). During participant observation, I heeded Schensul and LeCompte's (2013) warnings about the fallibility of memory, and I carried a notebook, making shorthand notes either during events, or at the nearest possible opportunity. These were then transposed into full narrative accounts in the evenings. In addition, I kept a separate research journal in which I reflected on the experience more broadly, including my own feelings relating to the research (see appendix F). During the fieldwork, I was in school Monday to Friday and some Saturdays. On Sundays, I formed the habit of re-reading my fieldnotes and research journal and writing conceptual memos (appendix G), reflecting on the data that had been generated that week and how it contributed to my cumulative understanding. These memos played a central role in enabling me to narrow my focus so that, in the later stages of the fieldwork, I was observing and noting more selectively (Anderson, 2005).

Several different types of interviews were involved in this study. In the early stages of the research I conducted very few formal interviews, but I engaged in regular conversations, often taking the opportunity to explain and answer questions about my research. The days that I spent based in a single classroom were key for facilitating these conversations as different students spoke to me over the course of the day in the gaps between teachers being present. Schensul and LeCompte (2013, p. 106) suggest that ethnographic researchers should 'maintain a constant state of alertness', being prepared with a notebook in which details can be noted down either during, or shortly after, these conversations occur. These interactions were then recorded in fieldnotes at the nearest opportunity. In the first months these were very open conversations as I sought to learn which aspects of schooling and language students perceived to be important. The announcement of the new Education and Training Policy in February 2015 was a common topic of discussion for students and teachers and drew focus to the question of language of instruction. Due to the relevance of this announcement to my area of research interest, there were a few discussions between groups of students who were involved in the English Clubs I was running, or with students who later became student researchers, which I opportunistically asked permission to voice record. By the sixth month of fieldwork, after a brief break from the field, I felt confident enough with the overall scope of the research, and had narrowed my areas of interest sufficiently, to design a set of questions that could guide semi-structured student interviews (see appendix H).

The body of recorded interview data is comprised of 19 interviews or conversations with students from the urban school, 12 interviews with students from the rural school, and 4 recorded group discussions with student researchers. In addition, the student researchers contributed another 18 recordings, 5 or which were conducted with Form One students at the rural school as part of a workshop and are guided by a list of questions that the student researchers agreed on together (see appendix I). Only two interviews were conducted with individual students, the rest were in small groups, usually of two-three people. Although the research methods literature includes discussions of advantages and disadvantages of

interviewing individuals compared to groups (Frey and Fontana, 1991; Lewis, 1992; Watts and Ebbutt, 1987), in this study I found that students felt much more comfortable talking to me in small groups and that the group dynamic encouraged students to develop their explanations (Heary and Hennessy, 2006). The set of questions that guided the semi-structured interviews was designed to be fully flexible and was adapted over time. I often included additional follow-up questions, or asked students about things I had observed. This variability is in line with Hammersley and Atkinson's (2007, pp. 117-118) description of 'reflexive interviewing' in ethnographic research, in which the interviewer is an 'active listener' and uses what they have heard to adapt and guide the subsequent course of the interview. Influenced by Posti-Ahokas's (2013) use of conditional 'what if' questions, which she argues are common practice in Tanzanian culture, I usually concluded interviews with the question: *If you were the Minister for Education, what would you change?',* and was pleasantly surprised at how enthusiastic and reflective many students were when answering. Interviews were only part of a much broader data set generated as part of this study, which positioned the researcher very much as 'traveler', '"wandering together with"' students between different school spaces and activities and piecing together a picture of their experiences over multiple interactions (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015, pp. 57-58). However, excerpts from recorded interviews contribute a significant proportion of the examples presented in this thesis, partly due to the belief that one of the purposes of this narrative is to allow students' voices to be heard, but also because these interviews were an important opportunity to ask students to explain their actions and perspectives in more detail.

Juffermans and Van Camp (2013, p. 150) argue that 'ethnographic interviewing is really a form of intercultural communication in which all sorts of miscommunication can occur'. This was especially true in this case as the majority of interviews were conducted using Kiswahili as the primary or only language. Aware of this, I used a voice recorder to record the semi-structured interviews, as well as some of the more opportunistic discussions I had with groups of students, to ensure that if I did not understand all of the language used, I would be able to return to the

recording later and seek help with the translation if necessary. Of course, this type of linguistic miscommunication meant that there were occasions when I missed potentially rich opportunities to follow up on something a student had said, and this could be considered a limitation of this study. However, my learner status also allowed me to ask students to repeat or rephrase something if I had not understood the words used, something they did in a seemingly willing and patient way. On these occasions the presence of multiple students appeared to be particularly beneficial as they often discussed ways of explaining meaning, or if there were students who were more confident with English, sometimes they suggested a translation. These exchanges offered an excellent example of one of the ways that students negotiated meaning across different languages. Of course, Juffermans and Van Camp are not referring only to misunderstandings of language, but also of cultural interpretation. The potential for this could never be fully mitigated, but by asking a variety of follow-up questions, and using interviewing as just one tool among many over an extended time period, I hoped that I would have enough interactions to clarify areas of misunderstanding.

This section has focused on different forms of observation and interviewing because these were perhaps the most prominent methods of data generation used in this study, but they were not the only methods. The pictures of the settings and students' experiences that are described in this thesis are also informed by collected documents, including school notices, publicly available student examination data, subject syllabi, exam papers and textbooks. I took photographs of the school environments, and some of the student researchers took photographs of their home environments. At both schools, I asked two classes to complete anonymous background questionnaires to offer contextual information about students' home lives (see appendix J), and these have been used to inform the setting descriptions at the end of this chapter. Additionally, I experimented with different types of data generation activities. For example, one activity asked students to write letters to an imagined student in their final year of primary school to explain to them what to expect in secondary school. In another, a small group of students created and discussed a timeline of their lives, both up to that point and in the future, and

identified the points where they felt different languages were most important. These activities are not explicitly analysed in this thesis, but reflections were recorded as part of my fieldnotes. I also organised two Saturday workshops. For the first, student researchers from Mlimani School travelled to Kijijini School to work with 23 Form One students. The student researchers from both schools conducted group interviews and ran activities around what makes a good/bad student and a good/bad teacher. The second workshop was organised in the final week of the fieldwork and I arranged for 20 rural students from Forms One and Two to travel to town to take part in activities alongside 20 urban students. These activities were led by the student researchers and were specifically designed to facilitate interaction between the students from different schools. One of the activities asked students to comment on, and to say to what extent they agreed with, a series of statements that related to some of the key observations from the fieldwork. As such, it acted as a kind of feedback opportunity, seeking participants' perspectives on my findings. A vast amount of data were generated in the course of fieldwork and the following section discusses the processes of transcription, organisation and analysis.

Data transcription, organisation and analysis

All of the recorded conversations and interviews with students were transcribed during the period of fieldwork. Although, with some of the earlier conversations, I had attempted to complete the transcription myself, it quickly became clear that this approach would be incredibly time-consuming and carried a high risk of error, largely due to the fact that my Kiswahili vocabulary was much more limited than the students speaking. Concerned that this would affect the trustworthiness of the data (Easton, McComish and Greenberg, 2000), I decided to employ Tanzanians, bilingual in Kiswahili and English, to transcribe the recordings. In the course of the research, I worked with three transcribers: one I found through a commercial language services company; one was a university student I approached through my NGO contacts; and the third was a university lecturer and colleague of another PhD researcher working in the local area. Working with three different people offered some reflections about transcription. For example, one transcriber initially misunderstood our discussion

about the task and translated a Kiswahili recording into English as he assumed that I would not be able to read the Kiswahili (this despite the fact that our meeting had been conducted in a mix of both languages!) The most useful transcriptions were completed by the university lecturer, who transcribed all of the semi-structured interviews from the later stages of the research (see appendix K). In addition to producing a faithful reflection of the dialogue in the interview, always in the language(s) used by the speaker, he included explanatory footnotes when students used colloquial language, expressions or other references that he thought I would not understand.[20] These were extremely useful and point to the fact that translation is not simply a matter of moving from one language to another (Moerman, 1996). There were occasions where it was necessary to leave gaps in the transcription because the speaker cannot be heard due to background noise or students talking over one another. Easton, McComish and Greenberg (2000, p. 705) list 'extraneous noise' as a 'pitfall' in qualitative research. Although everything was done to minimise these interruptions, I have already noted that finding quiet places to conduct interviews was a practical challenge in this research.

It has been widely argued that transcription is itself a 'selective' and interpretive process as the transcriber makes choices about what will be transcribed (Davidson, 2009; Duranti, 2006; Ochs, 1979). Because I was intending to use the transcriptions for thematic analysis of students' perspectives rather than discursive or interactional analysis of student talk, and because of the number of recordings, I did not require that transcribers pay close attention to features like pauses or turn-taking. But the transcripts do record laughter and noises of agreement and disagreement and these indicators of the tone of discussion were supported by reflections about interviews that were part of my fieldnotes. As I familiarised myself with the transcripts, I also read them alongside the sound recordings, allowing me also to confirm that I was satisfied that they were as accurate as possible.

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[20] He also included notes identifying where I had made mistakes with my use of Kiswahili, contributing to the fact that my anxiety about my own language negotiations continued long after the period of fieldwork, throughout the analysis of the data.

The analysis of the data generated in this study began in the field, through the practices of reading and reflecting on fieldnotes, re-listening to interview recordings and writing conceptual memos. Through these analytical activities, relevant themes were already emerging. In June 2015 I made a brief visit to the UK to visit family and consult with my PhD supervisors. Rather than interrupting the research process, this time away from the field allowed me the distance for reflection (Street, 2012), and during this break I created a 'thematic network' map of themes and concepts emerging from the data (appendix L). Once fieldwork was concluded, I organised the data by coding all of the interview transcripts, lesson observations and fieldnotes in Nvivo. I started this process using themes that I had already identified as significant, but was open to, and indeed added additional codes where common themes were not covered by the original list.[21] Coding allowed me to easily bring together thematically linked data from different sources, helping me to establish 'pool[s] of meaning' (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996, p. 31; Tesch, 1990), which eventually shaped the structure of the chapters of this thesis. The data included and analysed in this thesis inevitably represents selections and prioritisations influenced by engagement with the literature about language of instruction in Tanzania, my theoretical and political commitment to foregrounding student agency, and my own positionality and identity, which have continued to shift and change throughout the research and writing processes (Coffey, 1999).[22] But I have sought throughout to be conscious and reflexive about these choices, in line with the requirements of good quality interpretive research.

Quality in ethnographic research

There is now widespread agreement that conventional scientific criteria for assessing quality and rigour in research, including objectivity, validity, replicability and generalisability, are inappropriate for the assessment of work within the

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[21] The final list of codes can be found in appendix M.

[22] In particular, my role as Research Lead in an independent UK secondary school since September 2015 has deepened my familiarity with research literatures relating to teaching and learning, and has influenced my thinking around issues of fear and resilience in the classroom (explored in chapter 9).

interpretivist paradigm (Guba and Lincoln, 2005; Lincoln, 1995; Tracy, 2010). Guba and Lincoln (1986) are widely credited with encouraging debate around this issue and encouraging discussion of 'what we think research should do and be like' (Smith, 1993, p. 153). Various alternative sets of criteria have been offered for evaluating qualitative, interpretive research (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln and Guba, 1986; Richardson, 2000), but this study looks to Tracy's (2010) 'Eight "Big Tent" Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research'. Tracy's criteria are designed to be multidisciplinary and to represent 'ends' that researchers can reach in a variety of different ways. The list is comprised of, '(a) worthy topic, (b) rich rigor, (c) sincerity, (d) credibility, (e) resonance, (f) significant contribution, (g) ethics, and (h) meaningful coherence' (Tracy, 2010, p. 839). The worthiness of the topic, significance of the contribution of this study and its meaningful coherence are addressed directly in the introduction and conclusion of this thesis. Rich rigor refers to a combination of the theoretical framing and the design and execution of the study and has been discussed in the previous chapter and preceding sections of this chapter. Sincerity asks that the researcher be both reflexive about their role and influence in the research, as well as transparent in their methods and analytical choices, and so is a criterion that has been discussed in this chapter, but continues to be relevant throughout the thesis. Remaining, then, as the focus of this section are the ethical considerations relevant to this study as well as questions of credibility and resonance.

Ethics

As I worked only with secondary school students in this study, some of the ethical issues of working with younger children were avoided. Students of secondary age in Tanzania are most likely to be between 14 and 18, although in some cases students may be older. They occupy a dual position in that, in their personal and family lives, teenagers are often viewed as young adults and take on a number of adult responsibilities, but in school they are identified as children in relation to their teachers, and systems of hierarchy and expected behaviour are firmly embedded. Although it was important for me to encourage students to actively participate in this research, I had to be aware of cultural expectations about the behaviour of

students. Throughout, I was conscious to ensure that my work with students was not seen to undermine the authority of teaching staff as this could cause harm to students by negatively affecting their relationships with their teachers. This was particularly important in the context of Tanzanian schools where corporal punishment is still regularly practised (Joyce-Gibbons *et al.*, 2018; Tao, 2015). Balancing relationships between these two groups, while upholding the anonymity of participants was also an important consideration as staff were particularly interested in what the students had told me. In these circumstances, I discussed general findings, and often used these as opportunities to raise questions about teachers' perspectives on certain issues, but I never specified details that could be linked to individuals or identifiable groups.

It would not have been practically feasible to collect signed consent forms for all of the participants in this study, and could potentially have made the research seem unnecessarily daunting to students with little experience of such practices. Moreover, Atkinson (2015, p. 179) argues that, due to the 'emergent, unfolding processes' of ethnographic research, fully informed consent is an 'anthropological impossibility'. Instead, I sought to regularly discuss and explain the motivations for my project and the potential outcomes. Initially, having completed the process of gaining the necessary formal permissions from the relevant authorities and the Heads of School, I composed a letter in both English and Kiswahili that introduced myself and my research to members of the school community (see appendix N). This was posted on school noticeboards, but I also read this to staff in meetings where I was introduced by the Head Teachers and to students when I first observed their lessons. When introducing myself to students, I also asked for support from the teachers to ensure that the messages about active participation in the research being voluntary, that all participants would remain anonymous, and how the data would be used, were understood by all students. When I was observing students in classrooms, I tried to be very conscious of their response to me, and to make it clear that they did not have to answer any questions I asked. Furthermore, when I was looking for volunteers for other activities and semi-structured interviews, I always explained in Kiswahili that participation was completely optional and that there

would be no negative repercussions of choosing not to take part. Similarly, I always asked permission of teachers to observe lessons and many observations were the result of an invitation by the teacher. In addition to striving to ensure that students and teachers were as informed as was possible about their involvement in the research, I also had to be practically mindful of the demand that some additional activities would have on their time as I did not want to disrupt teaching and learning, or students' responsibilities outside of school.

On entering the field, perhaps naively, I did not expect that my interest in language would raise any particular ethical issues and I was quite surprised by the negative impact that some aspects of the language environment had on the emotional well-being of some students. I had prepared myself for more obvious child protection and safeguarding issues, and had identified in both schools who I would approach with these types of concerns. In advance I had also considered the issue of corporal punishment, which I expected to encounter due to previous school visits and the experiences of other researchers (for example see Tao, 2015). There was an awareness amongst the teachers from both schools that corporal punishment would make me uncomfortable, and several addressed this with me directly, making it very clear that this practice was widely considered necessary for 'African students'. On several occasions, teachers used this knowledge to laugh at me, making jokes about human rights. It was clear that criticism from me would not be welcome, but when asked, I made my feelings about the practice clear and explained alternative approaches to sanctioning students that are commonly used in UK schools. As far as I could, I tried to avoid being present while students were being punished in this way, trying to subtly walk away or stay inside the staff room when it was happening outside. But this was not always possible, especially when it was used by teachers in lessons that I was observing. In relation to other well-being concerns such as students' behaviour that suggested they were experiencing anxiety in lessons, I asked teachers and students about this, hoping that my questions might raise awareness of the issue, but it became clear that these were considered common features of schooling and that the majority of teachers and students felt that the responsibility lay with students to be more confident (see chapters 6 and 9).

The inclusion of students as researchers has often been framed as a response to ethical concerns, particularly around power, voice and agency (Gallagher, 2008; Grover, 2004; Robinson and Taylor, 2012). Certainly, these were the key motivations behind including student researchers in the design of this study, as discussed earlier in this chapter. However, there were also new ethical issues introduced by the positioning of students in these roles. Giving a small number of students levels of responsibility for designing and leading research activities carried the potential risk that they might use this position to exert power over younger students. For example, during the two workshops, student researchers took on a teacher-like role and I needed to be conscious of how they would enact this. If they were to reproduce the hierarchies and modes of interaction that were common in the teacher-student relationships in classrooms and were often characterised by control, fear and humiliation (Moris, 2008; Mwinsheikhe, 2009; also see chapter 9), this would not only undermine my aims in giving students more active roles, but would also pose a significant threat to student well-being. I had observed abuses of power by older students in positions of responsibility in the broader school context, including an incident, that is discussed more fully in chapter 6, with a group of student 'Scouts' who had a responsibility for monitoring student behaviour. To mitigate this risk, I spoke to the student researchers about the importance of making both interviewees and workshop participants feel comfortable and that their contribution was valued. We also discussed the concepts of anonymity and consent and the fact that students should know they had a choice about whether or not to take part. When preparing the workshops, I worked collaboratively with the student researchers to design group activities where the student researchers would act as facilitators, explaining activities and then focusing on asking participants questions about what they were doing. During the workshops themselves, I stepped back to allow the student researchers to take the lead in running the sessions, but I would have intervened if I had any concerns about conduct. Observing the workshops, student researchers were definitely conscious of, and were engaged in negotiating, their power in relation to the other students in the room (Gallagher, 2008). This was evident in the way that they used English words and phrases, interspersed with their Kiswahili, as

markers of their status. In addition, student researchers occasionally slipped into 'advising' workshop participants about the importance of English and of hard work, but their interactions were always positive and encouraging.

There was no financial benefit to the schools or individual participants of being involved in this research, though I did seek out opportunities to contribute to the school communities in other ways. I shared with schools the fact that I am a qualified teacher, though I made it clear that I am not specifically qualified in the teaching of English as a foreign language. At Mlimani School, I taught a Form 1 English class for 8 weeks, and at Kijijini School I regularly contributed to English lessons, in collaboration with the teachers. I ran English clubs and helped prepare students from Mlimani School for English speaking competitions running at different schools. When students were invited to take part in workshops at the weekend as part of my research, I also provided snacks or lunch where appropriate and covered the cost of transport between the two schools. In the case of the student researchers, I spoke to them about what would help them to convey the experience they had gained as part of the project, offering to write references. They suggested that certificates of involvement would be most useful and appropriate and so I created these. The student researchers also kept the voice recorders they had been using as part of the study so that they would be able to conduct further research of their own.

In order to uphold rigorous standards of data protection, Mlimani School and Kijijini School are both pseudonyms, as are any names that are used for individuals throughout this thesis. Wherever possible, pseudonyms were also used in the fieldnotes and other written documents associated with this study. When interview files were shared with transcribers, they were given anonymous codes. Although students' names are occasionally used in the recordings, the transcribers did not know which schools were involved in the research. The electronic data associated with this project was stored on password-protected devices and physical notebooks were either locked in a cupboard in my accommodation or carried on my person. The descriptions of the schools involved in this study are purposely vague in an attempt to protect their anonymity, but as the number of schools meeting these

descriptions is limited, it is possible that they may resonate with someone very familiar with the area. In this case other anonymity measures should still protect the identity of individuals.

Credibility and resonance

Credibility refers to the account that is created as part of the research process. Because credibility in ethnographic and other qualitative forms of research is sought in relation to an account of the social world, the notion of credibility requires that researchers create an account of the data that reflects its complexity and relationship with the context in which it was generated (Tracy, 2010). The ethnographic perspective and its commitment to 'thick description' of both detail and socially and culturally situated meaning lends itself well to this task (Geertz, 1973). Although this manuscript conforms to the conventions of a doctoral thesis rather than 'an ethnography' (Van Maanen, 1988), its commitment to constructing an account that foregrounds complexity and heterogeneity remains, with attention paid both to what is explicitly said, but also implicit assumptions that guide behaviour. The breadth of methods included for data generation, and the plurality of voices incorporated, support the process of looking from multiple angles. Moreover, the choice of the capability approach as the main framework for this study offers the conceptual vocabulary with which to create this multi-faceted account.

Offering an account that strives for 'thick description' also helps a research report to achieve resonance. Tracy (2010, p. 845) suggests that there are two possible routes to achieving resonance. The first, 'aesthetic merit' is concerned with the nature of the text and the emotional impact on the reader. In this case, I hope that both the narrative and the inclusion of students' voices are evocative enough to not only engage, but also to affect an emotional or empathetic response from the reader. The second element of resonance relates to the question of 'transferability'. Although Lincoln and Guba (2000, p. 40) dismiss the possibility of generalisability in interpretive research, they do describe the notion of transferability which 'depends upon the degree of fittingness'. They place the responsibility on the reader to decide

whether the account and analysis that they are reading might be transferred to another context, but they argue that the researcher holds the responsibility for offering a sufficiently detailed description of the context in which a study was done for the reader to make that evaluation. Although this thesis must balance the demand for description with concerns about participant anonymity, it is hoped that the reader finds the account detailed enough that it can resonate across similar contexts, both in Tanzania and more widely.

Relevance of empirical findings to similar contexts is not the only way that a study can achieve transferability. Through the process of theory building, conceptual understandings can be transportable to other situations with different levels of similarity or dissimilarity. Lincoln and Lynham (2011) offer a list of 13 criteria for judging the 'goodness' of theory derived from interpretive research. It has many similarities to Tracy's more general criteria for quality qualitative research, but it additionally points to the importance of developing 'good conceptual understanding of practice' and doing so using concepts and a 'descriptive and explanatory framework' that 'are made explicit' so that they can be used elsewhere (Lincoln and Lynham, 2011, pp. 16-17). By framing the analysis in this thesis using the concepts and tools of the capability approach, it makes theoretical contributions that are expressed in a conceptual vocabulary that is both explicit and shared across multiple disciplines. These theoretical claims are underpinned and 'supported by "lived experience"', as presented in the subsequent chapters, that demonstrate the 'empirical verifiability' of the findings and conclusions (Lincoln and Lynham, 2011, p. 16). But before turning to in-depth discussion of the data generated as part of this study, this chapter ends with introductory descriptions of the research settings.

The research settings

Morogoro Region is situated in central Tanzania, approximately 180km and 4 hours drive south-west of Dar-es-Salaam and 260km south-east of the political capital, Dodoma. The 2012 census recorded a regional population of over 2.2 million people (United Republic of Tanzania, 2020). Morogoro Town sits at the foot of the Uluguru Mountains and was traditionally the base for the Luguru tribe. Morogoro Town is

close to the main road that connects the port and airports of Da-es-Salaam to the central and southern parts of the country. As such, as well as being a popular stop for traders, Morogoro is also stopping point for tourists travelling to the Mikumi, Selous and Ruaha national parks, or undertaking hiking and camping activities in the mountains. Morogoro Region is associated with agriculture and is home to the Sokoine University of Agriculture. In terms of educational achievement, the 2015 Uwezo national learning survey found that 37% of children surveyed aged 9-13 years passed all three tests (in Kiswahili, English and Numeracy). This was below the national average of 40%, though it should be noted that only 7 of 25 regions scored above this average (Uwezo, 2017).

Mlimani School was a well-established government secondary school in the centre of Morogoro Town. It had more than 1500 students in Forms 1-6. Teaching was divided across two campuses, one for 'Ordinary Level' (Forms 1-4) and one for 'Advanced Level' (Forms 5-6). Boarding facilities were available for students in Advanced Level. Although the school had a good reputation, the facilities had depreciated with age and buildings were worn. Class sizes in Forms 1 and 2 averaged around 80 students, though this number decreased in Forms 3 and 4. An indication of the socio-economic background of students was offered by background questionnaires, completed by 115 students in Forms 1 and 2, which showed that 82% of students lived in homes with cement floors, 11% of students lived in homes with tiled floors, and 7% of students lived in homes with earth floors. Parents and guardians were employed in a wide range of jobs including teachers, doctors, police, mechanics and self-employed. In the 2019 national examinations for Form 4, the pass-rate for candidates from Mlimani School was 89%, with 54% achieving in the top two divisions (NECTA, 2019).

Kijijini School was a relatively new school, built as part of the rapid expansion of secondary schools between 2004 and 2009. It was situated in Morogoro Rural District and served three villages, though none of them were close-by, so the school felt quite isolated. It was accessible by local buses from Morogoro Town, and twice a day, a bus would make the extra 2km journey between the main road and the school to serve the majority of teachers who lived in Morogoro Town. The school

was made up of 13 classrooms, an administration block, staffroom and store. The foundations had been laid for two science laboratories, but these were awaiting construction. There were approximately 600 students enrolled at Kijijini School, but the average class size observed was never more than 40 students. Of 94 background questionnaires completed, 41% of students lived in homes with cement floors while 59% of students lived in homes with earth floors. The most common occupation of parents and guardians was farming. In the 2019 national examinations for Form 4, the pass-rate for candidates from Kijijini School was 54%, with 4% achieving in the top two divisions (NECTA, 2019).

This chapter has offered a description and explanation of the methodological and social-geographical contexts of this study. It has situated the study within an ethnographic perspective and demonstrated why this is considered to be a particularly valuable approach to the study of language-in-education. An account has also been shared of the research process, including the assumptions, reflections and practicalities that influenced decisions made with reference to access, data generation methods, data management and analysis and research quality. Importantly, this chapter has introduced the voices that have contributed to this study, including students and teachers. The next chapters turn to exploring their experiences and negotiations of language and learning.

6. Aspirations and Agency for 'Being' and 'Becoming'

"I come to school…to get education. Because education is the key of life."
[Male, Form Two, Kijijini, 1/8/15].

"Education is the most important thing in the life of humanity".
[Female, Form One, Kijijini, 18/8/15].

'Education is the key of life' (*'Elimu ni ufunguo wa maisha')*, and other statements with similar meanings, are commonplace in Tanzania. Not only do they pervade the data collected as part of this study, but they have been highlighted in other studies relating to education and young people's aspirations (Billings, 2011; Posti-Ahokas and Palojoki, 2014). Subsequent chapters of this thesis shine a spotlight on school language environments, exploring language use in more detail and considering specific areas of challenge related to both learning language and using language for learning. However, the experience of conducting this study, and the analysis of language of instruction debates in chapters 2 and 3, emphasise that school-based language use must be situated within the broader context of students' reasons for valuing and pursuing education, and their perspectives and understandings of how their educational efforts and experiences can help them to achieve their aspirations.

Students' aspirations and the ways in which they valued education and language in relation to these aspirations were numerous. Different aspirations were also interconnected. A similar observation in her own UK-focused study, led Hart (2012) to advocate for a more holistic approach to understanding students' aspirations. The first part of this chapter aims to offer just that and draws upon the analytical tools of the capability approach to demonstrate these connections. Previous studies have offered different approaches to organising and categorising aspirations (for example see Hart, 2012; Posti-Ahokas and Palojoki, 2014; Unterhalter and Brighouse, 2007; Zipin *et al.*, 2015). However, in analysing the data generated in this study, it was most useful to divide students' aspirations between those that were future-oriented, related to students' aspirations for 'becoming', and those which focused on aspirations for states of 'being' in the present. When consideration of aspirations is limited only to future-oriented goals, important

beliefs relating to attitudes and behaviour can be overlooked. Distinguishing in this way allows clearer understanding of students' views about how their current actions might relate to future outcomes, and their perspectives on their own agency in relation to their aspirations.

Amongst students' aspirations for 'being' they often talked about the importance of being able to *'soma kwa bidii'*, which translates as 'study hard' or 'study with effort'. This notion encompassed a set of behaviours, but also a mindset that might be likened to resilience. Students' sense of agency and hope relating to their educational outcomes and future aspirations seemed to be invested in the concept of *'soma kwa bidii'*, but this remained an aspirational state for many because there were barriers to being able to achieve and maintain this state of being. The final section of this chapter frames *'soma kwa bidii'* as a valued capability, exploring the meanings that students attached to this concept. It also uses *'soma kwa bidii'* to raise questions about students' perceived sense of agency in relation to their educational aspirations.

The focus of this chapter is particularly on aspirations related to education and language. Of course, there are other valued beings, doings and becomings that were important to students, both within and beyond the school context, some of which are discussed when relevant in subsequent chapters. But this thesis argues that students' day-to-day experiences of schooling and the school language environment cannot and should not be understood divorced from the wider context of students' hopes and aspirations for education. At the time of this study, students who continued to, and progressed through, secondary education in Tanzania were a minority group compared with their out-of-school peers. Although the multiple reasons why these students were in school are beyond the scope of this study, the importance of continuing in school on students' ways of thinking and imagining are crucial to understanding their attitudes, choices and negotiations in relation to language.

Connections between education, English and aspirations

The capabilities that students aspired to in relation to 'being' and 'becoming' in and through education were connected, as the diagram in figure 6.1 illustrates. Considering aspirations for future 'becoming', the diagram shows that students held aspirations for both the short and longer term future. In particular, 'passing examinations' and/or 'completing Form Four' were important capabilities that were also necessary means towards wider goals, in particular 'being employed'. But having a job was not necessarily valued only as a 'final end' either. Some students, particularly rural girls, spoke in some detail about why they aspired to be employed, giving reasons including 'becoming financially independent', which they in turn believed would help them in 'becoming protected from harm'. Aspirations for 'becoming' and the connections between different valued capabilities are considered more fully later in this chapter.
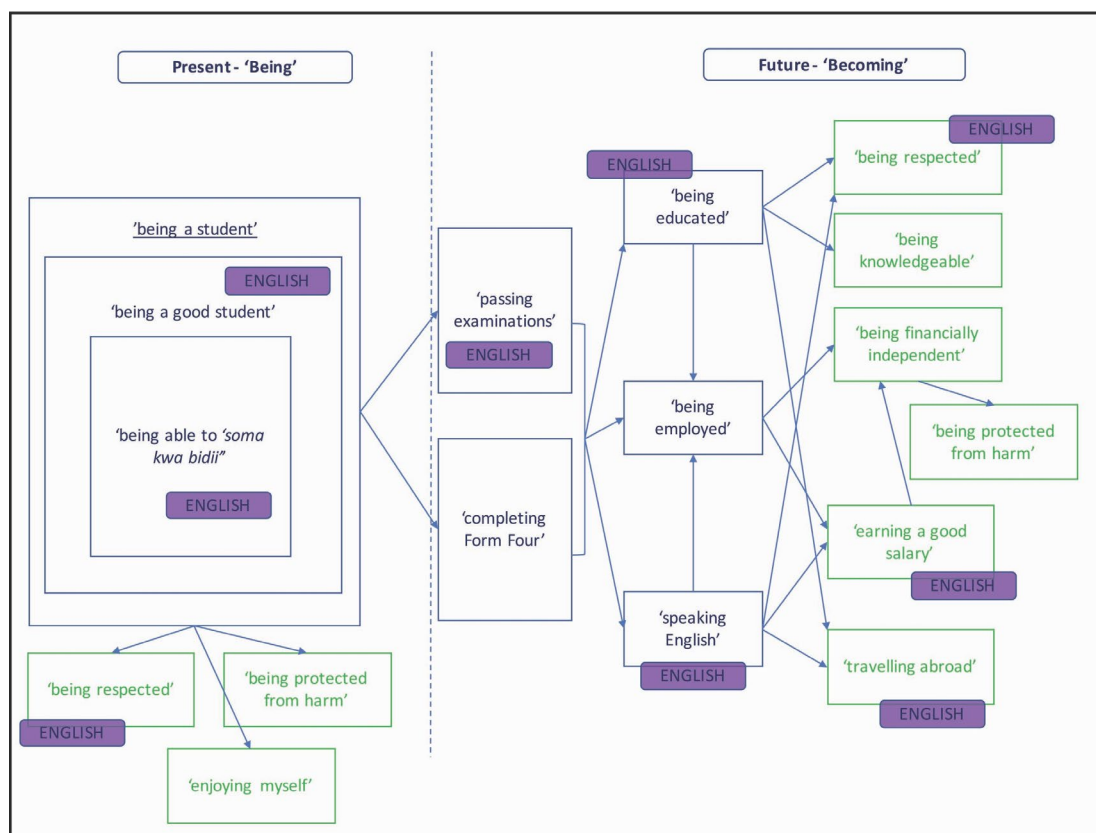
Figure 6.1: Connectedness of students' aspirations for 'being' and 'becoming'

Although many of the students' aspirations for 'being' in the present were instrumentally valued as supporting their future goals, it should not be assumed that this was the only reason for aspiring to 'being a student' and different capabilities relating to this. The capability of 'being a student' was also valued both because of the identity and status that it conferred and because it protected students from alternative 'beings' and 'doings' that they positioned as undesirable. Within the broader capability of 'being a student' students also described a kind of hierarchy, represented in Figure 6.1 by a series of capabilities within capabilities. Students made a distinction between simply 'being a student' and 'being a 'good' student'. Particularly important to the notion of 'being a 'good' student' was the concept of *'soma kwa bidii'* or 'studying hard', which is explored towards the end of this chapter.

In addition to illustrating students' aspirations and the connections between them, this diagram uses the purple 'ENGLISH' labels to highlight where students explicitly linked language to their aspirations. When talking about language in the context of education-related aspirations, students exclusively talked about English. Chapter 3 argued that language assumes multiple functions and roles, and that one of these is that certain, high-status languages act as forms of aspiration. In the context of the data generated as part of this study, it is English that is very clearly positioned as the language of aspiration, and secondary schooling was the assumed route to the acquisition of English. There was a common narrative, shared by both students and teachers, about the importance of English. For example, it was described as *"that language of the world" [Female, Form One, Mlimani, 14/8/15], and "the most important thing in the life of a student" [Male, Form Two, Kijijini, 13/8/15].* In these and similar statements, English is endowed with an importance that resembles the 'education is the key of life' discourse. Although there are examples in the data where students drew a distinction between the completion of secondary education and acquisition of English, some of which are presented in this chapter, more often, the capabilities of 'being educated' and 'speaking English' were inseparable. Talking about how he was going to ensure a 'good life' for himself later, one student explained: *"…we have been told that we should study…we should know education and we should get the English language" [Male, Form One, Kijijini,*

18/8/15]. In my notes from the second day of fieldwork, I have recorded a discussion with a teacher from the urban school during which he said, *"people think that to speak English is the same thing as to succeed" [Researcher field notes, 21/1/15],* a sentiment that has been remarked upon by several scholars who have noted that education and English are 'synonymous' in the Tanzanian imagination (Mapunda, 2013; Neke, 2005; Nyamubi, 2016; Rubagumya, 2003). Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis have already offered critiques of the assumed relationship between English and knowledge. This chapter, then, focuses on presenting students' perspectives in the ways they expressed them in order to build a picture of students' aspirations relating to language and education. The impact of some of these language attitudes is then further explored in chapter 7.

What is particularly striking when this set of aspirations is viewed together is that it represents not only the activities that students want to be able to do, but also the kind of person they want to be, both in the present and in the future. This is a key observation because, for many of the students in this study, particularly students at the rural school but also a number of students in the urban context, schooling represented an opportunity to break free from the circumstances they were born into and to access not only material opportunities that were not open to their parents, but also the chance to forge a separate identity. There were certainly differences in the aspirations that students in this study expressed, and figure 6.1 would undoubtedly change if redrawn for individuals, but there were also clear similarities. In particular, students created two dichotomies that they spoke about themselves with reference to: *maisha magumu / maisha mazuri*; and traditional / modern. It is useful to consider these from the outset because they sit behind many of the more specific aspirations that students spoke about.

The notion of '*maisha mazuri'* ('a good life') was not clearly defined, but it existed for students alongside the spectre of '*maisha magumu'*. This can be translated either as 'a hard life' or as 'life is hard', and the prevalence of this phrase in the Tanzanian context has been noted by a number of scholars (for example Kamat, 2008; Nalkur, 2009; Vavrus, 2002a). Kamat (2008, p. 368) goes so far as to describe the expression *'maisha magumu'*, translated as 'life is hard', as a 'constant

subtext' in Tanzanian life. From her study of schooling in the Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania, Vavrus (2003, p. 6) explains that *'maisha magumu'* 'describes not only the absence of good health and employment but also the desire for more control'. Although Vavrus is referring to broad social and political forces, the sense that many things in life were out of their control was present in this study in students' comments. One Form One student from Kijijini School explained:

> *"Firstly, a person says, "my mother is there and I eat and am full…".….But life is today and tomorrow. Today a person is there…tomorrow…We just walk through the world waiting for death. So they don't know, if their mother dies or father dies, who they will be left with." [Female, Form One, Kijijini, 25/8/15]*

When talking about why education was important to them, then, many students aspired to have the resources to be able to protect themselves from *maisha magumu*. The *maisha mazuri / maisha magumu* distinction seemed to apply mostly to material conditions, and money in particular was viewed as being able to protect from hardship, and offer some sense of control. As such, gaining employment played a central role in students' discussions of their aspirations, and consequently plays a significant role in the discussion in this chapter.

Alongside the contrast of *maisha magumu / maisha mazuri*, there was another dichotomy that appeared regularly in students' explanations and so will feature at different stages in this thesis, the difference between 'traditional' and 'modern' culture. Unlike *maisha mazuri / maisha magumu*, the traditional / modern distinction was used to discuss both 'doings' and ways of 'being'. 'Traditional' culture was negatively positioned and associated with a lack of education – some of the student researchers referred to people who 'had traditional culture' as 'backwards'. In contrast, 'modern' culture was very positively positioned and associated with education and English. Students were proud to describe themselves as 'modern', and several students used these labels to set themselves apart from their families. This was particularly notable with two of the urban student researchers who regularly reinforced the fact that they perceived themselves as different from their parents 'in the village'. Stambach's (2000) ethnography of secondary schooling on Mount Kilimanjaro similarly identifies a generational tension between tradition and

modernity. Like *maisha mazuri,* the concepts of traditional / modern were not clearly defined in the data, but features associated with these markers are discussed in the following sections of this chapter that look more closely at students' comments relating to their aspirations.

Education, English and 'becoming'

Closer discussion of students' aspirations begins here by looking at future-oriented goals because these were not only a clear focus for students in this study when talking about why they valued schooling, but they also dominate other studies of students' education-related aspirations (for example see Posti-Ahokas and Palojoki, 2014; Stambach and Hall, 2017). Although there were differences in the ways that students talked about their aspirations, with particular trends noticeable amongst urban and rural students, the foremost reason given by all students for valuing both continued schooling and the acquisition of English was related to the opportunities that they hoped would be opened up. As discussed above, students considered education and English to be valuable for the futures they aspired to, and which they hoped would protect them from *'maisha magumu'*. Especially central to this was employment and so the first part of this section focuses on this. The final part of the section, though, considers perceptions of success and failure, observing that many rural students had a keen awareness that some aspirations for further education and formal employment might not be possible. Instead of being a reason for giving up and dropping out of school, these students continued to frame education as a transformative experience, even if they 'failed'.

Employment, financial independence and continued education

The most common reason students gave to explain the value of education to their future aspirations was that schooling was vital for securing employment. But their responses relating to the types of employment that they were interested in emphasise the importance of considering the social context in which aspirations are formed (Appadurai, 2004; 2013). One student explained: *"It's compulsory to come to*

school. Because a student without education in our country…you won't be able to get employment, you see?" [*Female, Form One, Kijijini, 25/8/15*]. Another student explained why he considered employment to be important, linking having work to a sense of direction and security, saying: *"We come to school to study so that we will know what our life will be later. If you get work, you will know where your life is going."* [*Male, Form Two, Kijijini, 1/8/15*]. It is of interest that these two rural students have specified that they aspire to 'get work', to be employed by someone else. Living in a context where the majority of parents were either farmers or sold goods, often fruit and vegetables, and so might be described as 'self-employed', these students aspired to a different type of working situation. In contrast, being a 'business man' or 'business woman' was a popular aspiration in town, perhaps where the self-employed roles that students came into contact with were more varied and potentially lucrative.

On the whole, students in town had a clearer idea of the occupations they aspired to. To become a doctor was a popular aspiration, along with being a bank clerk. Even if they weren't sure exactly what type of work they wanted to do, several urban students mentioned that they wanted to work in an office. It was clear that they admired the lifestyle that they believed office workers to have. One student even specified that she aspired to work in an office with air conditioning, something that she perceived would improve her quality of life. Studies of students' aspirations in a variety of contexts have upheld Appadurai's argument that aspiring requires the ability to comprehend 'a map of a journey into the future' (Appadurai, 2004, p. 76; see also Bok, 2010; Gale and Parker, 2015). In order to understand this map, students must have access to people within their ken who have experience of different possible routes. Urban students were at an advantage with this because they had access to a broader network of experiences and a wider variety of people. The majority had family members in waged employment, elder siblings who have progressed through schooling, and in their daily lives they would observe and interact with individuals working in different roles. This supports Appadurai's claim that the capacity to aspire 'is not evenly distributed' (2013, p. 188).

Although it was less common for them to specify particular occupations, rural students were much more likely to talk about the reasons why they aspired to 'being employed'. They positioned 'being employed' as a 'fertile functioning' and identified the other valued capabilities that they believed employment would allow them to achieve. These reasons included the security and financial independence of a predictable income. In addition to more general comments about money supporting *'maisha mazuri'*, some students explained much more specifically how they hoped this income would improve their lives. Writing about students in their first year of higher education in South Africa, Wilson-Strydom (2017, p. 390) observes a similar difference between the way that different students framed their aspirations, noting that those who were the first in their family to attend university were more likely to talk about their aspirations in terms of 'escaping from current conditions of poverty', while students who came from families with previous experience of higher education tended to focus on specific careers. Perhaps due to the specific challenges associated with their gender (Billings, 2011; DeJaeghere, 2018), female students talked in greater detail than male students about why they aspired to earn their own money. One rural student explained:

> *"If you have your education you can't be persecuted by others...In the future when you are married, if your man doesn't have money...because you have money he can't abuse you...because you have money. Meaning, we come to school in order to study...we make an effort so that later you will have your good life". [Female, Form One, Kijijini, 18/8/15].*

This student's life experiences and/or observations of the experiences of others meant that she valued a future where she would have the financial independence to protect herself from abuse and persecution. Other female students talked about wanting to earn their own money so that they could contribute to their family. One girl explained:

> *"And if I see that my life there at home is hard it's necessary that I should study...to be able to assist my parents. They raised me from a child to being like this. And now I should study a lot so I can help my younger siblings...and I should educate them for the society they are in...so it's not, you know, a hard life." [Female, Form One, Kijijini, 25/8/15]*

166

It was not only rural girls who talked about the potential for education and employment to help them to escape current conditions. A male student in Form Four linked his future aspirations with occupations that would take him away from the community he had grown up in. He explained: *"If God helps you, you go even to study at the teachers' college or you go to the army…at the end of the day you find that, in life, you have won." [Male, Form Four, Kijijini, 27/8/15].* Interestingly, this student was amongst a group that had been identified by others as 'struggling' and, although he talked elsewhere about being 'disconcerted' with school, he talked positively about the value of remaining until he got his leaving certificate so that he could access alternative employment options to those that would have been otherwise available to him. For both rural and urban students, employment, and thus education, were key to achieving a variety of connected aspirations and valued capabilities. Similar observations have been made in other studies of girls' aspirations in Tanzania and surrounding countries (for example see DeJaeghere, 2018; Helgesson, 2006; Kiragu and Warrington, 2012; Nalkur, 2009; Posti-Ahokas and Palojoki, 2014; Stambach, 2000).

English improves employment opportunities

No matter what students aspired to, English was perceived as improving employment opportunities. Urban students often framed English as a prerequisite for the careers that they aspired to, and pointed to occupations like medicine where the technical vocabulary used was all in English. For those who wanted to become teachers, a particularly popular ambition for girls at the rural school, English was also a requirement. Many students pointed out that, in order to pass the examinations which were written in, and required a response in English, knowing English was important. There were some students who admitted that it might be possible to achieve a passing grade at school without knowing English well, strategies for which are explored in chapter 8, but they said that they would struggle to get a job. One girl argued that, even if someone were able to secure employment, it would not be long until they were 'found out':

"It can cost them later when being judged at work…it might be that they passed school, but if they don't speak English it will look like they stole their certificates." [Form One, Mlimani School, 14/8/15].

Although Qorro (2013, p. 36) notes that 'English is rarely used for communication in most workplaces' in Tanzania, it is often a pre-requisite of securing employment, either as a named requirement, or indirectly because of the LOI policy in secondary schooling. Moreover, Swilla (2009, p. 9) notes that foreign-owned organisations, where salaries are often higher, require knowledge of English for even the most junior-level roles and often only advertise in English.

While urban students tended to talk about English as a non-negotiable requirement of achieving their aspirations for employment, rural students were more likely to frame English as improving their opportunities. Even those with more modest work ambitions highlighted the benefits that knowledge of English could give them. The excerpt below is from an interview with two Form 4 boys, Johan and Hamisi, who were at Kijijini School. They were approaching their final exams and were not expected to achieve a pass mark. They confessed that they did not like English because of the 'struggle' it created for them. Despite these difficulties, they still considered English to be of benefit to their future working lives:

> Johan: *"If you can study English a little here at school and then you go to VETA to get your [driving] licence, then you might encounter someone from another language and if you can speak English with them, they can tell you, "take me to a particular place", and you will be able to drive them…"*
>
> Hamisi:*" …and perhaps they will want to go to the market…and you will be able to translate for them there."* [Form Four, Kijijini School, 27/08/15]

Being able to drive or translate for a foreigner was considered particularly desirable because it is reasonably common practice to charge foreigners, particularly those from outside Africa, a higher price for goods and services. It is also common that someone who does not speak Kiswahili will tip someone who can help them to get what they need, in Hamisi's example, buying food from the market.

Being able to communicate with non-Tanzanians was a common aspiration. Teachers framed it as an assumption that students would aspire to travel abroad and used this when trying to motivate students to learn English. For example, one teacher had a habit of saying *"Shida kwenda Ulaya!"* when a student was struggling

to answer a question in English, meaning 'You'll have a problem going to Europe!'. Several students who knew that their families would struggle to pay for education beyond Form Four talked of their hopes of finding an international sponsor, or a scholarship to study abroad. Even for those students who anticipated finding work in Tanzania, like Johan and Hamisi, being able to speak English and secure work with an international company was highly desirable because of the opportunities it might afford:

> *"It can be that you get work for Chinese people here, or for Europeans...you should speak English with them...There are some who you go with them to England! There are others that I see here in the cars that pass. Here sits a European and here a Tanzanian...the Tanzanian translates for you." [5 girls, Form Two, Kijijini, 20/8/15]*

Whether students aspired to study abroad, to remain in Tanzania, to become a doctor or to drive a taxi, English was associated with their success, either as a pre-requisite for following their chosen path, or because it was viewed as increasing earning capacity due to the types of work and clients that could be engaged.

'Even if you fail...you are different'

One final but very significant difference in the way that urban and rural students tended to talk about their aspirations for 'becoming' was in relation to definitions of both success and failure, and the extent to which they had considered alternative aspirations if they did not pass the Form Four examinations. Perhaps the starkest example of the difference in definitions of success came when the urban student researchers visited Kijijini School to run a workshop with rural students in Form One. In a debrief discussion at the end of the day, student researchers from both schools discussed their experiences and impressions of the day and what they had learned. One expressed shock about the school's examination results in the previous year:

> *"I learned about the school performance, because the results were displayed but only two passed the Form Four examination while the number [of students] was large. But only two get a golden chance to move onto Advanced Level education. So I think it's a problem...someone can ask how there can be success?" [Student Researcher, Mlimani, during feedback discussion after interviewing students from Kijijini School, 25/7/15].*

Looking at the national results for Kijijini School in the 2014 Form Four national examination, in fact 10 students were considered by the exam board to have achieved a 'pass' grade that would give them the certification they needed to access some forms of employment or technical and vocational training colleges. It is interesting, then, that the student researcher, who was an Advanced Level student, did not consider these students to have passed, but instead focused on the much smaller number who had achieved at a high enough level to continue on to Advanced Level schooling.

While all of the urban students interviewed stated that they believed they would succeed in school, a significant number of rural students, perhaps due to the experience of previous Form Four students at the school, acknowledged the possibility of failing their Form Four examinations. However, this did not seem to affect the value they placed in schooling, rather, they still believed that education offered benefits even if students did not leave with the qualifications necessary to continue in education or access certain types of employment. One student whose national examinations were imminent explained:

> *"But it can be that you have failed, but since you have your education you can develop yourself to maybe become self-employed" [Female, Form Four, Kijijini, 21/7/15].*

Education is framed by this student as something that you 'have' through being at school, regardless of whether you are able to convert that into exam success or to use it to gain formal employment. Another student offered more detail about how having been to secondary school made a person different from those who had not:

> *"You find that a person who finishes school in the fifth class [of primary school] is very different to a person who finished Form Four [of secondary]…because that person, their life will change…they will know about the environment that they live in, even if they haven't been employed" [Male, Form Two, Kijijini, 13/8/15].*

Linking back to the previous section about English being associated with improved future opportunities, another student in the same group explained: *"Even if you finish Form Four and get 'failure' and cannot proceed to Advanced Level, this experience of knowing English it can help you." [Male, Form Two, Kijijini, 13/8/15].*

These students' points reminded me of a discussion that I had with a Tanzanian senior education official in 2009 as part of a Masters level project about the quality of education in Tanzania. I had asked if it was really of benefit to students to attend school when failure rates were so high that the majority would leave without any formal qualifications. She argued that, even if students fail:

> *"someone who has been in school for 4 years, their thinking will change. Things will be different. They will know about how people live in the world. They will be able to question." [Senior Education Official, Dar es Salaam, 6/8/09].*

All of the excerpts above frame education as transformative to students' lives, even if they do not achieve 'success' as defined by the urban student researcher or the national examination pass mark. The students and education official mention a number of valued capabilities beyond 'being employed' which are used to justify students continuing in secondary schooling even when their chances of passing their examinations are low. The differences observable in the data between urban and rural students' perceptions of educational success highlight a form of adaptive preference as rural students adjust their aspirations, or suggest that they would still be content even if their primary aspirations were not achievable. The fact that this response is related to the students' contexts further supports Appadurai's argument about the cultural-embeddedness of aspiring, as well as arguments that draw on Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* to suggest that aspirations are governed by notions of what is possible within existing socio-structural constraints (Bourdieu, 1990; Gale and Parker, 2015; Zipin *et al.*, 2015). But the notion that a person who has been to secondary school is different to someone who has not is not simply an imaginative tool that students use to motivate themselves to continue attending school despite poor odds of examination success. Instead 'being a student' is a multifaceted identity that represents both an aspiration in itself and plays an important role in students' hopes for achieving future aspirations.

Education, English and 'being a student'

> *"When people in town hear you speaking English it gives you a kind of status. They hear and think, "Ah! That person is a student"".[Student Researcher, Form Five, Mlimani, 15/2/15].*

The previous section focused on students' future-oriented aspirations and discussions of what they hoped education and the ability to use English would help them to 'become'. This section argues that students also had education-related aspirations for the present and that, within the social and cultural context, 'being a student' represented an aspirational identity that students were proud to have achieved, and wished to retain. Of course, 'being a student' was valued in part for its instrumental role in the achievement of future aspirations of 'becoming', but it also had two other important roles. 'Being a student' represented an intrinsic and positional aspiration in the present because of the status that it represented. It was also associated with 'being modern' and set young people apart from out-of-school peers, siblings, parents and other members of the community who were labelled as 'uneducated' and 'traditional'. As the quote that opens this section suggests, use of English was the most valued marker of this aspirational student status, and points towards a sub-hierarchy that marked out the 'good student' within the broader student identity, but even students who rarely used English outside of lessons, as was very common at Kijijini School, expressed pride in their student status. 'Being a student' also had a highly valued practical role in the present, as it was viewed as protecting young people from other alternative functionings that were positioned as highly undesirable by the students in this study. Although the ways in which 'being a student' contributed to a sense of status and acted as protection from alternatives are initially discussed separately in this section, they are actually closely related because it is argued that the high social value attached to 'being a student' contributes to the negative perceptions and judgments of those who have not continued in school.

'Being a student' as an aspirational identity

In the quote that opened the section above, the student researcher pinpoints the use of English as the marker of the student. As will be explored in the next chapter,

though, the vast majority of students in this study did not speak English outside of their lessons. The use of English was not a requirement for the identity of 'being a student', but it was part of the ideal of the 'good' student (*mwanafunzi mzuri*) to which students aspired. Where students could not, or preferred not to use English as their main form of communication, some students mixed English words and phrases amongst Kiswahili as markers of their 'good student' status. Similar to the way in which being able to speak English was considered to improve employment prospects, speaking English was also considered to make you a better student. This applied not only to individuals, but to judgments about what indicated a 'good' school. One student explained: *"…even people from far away, if they pass they will say, "that school is a good school because students speak [English] in all places"."* [Female, Form Two, Kijijini, 27-8-15].

The ideal of the 'good' student went beyond language choices to influence values related to behaviour and ways of thinking. One of the other key indicators of 'being a student' was the wearing of school uniform. During my time in school, I observed regular uniform checks carried out by teachers and older prefects. These included counting the number of rows that female students' hair was braided into and checking that male students were wearing straight-legged rather than tapered trousers. Those who did not conform to expectations were accused of 'not wanting to be students', most commonly subjected to corporal punishment, and in the case of the trouser legs, teachers ripped the seams open, to be re-sewn at home. Students were also expected to be punctual, to be quiet, and to copy notes and complete work, amongst other things. Anyone who failed to meet these expectations was accused of not being 'serious' about being a student. From a capabilities perspective, these school-imposed expectations could be viewed as limitations on students' freedoms, but students also reported valuing these behaviours and they were related to the mindset of *'soma kwa bidii'* that is discussed later in this chapter.

As with students' aspirations, valuing of 'being a student' existed in a social context. One of the most pertinent examples where the difference between the urban and rural settings influenced students' values was in relation to the length of time that it was considered desirable to be a student. As was seen above, many of

the students in town aspired to, and defined success as, continuing to Advanced Level schooling and on to university, and so 'being a student' was considered a valuable status into early adulthood and even beyond. For rural students, though, there was a sense that 'being a student' was for younger people. A group of Form Four students, approaching their final lower-secondary exams explained: *"To tell the truth we feel happy that we are almost finished…to reach this age and still be at school…(laughter)"* [Male, Form Four, Kijijini, 27/8/15]. Perhaps because the secondary school was a relatively new addition to the community, and only rare exceptions continued beyond Form Four, to still be in school in their late teens was unusual compared to peers. Yet, these students persisted to the end of Form Four as this was the key watershed that would allow them to shift from the status of 'being a student' to 'being educated', something that was highly desirable at any age.

'Being a student' as protection from undesirable alternatives

Although the rural students above were looking forward to completing school and no longer 'being a student', the same students also spoke very negatively about the alternatives to schooling. One explained:

> *"When you go to get education, you avoid many temptations, meaning that on the streets there are many temptations. A person comes and says to you, "my friend, let's go to this certain place". They don't tell you what you will be doing at the place you are going to. You go there and maybe you steal, and as you leave there you are arrested. Either you should die, or you should escape, or you should be caught. Meaning that school has its importance. Education is important."* [Male, Form Four, Kijijini, 27/8/15].

The other students in this group agreed with this comment and one added: *"Just staying at home freely, you will come to harm, you will be a bum, smoking dope…you will end up in jail."* [Male, Form Four, Kijijini, 27/8/15]. Students' discussions framed the failure to achieve the functioning of 'being a student' as particularly damaging because they felt that it would deny them other valued capabilities in the present, including 'being protected from harm', as well as the capabilities relating to their future aspirations. This aligns with Wolff and de Shalit's (2007) conclusion that lack of education is a form of 'corrosive disadvantage'.

Some girls talked about 'being a student' as offering them protection against pregnancy and early marriage. One student spoke about girls who were not in school, saying that: *"some are married off…there are some who get married before their age. Others get pregnant before their age…so it has a big impact on their lives."* *[Female, Form One, Mlimani, 28/8/15].* There is certainly international evidence to suggest that keeping girls in school lowers instances of child marriage (Human Rights Watch, 2017; Wodon and de la Brière, 2018). However, there was not necessarily agreement that continued schooling acted as protection against pregnancy. One of the student researchers explained that parents and families could be particularly reluctant to allow their female children to continue to secondary school, saying: *"There is a fear that a girl who studies will be led to temptation, to ask questions, or to early pregnancy."* *[Female student researcher, Mlimani, 11/8/15].*

There is some evidence in the data from this study to support parental concerns. In the urban school, I observed teachers dealing with an accusation made by a third party that a group of Form Four prefects, known as 'Scouts', who had some responsibility for supporting teachers with discipline, had coerced Form One girls into having sex with them. On a separate occasion one teacher told me that he regularly patrolled the school campus and knew the spots where students went together for sex. Several female students also talked about their fear of being raped on their journey to and from school. Pregnancy amongst school girls became an area of particularly heated debate in 2017 when President Magufuli labelled girls as 'immoral' and declared, "After getting pregnant, you are done" (Aglionby, 2017). Although this officially reversed the previous President Kikwete's stance, in practice, many schools had routinely been expelling students for becoming pregnant, and some schools even subjected students to regular pregnancy tests (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

The data from this study raises concerns about the extent to which schooling strengthens students' capability for protection from harm. Some of the examples above, as well as the routine practice of corporal punishment, that is discussed in chapter 9, show that there are some areas where students' freedoms are being curtailed within schools. Unterhalter (2003) highlighted a similar problem with

reference to sexual violence and HIV/AIDS transmission in South African schools, developing a criticism of Sen's framing of education as solely capability-enhancing. However, the students in this study positioned schooling as predominantly protective against undesirable alternatives. Whether or not this perception is empirically true, students' comments might be seen as expressions of their increased sense of agency related to continuing in school. For example, one student spoke about why he thought it was important to come to school, explaining: *'I like that I am taking care of myself' [Male, Form One, Kijijini, 18/8/15].* The association of early pregnancy with out-of-school peers, even though statistics suggest that significant numbers of in-school girls also fall pregnant,[23] may also be influenced by the aspirational status of 'being a good student'.

'Being a student' as a moral identity?

The previous section has shown that students in this study positioned being out-of-school very negatively. Being out-of-school was associated with pregnancy, early marriage, criminal activity and even death. Even when students did not offer as extreme accounts of the activities of non-students, they often suggested that they were not engaged in any activities that they considered worthwhile. The alternative to being in school was often described as 'staying at home' or 'sitting at home'. Earlier in this chapter it was also demonstrated that students positioned those who had been to secondary school as 'different' to those who had not. One student brought both of these ideas together when she said:

> *"Because if we come to school you can get education…if you sit at home you can't know anything…you know, a person who sits at home isn't the same as one who comes to school. You know me, I came to school here, I got* ***zero****…but I go home and I beat him…" [Female, Form One, Kijijini, 25/8/15].*

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[23] Although precise numbers of in-school youth getting pregnant in Tanzania are not known, the Center for Reproductive Rights estimates that 8000 girls a year are expelled from school due to pregnancy (Center for Reproductive Rights, 2013, p. 80).

Of additional interest here is the suggestion that schooling allows the student to 'beat' her out-of-school peers, suggesting a sense of superiority. This is perhaps not surprising considering the status that was shown to be associated with 'being a student' at the opening of this section. One of the student researchers explained that speaking English and 'being educated' put a person in *'a higher class' [Form Five, Mlimani, 15/2/15].*

There seem to be a number of similarities between the Tanzanian context analysed as part of this project and Frye's (2012) observations from a study of girls' aspirations in secondary schools in Malawi. Frye talks about the 'social meaning' of being a student, asserting that this status represents an aspiration because, although it takes place in the present, those who have been able to take on the student identity have 'transcended the boundaries of their present lives' (2012, p. 1598). Moreover, Frye argues that student identity 'offers respondents an immediate claim to moral superiority among their nonschooling peers'. Frye identifies a 'cultural model of bright futures' that has been 'cultivated by years of government policy, public outreach, and NGO programming', which she argues has directly influenced students' aspirations. Her analysis suggests that the 'bright futures' discourse propagates the message that: 'Career Goal + Sustained Effort + Positive Thinking + Resistance to Temptation = Bright Future' (Frye, 2012, p. 1590). Exploring the way that students in this study in Tanzania talked about their aspirations and what they believed would enable them to achieve them, it can be seen that there is a similar formula that sits below the 'education is the key of life' discourse. Although there is undoubted diversity in students aspirations and social experiences, there is a common belief amongst those students who have continued in secondary education, that 'being a student', and in particular 'being a good student' is an aspirational identity that not only physically separates them from the activities of out-of-school youth, but also sets them apart as 'different' and 'superior'.

Aspirations and Agency: 'To be a 'good student' you have to "soma kwa bidii"'

"Ndiyo…tunaamini tutafaulu…kwa sababu tutasoma kwa bidii."
"Yes…we believe we will succeed…because we will study hard."
[Male, Form Two, Mlimani, 14/8/15].

The previous section demonstrated that, within the identity of 'being a student', there were different versions of what this could look like. 'Being a good student' was associated with particular attitudes and behaviours that students believed would enable them to be successful in achieving their future aspirations. These were encompassed in the notion, *'soma kwa bidii'*, which translates as 'study hard' or 'study with effort'. The first part of this section explores the concept of *'soma kwa bidii'*, identifying both practical actions and features of the mindset to which it referred.

The concept of *'soma kwa bidii'* is viewed within this thesis as representing an aspirational or ideal way of 'being'. This is partly because the discussion in subsequent chapters demonstrates that students did not always make choices and demonstrate behaviours that seemed to be aligned with their explanations of what it means to *'soma kwa bidii'*. Moreover, the association of this idea with the 'good' student means that it takes on a similar moral role to the broader status of 'being a student', discussed in the previous section, and some students referred to this concept when criticising the behaviour of their peers.

In reality, students faced a number of obstacles and challenges to being able to consistently *'soma kwa bidii'*. However, although students identified long lists of challenges and shortages that they faced in their schooling, they insisted that they should be able to *'soma kwa bidii'* despite these barriers. Obstacles to learning and being able to *'soma kwa bidii'* are described and analysed in more detail in chapters 7-9. This section focuses on the way that the aspiration of *'soma kwa bidii'* seemed to refer to a type of resilience or perseverance to continue and succeed despite material and structural barriers. As such, it took on an empowering role in the formation of students' future-oriented aspirations and supported their continued engagement in schooling, by allowing students to feel optimism and a sense of

agency. But concerns can also be raised about the fact that the concept of *'soma kwa bidii'* places significant responsibility for students' success on their own personal, internal resources and capabilities, whilst underplaying the role of external circumstances. This section explores this tension between agency and individual responsibility, arguing that the agency expressed through the optimism embodied in *'soma kwa bidii'* does not fulfil Drèze and Sen's definition of the concept of 'critical agency', which requires that people 'question and reassess the prevailing norms and values' (2002, p. 258).

What does it mean to *'soma kwa bidii'*?

The Kiswahili verb *'soma'* means 'to read' as well as 'to study'. It can be transformed into noun in two ways. *'Msomaji'* describes a person who reads, but *'msomi'* translates to mean a scholar or a learned or educated person. These multiple meanings of the word, *'soma'*, perhaps help to explain the different layers of meaning encompassed in students' use of the expression, *'soma kwa bidii'*, and why it is argued here to refer to both behaviours and a mindset associated with the identity of 'being a good student'.

At the most direct level, *'soma kwa bidii'* referred to dedicating effort to the practical tasks relating to reading and writing that dominate students' learning-related activities, including copying down notes in class either from the teacher or from a book if available, followed by re-reading, re-writing and memorising them in their own time. One student explained:

> *"If you say I want to study ["soma"] at home, it requires that you read, if you finish, you say, let me write out what I have read. You write, then you return to the book and check…here, have you followed, have you missed anything?"* [Male student, Form One, Mlimani, 31/7/15].

The challenges relating to developing understanding through a learning process dominated by these types of activities in a language of instruction with which most students are not comfortable are discussed in detail in chapter 8. But *'soma kwa bidii'* is also associated with several characteristics that are related more to students' mindset, and which students believed would enable their success.

Several students talked about *'soma kwa bidii'* as if it referred to having an ambition or goal for the future that would help to direct their education-related efforts and keep them focused and motivated. A rural student in her first year of secondary school explained: *"So, kusoma kwa bidii…it's like you are making yourself for your future life… you say "I have planned that I should study so I can be a doctor, I have planned that I should study so I can be a teacher…""* [Female, Form One, Kijijini, 25/8/15]. An urban student explained the importance of having this plan by relating it to my own efforts as someone learning Kiswahili:

> *"If you have the intention, Madam, I mean, if you have the intention of doing it, **in short**, you will manage it…Without the intention, **I mean**, you can't know Kiswahili. **Or** me, if I say I don't want to know English, I won't be able to speak English."* [Female, Form Two, Mlimani, 20/7/15].[24]

In addition to identifying a goal, the notion of *'soma kwa bidii'* was used to describe maintaining a singular focus on both that future ambition and the activities that were perceived as necessary and helpful for achieving it. As one student explained: *"'Soma kwa bidii', we can say that you should take heed of everything that is given to you there. Stop with all other things. Make education your main priority."* [Male, Form One, Mlimani, 28/8/15]. There were a number of situations both inside and outside of school that students listed as 'distractions' that should be 'ignored'. Several of these are discussed more fully in subsequent chapters, but they include negative comments from peers as well as members of the broader community. Some Form One students from Kijijini School, for example, explained in an interview with student researchers that members of their community tried to discourage them from continuing with school by saying that they had been enchanted by spirits and would be destined to fail [25/7/15]. Interestingly, this led to a heated debate amongst the student researchers about whether or not they believed the community members' claims were true, resulting in the consensus that the truth didn't matter if students allowed themselves to believe it and allowed it to distract their focus [Post-interview feedback discussion with student researchers, 25/7/15].

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[24] Text in bold indicates where the speaker has used English as part of their response.

There was remarkable consistency about the narrative students used to talk about the strategies for success that they associated with the concept of *'soma kwa bidii'*. Undoubtedly, one influence on this was the comments and 'advice' that students received from teachers. Where parents were also educated to at least secondary level or students had older siblings who had progressed in education, which was often the case for Mlimani students, similar messages were likely also being transmitted at home. This practice of 'advising' was also common place between older and younger students. In fact, one of the interviews conducted by a student researcher includes a long section where only the student researcher talks, 'advising' the younger students. Religion also played a significant role in students' lives and one of the student researchers suggested that faith was an important component of success. His conception of *'soma kwa bidii'* incorporated strength that he drew from his faith and he used this to explain his success in relation to others that hadn't reached Advanced Level schooling, commenting that *'many students don't emphasise on praying' [Male Student Researcher, Mlimani, 11/8/15].* Not all of the student researchers agreed with this assertion, though, with one of them arguing that, *'God helps those who help themselves' [Male Student Researcher, Mlimani, 11/8/15].* Although there was disagreement about how faith supported individual determination, even the second student seemed to be suggesting that his religion influenced his mindset and behaviour.

'Soma kwa bidii': agency and responsibility

The way that students used the concept of *'soma kwa bidii'* can be viewed as a positive expression of agency as they state with optimism that, if they can fulfil their aspiration to *'soma kwa bidii'* in the present, it will enable them to successfully achieve their future aspirations. As such, this concept forms part of students' negotiation of their language and learning environments as aspiring to the behaviours and mindset of *'soma kwa bidii'* acts as both a practical and imaginative tool that helps students to maintain hope, and thus their engagement with continued schooling. However, considering *'soma kwa bidii'* from a capabilities

perspective problematises this framing and draws attention to the fact that students' optimism regularly overlooks the constraints to their success created by material and structural barriers. A study conducted by Posti-Ahokas and Lehtomäki (2014) with female students in Dar es Salaam also noted that students had a marked tendency to overlook the role of school-related factors in their success, instead placing high importance on personal factors such as effort and determination. Considering this with reference to Kleine's (2013) Choice Framework (discussed in chapter 4) suggests that students position *'soma kwa bidii'* as a psychological resource that strengthens their individual agency and allows them to ignore and to bypass structural constraints rather than to negotiate them. But, if *'soma kwa bidii'* is viewed, instead, as a capability, it becomes clear that the extent to which students have the capability to *'soma kwa bidii'* is influenced by the interaction between structure and agency. This raises concerns that students could be shouldering too much personal responsibility for their ability to achieve their aspirations. Moreover, since different students have access to varying sets of resources and experience different external obstacles, this has the potential to amplify inequality, as some students will have their confidence boosted by their ability to succeed, while others will carry personal responsibility for failure.

On the whole, students claimed to be confident about their ability to succeed in schooling. Where there were examples of students demonstrating uncertainty, they were exclusively from Kijijini School. In the example below, a group of students, currently in Form Two, discuss their chances of passing their Form Four examinations:

> *"Researcher: Do you believe that you will succeed in Form Four?*
>
> *Student 1: I don't have certainty. Until we have textbooks.*
>
> *Student 2: Myself, I have certainty, if my life at home were to change. Because if I were to have time to study, if I were to get money for going to tuition to help me a little, I would be able to progress. But like this…I don't know. I don't have a lot of certainty.*
>
> *Student 3: Me, I do have certainty. Like she said, if I were to get time for studying and doing past questions…I could succeed."*
>
> *[Two Male, One Female, Form Two, Kijijini, 1/8/15].*

It was not common for students to express doubt about their ability to succeed, although this chapter has shown that some rural students had potentially adapted their definition of success in recognition of the fact that few students from their school had previously progressed in education beyond Form Four. Of course, it is very possible that students did not want to confess their doubts to a researcher and outsider, particularly when the notion of *'soma kwa bidii'* emphasises confidence and faith.

The fact that doubt was more likely to be expressed by rural students, though, highlights the influence of context on students' recognition of the challenges they face. Commenting on data from four African countries, Unterhalter (2012a) notes that girls in situations of relative poverty are more able to identify obstacles to their schooling than those living in absolute poverty. This observation also seems to be relevant in this study, with the qualification that it is the rural students who, although living in situations of higher deprivation, have a keener sense of their poverty relative to others. The position of the school just 2km from a main road, and the fact that it is less than 1km from a private, boarding primary school, may contribute to this awareness. In comparison, urban students who have been selected for Mlimani School view themselves as successful in comparison to peers who are either out-of-school or were only offered a place in a ward community school. This experience of previous success likely contributes to their optimism about their future success. Optimism and hope have also been linked to context by Nalkur (2009) who compared the level of hopefulness amongst Tanzanian youth who lived on the streets, who had previously lived on the streets, and who were in school. It is also interesting that Nalkur notes that, for school students, 'inner strength was an important pathway to hopefulness', while those young people who had experience of living on the streets were more likely to link their hope to the support of others (2009, p. 684). This suggests that there is something about the discourse of schooling that places particular focus on personal resources.

This chapter opened with reference to the 'education is the key of life discourse', which though problematic in a context where even students who have

completed secondary and higher education struggle to find relevant employment, has been noted to be prevalent in contexts across Tanzania (Billings, 2011; Stambach, 2000; Vavrus, 2003). Posti-Ahokas and Palojoki (2014, p. 676) situate 'education is the key of life' historically as a 'common nation-building slogan' associated with Nyerere's programme of Education for Self-Reliance. However, in a study of entrepreneurship education in Tanzania, DeJaeghere (2017) suggests that this discourse has been adapted to the neoliberal global system and now carries a different meaning. Critiquing the impact of neoliberalism on education more broadly, Gray, O'Regan and Wallace (2018, p. 473) argue that 'neoliberalism is also a linguistic phenomenon'. In addition to acknowledging the central role and status that the neoliberal discourse ascribes to English as the global language, they highlight the way in which words and phrases have changed to take on new meanings. Where 'education is the key of life' under Nyerere was associated with a sense of a communal national identity, it has now taken on a meaning strongly tied to the view of education as expanding human capital and 'employability', and placing responsibility for success firmly on the individual (DeJaeghere, 2017; Holborow, 2012). The narrative of students' individual responsibility in converting education into success has also been identified more broadly in relation to students' aspirations, in particular when disadvantaged students are framed to be lacking aspirations (Bok, 2010; Raco, 2009; Zipin *et al.*, 2015). In her discussion of the narratives and practices surrounding education, development and entrepreneurship in Tanzania, DeJaeghere (2017, p. 31) highlights the role of 'socio-emotional skills, such as resiliency'. The data in this study suggest that this is also relevant to students in more formal schooling, and the mindset associated with *'soma kwa bidii'* could, in many ways, be thought of as a form of resilience.

Students' framing of *'soma kwa bidii'* positions resilience as a personal strength or attribute. For example, one of the Form Four student researchers at Kijijini School seemed to position success as a personal choice:

> *"I don't like to see someone who has the ability to succeed but doesn't want to engage themselves so that they succeed…because you know that person has ability, and you would like to help them, and you can try to help them, but they don't want to be helped." [Female, Form Four, Kijijini, 21/7/15].*

A younger, urban student who had attended an English-medium primary school expressed a similar sentiment when she spoke about her peers who were struggling with English on the transition to secondary school:

> *'They are not improving because they don't focus on their studies…they are not serious in their studies, cause if they could focus, they could perform…If they really want to know English, just let them try.' [Female, Form One, Mlimani, 28/8/15].*

Both of these students are successful relative to their peers. Although their confidence in the abilities of their fellow students is supportive, their suggestion that making the decision to try and focus is all that is holding them back also raises concerns about the lack of recognition of the external barriers that students might be facing.

Wilson-Strydom (2017) develops a critique of the concept of 'grit' that is very relevant to this point. Studies of 'grit' have become very popular in Western educational contexts and the combination of 'perseverance and passion for long-term goals' is framed almost as a magical key to educational success (Duckworth and Quinn, 2009, p. 166). Wilson-Strydom criticises the individualised notion of 'grit' and the responsibility that it places on students to be heroic and exceptional. Instead she points to those who argue that resilience should be viewed as a 'social system' or 'process' (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Theron, 2013; VanderPyl, Rios-Aguilar and Deil-Amen, 2014), and suggests that resilience should be viewed through the lens of capabilities to encourage acknowledgement and analysis of the various factors that enable or constrain resilience. For example, reference to Kleine's (2013) Choice Framework reminds that the capability of resilience is underpinned by the interaction of structure and agency, and that agency itself is influenced by a wide range of resources. In their study of female secondary students in Dar es Salaam, Posti-Ahokas and Lehtomäki (2014, p. 344) divide the factors that students talk about as 'contributing' to or 'constraining' their advancement in education into three groups: 'self-related factors'; 'school-related factors'; and 'sociocultural factors', clearly demonstrating that students' success cannot be attributed only to personal factors. A range of obstacles to students' educational success, but also their capability to remain resilient in the face of these obstacles, are discussed in

subsequent chapters, but it is valuable from the outset to note that students, though aware of these obstacles, use the notion of *'soma kwa bidii'* to ignore the impact that these might be having on their progress.

The notion of *'soma kwa bidii'* undoubtedly offered students a sense of agency in relation to their schooling and aspirations for 'becoming'. The importance of this should not be dismissed. Drawing on the pragmatist tradition, Frye (2012, p. 1572) explains that aspirations or 'imagined futures' can be viewed as 'a core component of human agency' and highlights their role in supporting students to take action (see also Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Joas, 1997). In this study it has been shown that rural students in particular expressed their aspirations with reference to changing their circumstances and avoiding *'maisha magumu'* and so their aspirations for 'becoming' may act as crucial tools for helping them to persevere in education. But it was also shown that there were very few examples from their school of previous students passing national examinations and being able to progress with education. This raises concerns about whether encouraging students' aspirations in this context risks 'blighted hope or frustrated promise' (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 150; DeJaeghere, 2016). Although students might be argued to be expressing agency in their approach to schooling and education-related aspirations, this form of agency does not meet Drèze and Sen's requirements for 'critical agency'. They write that 'what is needed is not merely freedom and power to act, but also freedom and power to question and reassess the prevailing norms and values' (Drèze and Sen, 2002, p. 258). The concept of *'soma kwa bidii'* as constructed by students in this study certainly does not seem to leave space to question any of the external factors, including the material, social and linguistic, that constrain their personal efforts and commitments to schooling. It also places a great deal of individual responsibility on students, which risks lessening the responsibility placed on those adults – teachers, education planners, parents – who are tasked with creating an environment that supports resilience and offers students the best chance of educational success.

Conclusion

This chapter has not focused solely on language, but also on students' broader education-related aspirations. It is crucial to situate discussion of language-in-education in this context. For students, language is not viewed simply as a communicative skill, but rather English in particular is positioned as an aspiration in itself, both because of the improved opportunities that it is considered to unlock, and the identity and status that it confers. Moreover, the close association between English and education means that aspirations relating to these two things cannot be easily separated. In fact, this chapter has argued that students' education and language related aspirations are importantly connected and has shown that students' aspirations are not limited to future-oriented goals, or aspirations for 'becoming', but that aspirations for 'being' in the present are also crucial for understanding students' negotiations of schooling.

'Being a student' plays an important role, both because secondary schooling supports students' future ambitions, but also because it comprises an important part of students' identities. The social status that 'being a student' confers enables them to position themselves as both physically protected from out-of-school alternatives and different from their non-secondary educated peers. Within the broader state of 'being a student', students constructed a hierarchy, with certain behaviours, including speaking English, associated with 'being a 'good' student'. This association of language with this aspirational identity is an example of the connection and cross-over between the language roles of 'language as aspiration' and 'language as being'. Perhaps the most significant aspiration and imaginative tool that students constructed in relation to their negotiations of schooling, and thus the language environment, was the notion of *'soma kwa bidii'*. This combination of both behaviours and a mindset that has been likened here to resilience was believed to be the key to success. As such, it represented an expression of student agency. However, the focus on personal actions and attributes raised concerns about students failing to adequately recognise and question external obstacles to their success, and about the extent to which they were internalising responsibility for their success or failure. These observations are important because subsequent chapters

look more closely at areas where students face significant challenges to both learning English, and learning using English as the language of instruction, and explore examples where students are unable to live up to their aspiration to *'soma kwa bidii'*.

7. The Monolingual 'Ideal' Versus the Multilingual Reality

This chapter shines a spotlight on language attitudes and language use in the two schools in this study and is in three parts. The first part contrasts the pervasive belief that the ideal school language environment should be monolingual 'English Only' with the multilingual reality in which Kiswahili was the language most used. The narrative that English should be the sole medium of instruction was regularly reinforced by both teachers and students in this study, and the use of Kiswahili was explained as a necessary evil required to compensate for shortcomings in students' English language capability. But this explanation was in tension with another language narrative that existed concurrently with the ideal of monolingual use of English and is explored in the second part of this chapter. This narrative positioned Kiswahili as an important and valued marker of identity and was even used to challenge some uses of English by students. It also contributed towards the near invisibility of ethnic community languages in this study. The third part of this chapter, then, draws on the concepts of the capability approach to consider the relationship between English and Kiswahili and to map the capability of 'learning English' from students' perspectives.

Building upon observations from the previous chapter and the discussion of language roles in chapter 3, English and the 'English Only' narrative were closely associated with students' aspirational identities of 'being a good student' and 'becoming successful'. However, Kiswahili was a central component of the valued states of 'being' that students brought with them to secondary school. This chapter argues that the 'English Only' narrative neither reflects the reality of language practice, nor the plural nature of students' and teachers' language-related values. Moreover, the pervasive nature of the monolingual ideal results in different languages being positioned as undermining one another and language capabilities coming into conflict. The focus of this chapter is on the broader school language environment and attitudes and values relating to language. Chapter 8 then explores classroom language use in greater detail, including considering how the monolingual ideal constrains opportunities for purposeful multilingual practice.

"No English, No Service": school language use and the monolingual ideal

> *Student 1: "First there was a time when we were told, "There is no speaking Kiswahili"".*
>
> *Student 2: "But it wasn't possible."*
>
> *Student 1: "But it wasn't possible. We don't know English".*
>
> *[Student Researcher Interview with Form One Students, Kijijini, 25/07/15]*

> *"Leaders or heads of these schools should place different rules in place that force students to use the English language in all locations... I mean, if we look at the large proportion of our heads of our schools, they permit students to speak the Kiswahili language, so this hinders the development of the English language."*
>
> *[Student Researcher Interview with Male Student, Re-sitting Form Four, Mlimani, 03/05/15].*

The two quotes above reflect very commonly asserted attitudes towards language use in school and demonstrate that English and Kiswahili are positioned in a vicious cycle. In the first excerpt, students explain that they have to use Kiswahili because they don't know enough English to use it as the only language in school. But the second excerpt argues that it is the use of Kiswahili that prevents students from learning English and so advocates for stronger enforcement of the 'English Only'. It is perhaps interesting to note that, despite his advocating for the use of English, and the fact that both English and Kiswahili were used in the interview from which the second extract is drawn, this student made his point in Kiswahili.

The policy of 'English Only' and signs declaring 'No English, No Service' have been commented upon in several studies of secondary schooling in Tanzania, most often alongside the observation that this is not happening in practice (Joyce-Gibbons *et al.*, 2018; Mligo and Mwashilindi, 2017; Tibategeza, 2010; Webb and Mkongo, 2013). Chapter 2 of this thesis discussed the introduction of a new language policy in Tanzania that allowed for the use of both English and Kiswahili as languages of instruction in secondary schools. It was argued, however, that this change reflected acceptance of the reality of language practice in schools, rather than a significant

commitment to bilingual pedagogy, not least because thus far, the language of examination has remained English. The data presented in this chapter also suggest that, if policy-makers truly wanted to shift to a bilingual system, it would need to be accompanied by efforts to address the deeply rooted assumption that the ideal language situation in secondary school would be monolingual use of English. Returning to the data generated through this study, it was initially surprising that it contained relatively few explicit expressions of the fact that only English should be used in schools. But it quickly became clear that this was because this assumption underpinned nearly all discussions of school language use. These perspectives reflect the influence of the 'undeniable "truth"', discussed in chapter 2, that the best way to learn English is to use it as the sole language of instruction (Brock-Utne, 2012; Clegg and Simpson, 2016; Li and Martin, 2009; Phillipson, 1992).

The fact that the fieldwork for this study was conducted in the context of the announcement of the new language policy offered perhaps a unique opportunity to raise questions about this assumption without having to directly challenge participants' beliefs and, although there were some dissenting student voices, they were few, and even these demonstrated a preference for monolingual practice above multilingual language use in school. The majority of participants, then, believed that use of Kiswahili would undermine opportunities for learning English. For example, in response to the announcement of the new language policy in the national media, several teachers expressed anger at the President, arguing that he wanted to *"cut Tanzania off from the rest of the world" [English teacher, Mlimani, 16/02/15],* and one of the student researchers despaired that, *"This policy will make us the last country in East Africa in terms of workers going abroad" [Mlimani, 16/02/15].*

These reactions and assumptions about the new language policy show that English and Kiswahili were considered as discrete skills and that they were positioned in conflict with one another. A greater role for Kiswahili was immediately assumed to threaten and undermine opportunities for learning English. The existing use of Kiswahili in school was thus viewed as a regrettable response to students' lack of competence in English. Teachers often spoke to me after I had observed their lessons

to ensure that I had noticed students' low levels of English proficiency, explaining that this was why they had used Kiswahili alongside English in their teaching. The importance of codeswitching between English and Kiswahili during lessons to support student understanding of lesson content is discussed in detail in the next chapter, but it is important to note here that this practice was viewed as negative in the context of the broader attitudes and beliefs about school language use. As such, the data from this study support observations from other contexts about classroom codeswitching acting as a magnifying glass for tensions and debates over language policy (Chen and Rubinstein-Avila, 2018; Li and Martin, 2009; Martin-Jones, 1995; Probyn, 2009).

The positioning of Kiswahili as a deficit response to students' shortcomings in English further consolidated the depreciation of Kiswahili. One student made it very clear that he considered English to be the more advanced or educated language when he said: *"But if you turn everything to Kiswahili, it means you return back to* **Primary School***." [Male, Form Two, Kijijini, 01/08/15].* Although students might have been encouraged to argue against the superiority of English for the function of debate practice, the motion shown in figure 7.1 underpinned many of the comments that teachers and students made about language in schooling.

Figure 7.1: Debate motion from English lesson Mlimani School, 26/08/2015.

In addition to the beliefs presented in the previous chapter about the importance of English to students' future opportunities, it was evident that English was believed to be better suited to the task of education than Kiswahili. This attitude was particularly strong when considering science subjects. For example, two urban students argued:

> *"Student 1: For this, it (Kiswahili) can't be sufficient, because...*
>
> *Student 2: There are some words, for example maybe in Biology...maybe these apparatus, these like 'beaker'. There are others that can't even go into Kiswahili." [Female Students, Form Two, Mlimani, 20/07/15].*

This comment echoes some of the arguments that were presented in chapter 2 from those who prefer to retain the LOI status quo. It was also shown that these are countered by advocates for Kiswahili as LOI by drawing attention to the work done by the National Kiswahili Council of Tanzania (BAKITA) to develop subject-specific vocabulary (Kajoro, 2016; Mutasa, 2003). Science was not the only area where Kiswahili was criticised for not being adequate for the task of learning. An urban English teacher argued that, "*in Kiswahili people will not concentrate. English makes people to concentrate because it has rules." [Field notes, Mlimani, 16/02/15].* The suggestion is that English requires more conscious engagement. Kiswahili does, of course, also have rules, but native speakers may construct the language less consciously. The fact that Kiswahili was the language that participants were much more comfortable with is discussed in more detail later in this chapter, but this undoubtedly contributed to the fact that it was the language heard most often in both schools.

Like the student quoted at the opening of the section, several participants expressed frustration that more was not done to enforce 'English Only'. A common suggestion was to use the threat of punishment to force students to speak English. A discussion with one teacher was recorded in fieldnotes:

> *He said that he was thinking of trying to make a system using cards where they could bring together all the Swahili speakers for some kind of punishment....*
>
> *[English teacher, 26/01/18, Mlimani, discussion in English].*

Other teachers talked of having a sign to hang around the neck of students who spoke Kiswahili, and students talked about the fact that some class monitors, who

were students themselves, were instructed to make lists of those who spoke Kiswahili to give to the teacher so that these students could be punished. Although I did not directly observe these practices in either school, corporal punishment was certainly used as a threat when students made mistakes in English, as is discussed further in chapter 9. References to practices similar to that described by the teacher have been recorded as features of 'English Only' schooling in Tanzania, both during the colonial period and much more recently (Joyce-Gibbons *et al.*, 2018; Tibategeza, 2010; Vavrus, 2002b). It is possible, then, that teachers had experienced similar practices as part of their own schooling.

In reality, though, Kiswahili played such a significant role in activities both inside and outside the classroom that systematically punishing those who diverged from English would have been impractical. Although some of the older students at Mlimani School, and those who used English more confidently, criticised teachers who regularly switched to Kiswahili as 'unprofessional', they acknowledged that the majority of their peers would not be able to understand what was happening if only English were used. One of the English teachers at Kijijini School, frustrated by the Form Four English mock examination papers he was marking, declared that, *'English is a national disease in Tanzania' [Field notes, 24/04/15].* Mwinsheikhe (2009, p. 224) argues that this situation is common across the vast majority of Tanzanian secondary schools and terms it 'Chronic English Language Proficiency Deficiency Syndrome'. She argues that this is a problem not only for students, but also for many teachers (see also Galabawa, 2004; Vuzo, 2018). Certainly, I encountered several teachers at both schools who either only spoke to me in Kiswahili, or avoided speaking to me at all, perhaps indicating their lack of confidence in using English. However, in this study teachers' struggles with English were rarely voiced, in comparison to blame being regularly directed towards students.

The most common suggestion for improving the language situation in secondary schools was that all Tanzanian primary schools should become English-medium. This, it was believed, would address the 'poor language foundation' as students would already have had seven years of instruction in English before

reaching secondary level. The same teacher who described English as a 'national disease' explained:

> "they need a good foundation in Standard 1-7. All problems start there. Students lack language competence because foundation is poor. If they come here they start to learn slow slow slow" [English teacher, Kijijini, 24/04/15].

The fact that private primary schools were English-medium compounded the view that this approach was superior and there was little recognition of other differences, such as better resources or an intake of students who have access to better support at home.[25] Demonstrating again the influence of Phillipson's 'fallacies' (1992), it was strongly assumed that the early start and increased time spent with English as the LOI would solve students' language difficulties. When asked if English-medium primary schooling might negatively affect students' competency in Kiswahili, this concern was quickly dismissed, with participants arguing that students were surrounded by Kiswahili outside of school.

There were some dissenting voices from students, and several interviews included disagreement amongst students. However, those who suggested alternative approaches to managing language in school still supported a largely monolingual approach to teaching and learning. Focusing particularly on the difficulties they faced accessing subject content in English, a few students suggested that more subjects, for example history, civics and geography, should be taught only in Kiswahili. However, underlining the previous belief that Kiswahili was not suitable for science, it was commonly argued that English should be retained for biology, physics, chemistry and mathematics. One urban student, though, suggested that the tasks of learning subject content and learning English should be completely separated, stating:

> "If I were Minister for Education…the thing that I would change is that there would be one language…and I would take the national language [Kiswahili].

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[25] It should be noted that, on the student background questionnaires from the rural school, two students wrote that they had attended private, Kiswahili-medium primary schools. Because the questionnaires were anonymous, I was unable to verify this information. It is possible that they were, officially, English-medium schools, but that the teachers did not have sufficient proficiency in English to use it as the medium of instruction, and so the predominant language heard and used by students was Kiswahili (Rubagumya, 2003).

> *After that, I would put schools that specialise in teaching different languages."* [Female, Form One, Mlimani, 14/08/15]

This student argued that specialist language schools should be optional so that not everyone was forced to learn other languages to continue in school. If they choose to, though, the student emphasised that the quality of teaching should be good, suggesting that she did not think the current standard of English teaching was high quality. A final alternative approach came from a rural student who, although he spoke better English than his peers, considered the multilingual situation in both school and the country to be unnecessarily confusing. He argued:

> *"I would request that the government would choose **only one language**. I would request that the government choose one language which it is compulsory for every person to learn...If it would be maybe Kimasai or Kijaluo [ethnic community languages]...but everyone would know which language should be used."* [Male, Form Two, Kijijini, 13/08/15].

He made it clear elsewhere in the interview that he believed that English would be the most useful choice for the sole language because it could be used outside of East Africa, but in this excerpt, he emphasises that his main argument is for the simplification of language, by just choosing one.

This section has demonstrated some of the ways in which attitudes and beliefs about both existing and ideal language practice in school have been influenced by the assumptions that English is the language best suited to education and that the best way to learn English is to use it as the sole LOI. However, it has also been clear that school language practice does not meet this ideal. The next section offers a more detailed description of the realities of language use in the two schools.

The reality of school language use in practice

> *"Here at school, we can say that we use two languages. And really the main one is Kiswahili. When the teachers want us to speak English, there is English. But really, people are already used to Kiswahili."* [Male, Form Four, Kijijini, 27/08/15].

With a few exceptions, the excerpt above from a student at Kijijini School gives perhaps the most accurate description of the language use that was observed as part

of this study. At Mlimani School, there was slightly more English used by both teachers and some students, but the language most often heard in both school environments was Kiswahili. Although English was used in the vast majority of lessons observed as part of this study, it was nearly always accompanied by a significant amount of Kiswahili. There were a couple of exceptions to this where teachers conducted entire lessons in English, but this usually felt like it was being performed for the researcher and students confirmed that it was out of the ordinary. Table 7.1 outlines general patterns in the ways that language was used in practice in the schools in this study:

Figure 7-2: Table showing patterns of school language use

How and where English and Kiswahili were used within school	
English	**Kiswahili**
* Students asking for permission to enter or exit a room * Students greeting a teacher or guest (exception: Kiswahili lesson at rural school) * Some announcements made by Form 4 senior prefects (at urban school) * In lessons – teacher asking questions * In lessons – students responding to teacher questions * In lessons – students reading out prepared answers * In lessons – notes on lesson content written on board and copied down. * Limited examples of students talking to one another in English (more common at advanced level or Form 4 urban, but a few examples amongst younger students who attended English Club or went to English medium primary schools – often Form monitors)	* The majority of announcements in assembly * Vast majority of student-to-student communication, both inside and outside the classroom * Majority of teacher-to-teacher communication (though there is some code-mixing by some, mostly men or English teachers) * Majority of student-teacher interaction outside of the classroom * In lesson – when teacher comments about things that are not topic of the lesson, e.g. behaviour, lack of participation, importance of exams * In lesson – translation and explanation of notes

The first set of language use patterns that could be observed links different languages to different parts of the school routine and different spaces within the school. For example, the majority of English use happened within classrooms, while Kiswahili was the language used predominantly in outdoor spaces, offices and the staffroom. However, these patterns also differed according to activity and who was

in control. For example, although the majority of school assemblies would be conducted in Kiswahili, there were specified events within the assembly, such as 'Morning Speech' when a student delivered a short, prepared speech on a chosen topic, that was always in English. In the staffroom and offices, teachers mostly used Kiswahili, but when students came to ask questions, they were expected to greet teachers and ask permission to enter in English. The English used for these formal greetings and requests was largely stock phrases that had been memorised and repeated and students often remained silent if a teacher diverged from the expected script. It is also useful to note that, with the exception of Kiswahili language lessons, the vast majority of language that was written on the board, and copied into students' exercise books, was in English. In contrast, as will be discussed further in the next chapter, the discussion around these notes was often largely, or in some cases almost exclusively, in Kiswahili. A similar observation about written text being monolingual while there was more linguistic variability in verbal explanation has also been made in schools in South Africa (Prinsloo and Krause, 2019). This distinction did not apply as clearly outside of the classroom, though, and the vast majority of information on noticeboards was in Kiswahili.

Although the majority of English used in school was within classrooms, it was still not the language most frequently used in classrooms. Students spent significant periods of time in their classrooms without a teacher present and then the predominant language was Kiswahili. One student explained:

> *"Teachers…if they decide it, we speak English…but if we are not being monitored we will speak Kiswahili right up until we reach home!" [Female, Form Two, Mlimani, 14/08/15].*

During lessons, code-switching between English and Kiswahili was the norm. This student's comment about the role of the teacher in controlling which language was spoken is interesting, though, as teachers were certainly observed to be in control of sanctioning when Kiswahili was allowed or when English was required during lessons, something that has also been identified in classrooms in Botswana (Arthur, 1996) and The Gambia (McGlynn and Martin, 2009). On the whole, English was used for official curriculum content and formal routines, but Kiswahili still played a

significant role. The discussion of the 'English Only' ideal above and particularly the explanation that Kiswahili was used to compensate for students' linguistic deficits points to one, significant, reason for code-switching, for facilitating understanding. This was certainly a very common reason for use of Kiswahili and chapter 8 includes a much fuller exploration of the ways in which teachers facilitated student understanding. However, table 7.1 also shows that there were other reasons, including classroom management, giving more general advice about the importance of education or exams, or for group work. Common functions of code-switching have been much more thoroughly analysed and categorised in other studies in Tanzania and similar contexts (Chen and Rubinstein-Avila, 2018; Ferguson, 2003; 2009; Probyn, 2009; Rubagumya, 1994; Webb and Mkongo, 2013), and on the whole this study supports the observations made by other researchers.

There were some differences in language use patterns between the urban and rural schools. Mlimani School had a larger number of students who had better English skills than their peers. These students were often given positions of responsibility such as class monitor or school prefect, at least partly because of their command of English. Some of these students did regularly use English to make announcements, though these were nearly always also translated into Kiswahili. This can be explained both by the competence these students had in English, but also by the analysis offered in the previous chapter linking use of English to the aspirational identity of the 'good student'. At Kijijini School, although there were a handful of students who used English relatively confidently, they tended not to use English outside of lessons. One of the rural student researchers complained that he could not find anyone to speak English with, which was perhaps due to relatively small number of students who spoke English with any confidence, but also due to comments made by other students. Negative responses from others if students tried to practise speaking English were among the barriers that students felt they faced in learning the language, something that is discussed further both later in this chapter and in chapter 9.

This section has focused on the practice of code-switching, changing between speaking English and Kiswahili for different functions in school. However, there was

also evidence of code-mixing, when languages are mixed within the same sentence (Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir, 2004). Code-mixing was evident at both schools, though more so in town. Unlike code-switching, which was associated with enabling communication, code-mixing tended to perform other functions. The first was symbolic, indicating the status either of the speaker or the subject matter. One example is Juma, a Form Two student from Mlimani School. When he spoke, he used a number of English words mixed amongst his Kiswahili. In some cases, these were 'technical terms' like the English names of subjects like 'physics' or the use of 'primary' to refer to primary school, rather than the Kiswahili *'shule ya msingi'*. But Juma also included a number of non-technical English words in his speech. For example, there are more than 40 examples in his interview of the inclusion of non-technical English words when the Kiswahili word would have been a straight-forward alternative, for example when he said, *'you know, **sometimes**, you should know…'* *[12/08/2015].*[26] Similar examples of code-mixing have been observed in studies of Tanzanian elite groups and have been suggested to be a marker of status of the speaker (Blommaert, 1999; Bwenge, 2012; Legère, 2010). But there were also examples of when English might have been chosen because of the perceived status of the subject being discussed, for example when Juma said, *'others, you find that their parents are **very rich**' [12/08/2015].* Another example comes from a Form Four student from Kijijini School who was speaking Kiswahili and explaining how important it was to cooperate with teachers. She said, *"And when they tell you maybe **wear proper uniform**, it's essential that you do that" [21/07/2015].* Here the inclusion of the English phrase 'wear proper uniform' might be seen as symbolic of the official nature of the instruction. A second, different use of code-mixing applied to particular English words, most commonly verbs, that had been 'kiswahilified' by adding the 'ku' prefix. These were usually words that were shorter in English, for example, 'ku-mix' was often used in place of *'ku-changanya'* and 'ku-force' was used instead of *'ku-lazimisha'*. At Kijijini School there were also some examples of code-mixing between Kiswahili and the local ethnic community language, Kiluguru. During

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[26] Text in bold indicates that the speaker used English for these words.

several observations, these were commented on by the teacher who joked that *"no-one speaks Kiluguru here" [Observation, Form Two English Lesson, Kijijini, 16/04/15].* The next section of this chapter comments on the relative absence of ethnic community languages from the data from this study.

Offering a description of the reality of language use in the schools in this study has provided a stark contrast with the ideal of 'English Only' presented at the opening of the chapter. This is, in part, explained by the fact that neither students, nor teachers, were proficient enough in English to confidently use it as the functioning language of all school activities. This is the explanation offered by both the teachers and students in this study, but also by the LOI researchers, discussed in chapters 2 and 3, who argue for a change to use Kiswahili as the LOI. But the next section suggests that lack of linguistic capability is not the only explanation for the difference between the monolingual ideal and the multilingual reality.

Multilingual students (with multilingual identities)

> *"If the teachers instruct us, we speak English…but if you don't insist on this we would speak Kiswahili until we reach the President's palace." [Female, Form Two, Mlimani, 21/08/15]*

Reflecting on the quote above after having read the preceding sections of this chapter, it would be easy to assume that this student's clear preference for speaking Kiswahili must be explained by her not knowing enough English. But one of the problems with the dominance of the narratives relating to the importance of English, as discussed in the previous chapter, and the ideal of 'English Only' schooling that opened this chapter, is that they overshadow a wide range of other reasons why Kiswahili itself is valued by students and teachers. This section looks at these reasons for valuing Kiswahili, noting the particularly important part Kiswahili plays when considering roles played by 'language as culture' and 'language as being'. In making an argument for the importance of recognising and allowing for co-existing, plural values relating to language, this section also reflects of the virtual eclipse of ethnic community languages (ECLs) in the data for this study.

Kiswahili was significantly more than a tool for compensating for students' shortcomings in English. Kiswahili was the language that played the largest role in students' lives and, as the national *lingua franca*, it was an instrumental necessity in order for them to participate in most activities. One student explained, *"In our lives we use Kiswahili a lot because it was really the language we were born into and it is required to function within our country" [Female, Form Four, Kijijini, 27/08/15].* The importance of Kiswahili in Tanzania has already been discussed in chapter 2, and several authors have drawn attention to the disadvantage experienced by those who do not speak it comfortably (Batibo, 2009; Rubagumya *et al.*, 2011). In the school context, although several students expressed regret that it was the case, many talked about the crucial role that Kiswahili played in facilitating their understanding of subject content, something that will be explored in much greater detail in the next chapter.

Many students talked about Kiswahili being the language that was most familiar to them. Repeatedly, students used the expression, *"tumeshazoea Kiswahili",* meaning *"we are already used to Kiswahili".* It is notable that often this phrase or similar were offered in defence of not using more English, demonstrating again the strength of the suggestion that students *should* be using English rather than this more familiar language. One student explained, *"There is no-one who doesn't want to speak English…but we are already so rooted in Kiswahili." [Male, Form Four, Kijijini, 27/08/15].* As well as Kiswahili feeling more comfortable, many students indicated that it was easier to speak Kiswahili. One student noted, *"We see English as a hard language" [Male, Form Four, Kijijini, 27/08/15].* The same student continued to say, *"Also, it's a foreign language",* underlining the fact that it was unfamiliar to them. There has been some debate about whether English is indeed a 'foreign' language in Africa or whether it has been adapted and localised to the extent that it might be considered both a 'second' language and an African language (Jeyifo, 2018; Mugane, 2018a). The students in this study specifically referred to it as foreign, though, using terminology with which several of the key commentators on LOI in Tanzania agree (Brock-Utne, 2007b; Qorro, 2009b; Roy-Campbell, 2001b; Rubagumya, 2003). For example, one way of distinguishing between English and

Kiswahili was to describe the latter as *"lugha yetu"* or "our language", while English was frequently referred to as *"kizungu"*, "the language of the European/foreigner".

This distinction between "our language" and "the language of the foreigner" demonstrates that Kiswahili wasn't valued simply because students knew it better and so found it easier to default to Kiswahili. Kiswahili was part of their identity or sense of being. One of the rural student researchers explained students' preference for Kiswahili by saying that English, *"isn't their real language" [Female, Form Four, Kijijini, 21/07/15],* suggesting that, even if students were able to learn English, there would still be a preference for Kiswahili because of its relationship to who they are. Another rural student linked Kiswahili to the development of the person when he explained, *"your intelligence is already matured in Kiswahili" [Male, Form Four, Kijijini, 27/08/15].* The importance of African languages to students' identities has been observed elsewhere in Tanzania (Babaci-Wilhite, 2013; Vavrus, 2002b), and in studies in other Sub-Saharan African contexts, for example Spernes (2012) and Kiramba (2018) in Kenya and Chimbutane (2011) in Mozambique. In fact, many students were so confident that Kiswahili was an inseparable part of their being that they argued that their knowledge of Kiswahili would be protected, even if it were no longer used in primary schooling. One student argued, *"It shan't be that we forget Kiswahili, because it's our language" [Male, Form One, Mlimani, 28/08/15].*

In addition to students' association of Kiswahili with their personal development and sense of being, there was also evidence that Kiswahili was valued for its historical-political relationship to Tanzanian national identity and culture. One student noted that, if he spoke English, others might criticise him because it was the colonial language:

> *"If you want to speak English they say that you are speaking a colonial legacy simply because the situation of colonialism it is ended. Don't speak English language, speak Swahili language because Swahili language is the common language in our country" [Student Researcher Interview with Male Student, Re-sitting Form Four, Mlimani, 03/05/15, student spoke in English]*

Interestingly, in a discussion amongst the student researchers, when one expressed a similar opinion to this, arguing that the medium of instruction should be changed

to Kiswahili, he was shouted down by the others who said that he was not giving his true opinion, but that he was simply repeating a history lesson.

Whether this reflected the student's true perspective or not, the fact that students were aware of this argument is important to note because it demonstrates that they were conscious of historical-political power structures. The fact that they were also being debated by the student researchers can perhaps be seen as an illustration of the active negotiation between structure and agency that is suggested in Kleine's Choice Framework (2013 and see chapter 4). In Vavrus's (2002b, p. 379) study of schooling in the Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania, she noted that students were simultaneously aware of the potential 'cultural costs' of using English, and the benefits. In this current study, though, the data suggest that, although some students could give voice to the anti-colonial argument, this didn't seem to play a significant role in students' language attitudes. This might have been because the opportunities and aspirations associated with English were so strong, or due to students' confidence that, overall, Kiswahili wouldn't be threatened by greater use of English. Alternatively, it might be because language choices are not always the result of reasoned weighing of all possible implications and outcomes. This section has noted the influence of familiarity and ease as well as more explicit attitudes about the relationship between Kiswahili and a sense of being. Subsequent chapters build upon these points and explore the process of decision-making when it came to language use.

The invisibility of Ethnic Community Languages

Thus far, this chapter has only considered students' and teachers' attitudes relating to English and Kiswahili, but for many participants in this study, these were not the only languages in their personal linguistic repertoire or in their environment. But it was striking that ECLs were relatively absent from this study. One of the reasons for this was perhaps that the medium of instruction debate has been solely focused on the binary choice between English and Kiswahili, as was discussed more fully in chapter 2. This seemed to influence the way that students and teachers talked about

languages at school, but also more widely. When talking about the importance of English, one student stated, *"if you know English it means you will know two languages".* When I asked if she also spoke her tribal language, she explained, *"The tribal language is just a supplementary language. It doesn't have much importance".* This student continued to explain that she believed that the usefulness of her tribal language, Kiluguru, was limited because it could only be used with other members of her tribe. She continued, *"you can't leave here and go to England and meet Waluguru there…it is difficult! (laughs)"* [Form Two, Kijijini, 27/08/15]. This student, and the others in her interview group who all agreed with her, was evaluating the importance of Kiluguru in terms of its instrumental value for communication. Certainly, the opportunities for using ECLs outside of local communities in Tanzania are limited (Batibo, 2009), leading to Rubagumya et al. (2011, p. 80) suggesting that those who only spoke an ECL might be classified as 'semi-citizens'. Focusing on the multilingual environment in India, Mohanty (2009, p. 106) has suggested that this limited usefulness of ECLs leads to 'groups accepting the low status and exclusion of their languages as *fait accompli.'* The fact that many students did not even mention their tribal language(s) when asked about the languages they speak suggests that this may also be the case in this area of Tanzania.

It is crucial to acknowledge that the relative invisibility of ECLs in the data for this study is very likely to do with its geographical location. One teacher explained to me that students in this area of Tanzania will sometimes pretend that they do not speak a vernacular language when they are at school. He continued that this is quite different to some other areas of the country where there is one dominant language group and then it might be used by students in school more often than Kiswahili. A rural Student Researcher explained:

> *"They are already mixed up, people from Kigoma, from Dar es Salaam, they are mixed. So the main language that is used is Kiswahili. There are very few people who know **these mother languages…"** [Female, Form Four, Kijijini, 21/07/15].*

In fact, the home linguistic situation of students was very diverse. Some students did not use an ECL at all, while others used one or more regularly, depending on whether both parents were from the same linguistic group. Perhaps the most common

situations, though, were that students reported knowing and using limited words in an ECL, perhaps only greetings, or that they said they could understand, but not speak their tribal language.[27] The ethnic mix was particularly striking in one interview with a group of 6 students at the rural school who represented four different tribes.[28] The role and position of ECLs might be very different in areas of Tanzania where there is one dominant ECL. For example, Mekacha (1993, p. 313) suggests that there are areas of the country where a strong ECL may act as the 'interethnic lingua franca' rather than Kiswahili. In areas with a dominant ECL there have been arguments made for their use in primary education (Rubanza, 2000; Wedin, 2005; 2010). Many of the reasons given for including ECLs at primary level in some areas of Tanzania are similar to the points discussed in this study, but fuller consideration of arguments at primary level are outside the scope of this thesis.

Language capabilities and the capability of 'learning English'

The discussion above demonstrates that students hold plural values in relation to language. They value the capabilities of 'speaking English' and 'speaking Kiswahili', and some students value 'speaking ECLs', though these capabilities are valued for a variety of different reasons, which relate to the multiple language roles explored in chapter 3. The problem lies with the construction of the ideal that school language practice should be monolingual and the related belief that use of other languages undermines students' ability to learn English. Framed from a capabilities perspective, students' different languages are considered as completely separate capabilities and are positioned in conflict with one another when the use of other languages is seen as a constraint on students' capability to learn English.

One approach to negotiating this separation of language capabilities was to associate them with separate domains. For example, one student explained:

"When I'm back at home there is a tradition of eating tribal food so I am eating it. If there is a tradition of dancing to music, I am just dancing to it.

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[27] Of the students who completed background questionnaires, only 19% of the students at Kijijini School and 25% of students at Mlimani School reported using an ECL.

[28] Of the 47 students across both schools who reported using ECLs, only 10 of these used Kiluguru, the language of the tribe traditionally associated with Morogoro Region.

And if there is a tradition of speaking Kiswahili, or my mother tongue language, I'm going to use this because it's our tradition" [Male Student Researcher, Form Five, Mlimani, 27/04/15].

For this student researcher who was boarding at Mlimani School, it seemed that all three of his languages had a clear place where they could be used and valued. In some ways, he was living the 'English Only' ideal, preferring to use English as much as possible at school, but retaining Kiswahili and his mother tongue for use in the 'traditional' space at home. This might be seen as an excellent example of the triglossic linguistic relationship, that was discussed in chapter 2, where different languages perform different functions in society (Abdulaziz Mkilifi, 1972; Fasold, 1984; Petzell, 2012a). The majority of students in this study, though, did not have the opportunity for as obvious a separation as this, not only because they lived at home and attended schools close to their communities, but also perhaps because their level of English would not allow them to use 'English Only' at school. Because the majority of students did not have the necessary capability of 'speaking English', they did not have real freedom of choice in relation to language at school. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that a great deal of students' concerns in relation to language-in-education focused on the challenge of learning English.

As part of this study, the student researchers from both schools conducted their own interviews with other students. They worked together to design a set of interview questions, and although I had always framed my interest in language-in-education in general terms, their initial list focused exclusively on enablers and constraints in relation to learning English. Although this thesis argues for the recognition of plural language values, the importance of English to students' ideas about 'being a student' and educational success must not be underestimated (see also Kiramba, 2018). This section draws together data relating to students' perspectives about what contributes to the capability of 'learning English'. It draws heavily from interviews conducted by the student researchers, but this is also supplemented by other relevant data. The discussion focuses on three areas that emerged as particularly significant for enabling or constraining students' capability to learn English: the external material and financial resources available, or not available; the social environment and the way in which other people encouraged or

discouraged students to practise English; and students' personal resources or internal capabilities, including their existing knowledge of English and features of the *"soma kwa bidii"* mindset discussed in the previous chapter. Discussion of these factors is particularly relevant to understanding both the tension in the relationship between English and Kiswahili and students' experiences and negotiations of language and learning.

Material and financial resources

Students listed a number of material resource shortages that they felt impacted on their ability to learn English. Considering the fact that the task of learning English is not easily separable from the learning of other subjects, it is not surprising that many of these components have been linked more broadly to the quality of education that schools can provide, or the ability of students to be able to meaningfully engage in the learning process (Okkolin, 2017; Posti-Ahokas and Lehtomäki, 2014; Smith and Barrett, 2011). Among the teaching and learning resources that students mentioned, textbooks were a common theme. In observations, I often noted teachers' instructions to 'find books' or to ask their parents to buy them. Although both schools had book stores, neither had a library, and textbooks were not freely accessible to students. In Kijijini School, students were carrying around science textbooks that had been donated to, and distributed by, the school. I observed students looking through these books, both to try and help with answers to questions and seemingly out of general interest, but I did not see teachers explicitly refer to these books in lessons. This may have been due to teachers having clear preferences for the books they wanted to use that they felt most closely followed the syllabus. In the urban school, where I was involved in teaching English for one month, these preferences meant that four teachers were sharing two copies of the favoured textbook, despite the fact that there were sets of 15-20 copies of two other Form One English language textbooks available. Concerns about shortages of textbooks that are relevant to the Tanzanian syllabus and context and at an appropriate language level for learners of English have been raised in a number of

studies (Barrett *et al.*, 2014; Clegg and Simpson, 2016; Hardman, Abd-Kadir and Tibuhinda, 2012; Mosha, 2012).

Students also noted shortages in teachers, particularly for science subjects. This was a particularly acute issue at Kijijini School and students felt that this negatively affected their learning because teachers were overstretched. One explained:

> *"Because there are few teachers they cannot teach for pleasure…they have to teach many classes and students don't get enough education." [Male, Form One, Kijijini, 25/08/15].*

In fact, students from both schools suggested that the Government should focus on improving not only the numbers of teachers, but the quality of teaching. Their comments relating to pedagogy will be explored further in the next chapter, but students also complained that some of their teachers were 'unprofessional'. It has already been shown that the student researchers used this term to criticise teachers who used a lot of Kiswahili in their teaching, but other students commented on the way that teachers dressed, or the way that they interacted with students. One student explained:

> *"They should provide…teachers who you know if they go into the classroom…they just teach…they don't have arguments with students…or they don't enter the classroom and terrorise students." [Male, Form One, Kijijini, 18/08/15].*

The importance of a positive relationship between students and teachers is considered further in the two subsequent chapters.

The cost of schooling to a student's family was also a significant worry. In addition to school fees, there were other contributions that had to be made for things like uniforms, school maintenance and security, with the risk of students being excluded from school for non-payment.[29] Above and beyond these costs of attending school, students felt that private tuition was necessary if they were really

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[29] Secondary school fees were officially abolished from the beginning of the 2016 school year, which should in theory address this challenge, but there are reports that the practice of contributions has continued in some places (Daily News, 2018b; GEM Report, 2018) and other school-related costs continue to act as barriers to school attendance for some students (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

going to be able to learn English and succeed in their other subjects. During one mathematics lesson at Mlimani School, I observed the majority of students receiving strokes of the cane for not having completed their homework, which they claimed they did not understand. When I asked another student why some had managed to complete the homework when the majority had not, she said, *"they understand in tuition" [Female student, Form 2, as recorded in fieldnotes, 23/07/15]*. Anangisye (2016) notes that private tutoring has been banned in Tanzania since 1999, but both he states, and the data from this study supports, that the practice is rife. Students talked of teachers who taught poorly on purpose so that you would have to pay to have the same teacher repeat the lesson in tuition (see also Rajani, 2001). One consequence of tutoring being officially banned is that it is unregulated and one rural student explained that she had been cheated by the tutor who was supposed to be running a private English course preparing students for entering secondary school:

> *'Like me, I studied 'pre-Form One'…they said that we pay fees…24,000 shillings for one subject…one! It eats your side, but you want to study. I was taught for just 5 days. The teacher wasn't there…ran away. And that was that.' [Female, Form Two, Kijijini, 20/08/15].*

Families with more limited financial means found it difficult to meet the costs of schooling and additional tuition. But students described additional challenges that students from poorer families faced such as being unable to concentrate well due to hunger or tiredness from walking long distances to school. Students talked about having a shortage of time to study, sometimes because of the time spent travelling to and from school[30], but also because they were expected to complete chores at home, look after siblings, work in the fields or look after a wide variety of students. Material shortages were often the first things that students mentioned when asked about obstacles to learning English, but they were not the only constraints that were talked about.

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[30] Time spent commuting to school was not only a concern for rural students. There were a number of students from Mlimani School who lived on the outskirts of Morogoro Town and relied on buses to travel to and from school. However, because school pupils paid a reduced fair, bus conductors limited how many they would carry at one time, meaning students could wait for a long time before being allowed to board a bus.

The opportunity to practise English

It is particularly important for the subsequent analysis in this thesis to note that students identified the opportunity to practise English as part of the capability of learning English. Practising English is a capability in itself, and students recognised that achieving the related functioning was important to developing their overall ability in the language. This student perception is undoubtedly influenced by the belief that the best way to learn English was through maximum exposure, but there is also evidence to suggest that opportunities to practise the language of instruction outside of school support students' educational outcomes (Smith and Barrett, 2011). Students reported very mixed experiences of the extent to which the opportunity was available to them. Many students commented that use of Kiswahili in school limited chances for speaking English. For example, one rural student stated: *"There are students, myself included, we use Kiswahili, which disturbs us a lot educationally" [Male, Form 2, Kijijini, 13/08/15].* There were some students who reported that they spoke some English at home. Some mentioned being able to watch English language television or knowing someone they could talk some English with. For example, one student said: *"When I am home there are many things that can enable us to be able to know the English language…like if my relative is there they can help us with those things we are failing with" [Student Researcher interview with male student, Form 1, Mlimani, 03/05/15].* More students, however, suggested that there were limited opportunities to practise outside of school and some framed their lack of opportunities to speak English outside of school as a significant constraint. One lamented, *"there is no place outside of school where I can learn English. Truthfully, I don't have such a place" [Student Researcher interview with male student, Form 1, Mlimani, 03/05/15].*

A significant number of students asserted that their lack of opportunities for practising English were not only related to the absence of other English speakers, but also to negative attitudes of others. For example, one group of students suggested:

> *Student 1: "Some [parents] might say you cursed at them if you spoke in English".*

> *Student 2: "Maybe they think you are arrogant". [Student researchers' interview with Form 1 students, Kijijini, 25/07/15, Group 4]*

When reflecting on these interviews, the student researchers quickly dismissed these attitudes as 'backward' or 'traditional', but negative attitudes towards speaking English was a common theme in interviews at both the rural and the urban school and clearly acted as a constraint for some students. This does not represent everyone's experience, though, and one rural student explained that his parents were happy and proud when they heard him use English because it demonstrated that their investment in his education was working. He said, *"the parent sees that you can…because they paid they cost…they look at you like you have already become a star!" [Male Student, Kijijini, 27/08/15].* In a paper that uses quantitative data from the SACMEQ II surveys to map the capabilities that support learning to read at primary level,[31] Smith and Barrett (2011, p. 28) identify 'parental education' and 'home interest in education' as influential factors. The qualitative data from this current study perhaps offers some greater detail about *how* these factors might influence students' learning.

In addition to feeling that their opportunities to practise English were constrained or enabled by the reactions of parents, students also pointed to the attitudes of their peers. One group of students explained:

> *Student 1: "Your classmates don't know it, so when you speak, they might hate you."*
>
> *Student 2: "They will hate you, that is when you walk, you will be alone". [Student researchers' interview with Form 1 students, Kijijini, 25/07/15, Group 4]*

The attitudes and comments of classmates were such a significant feature of students' experiences of language and learning that they are explored in more detail in chapter 9. But it is important to note here that students felt that their capability of learning English was related to the reactions and behaviour of others and that students commented on the role of parents, other students, teachers and the broader community in contributing to their capability of learning English.

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[31] SACMEQ is the Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality and is made up of 14 countries, including Tanzania.

None of the students who contributed to this study challenged the importance of English overall. Of course, this might have been influenced by the context of the research and the positionality of the researcher, as discussed in chapter 5. But chapter 6 has shown that students' commitment to continuing in their education was inseparable from their aspirations relating to English and so negative statements like the ones above are more likely to indicate tensions between languages than be suggestive of some students not valuing English. Despite the monolingual ideal that English should be the language used in school, this chapter has shown that Kiswahili was the default language. Its prevalence both in the school environment and outside of school meant that speaking Kiswahili was the behavioural norm. In this context, choosing to speak English when it wasn't required by a teacher made students stand out. This could be seen as an example of what DeJaeghere (2019, p. 9), in the context of young people engaged in vocational education in Tanzania, describes as "othering". DeJaeghere argues that this process of other people labelling individuals as sitting outside of the expected social norms has psychological effects that can have a powerful influence on young people's own sense of being and on their capabilities. This thesis suggests that there are two types of structures in relation to language that influence the ways in which students think about themselves and their language choices. The first is the discourse around the importance of English and the monolingual ideal, but the second is the norms around language use, which emphasise the expectation that students will use Kiswahili. These co-exist, but are in tension with one another, and students who make language choices influenced by the former, may find themselves criticised for breaking the 'rules' of the latter.

Personal resources / internal capabilities

After the discussion of the notion of *"soma kwa bidii"* in the previous chapter, it is unsurprising that students placed so much emphasis on what might be classed personal or psychological resources or internal capabilities. Particularly relevant to the discussion above about the responses of other people to the use of different languages, several students talked about the importance of 'self-determination'.

This was understood to combine determination and a focus on the self, rather than allowing yourself to be distracted or discouraged by others. Talking about the way that other people's comments could weaken your resolve to speak English, one of the female, urban student researchers explained, *"Sometimes you can just think, "Oh my God, let me use Swahili so people can leave me"*, but this was quickly countered by one of the male student researchers who said to her, *"If you are not so strong…they will come at you if you are weak…" [Student researchers' discussion about language attitudes, Mlimani, 27/04/15]*.

The student researchers, along with some other students who spoke better English than their peers, quite often made comments that were quite critical of their classmates and suggested that they did not embody the mindset and behaviours associated with *"soma kwa bidii"*, and that this explained their struggle to learn English. For example, they listed 'laziness' among their factors that influenced a person's capability to learn English. They talked about these ideas as if this were the key factor that set them apart from their less academically successful peers. For example, as part of a longer explanation where he is talking about English and Kiswahili in the classroom, the male student sesearcher at the rural school said of his classmates:

> *"A large percentage of students don't yet have that consciousness, let's say they don't yet have good self-awareness...the teacher puts emphasis on a certain thing [using English] but they miss it. They don't know that that thing [English] is more useful than theirs [Kiswahili]." [Male Student Researcher, Form Four, Kijijini, 21/07/15]*.

He implies that his peers don't understand the importance of English for them in the same way that he does, and that is why they have not developed their English as well as he has. The vast majority of data generated as part of this study would suggest that this is not the case at all and that students are very aware of the benefits of speaking English, and aspire to do so, but that there are other barriers and obstacles that prevent them from always making the choice that might best further that goal. These barriers are further explored in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

The other internal capability that was regularly highlighted was existing knowledge of English. Students felt that they would be better placed to develop their

knowledge of English, and to use it as the LOI for learning other subjects, if they had a stronger 'language foundation'. One student argued:

> *"Beginning in the first class they would study in English, like here at secondary. Then there would be no-one who arrives here not knowing…they would understand a lot. Everyone would be the same…everyone would get 'A'. No-one would fail…this would help."* [Male, Form Two, Mlimani, 14/08/15]

This student seems to suggest not only that a better grounding in English would support learning and secondary school, but also that it would facilitate greater equality of achievement amongst students. At Mlimani School, the difficulties experienced by those who did not know much English were made particularly stark by the fact that each class included a number of students who did have a stronger grasp of the language. The comment made by the student researcher above also demonstrates that those students who were more proficient of English may have lacked empathy and understanding of the difficulties experienced by those who struggled with the language.

This section has mapped the capability to learn English from the perspective of the student researchers involved in this study, drawing examples both from their interviews and the wider data. This was an important exercise because obstacles to learning English fully consumed the attention of the student researchers who believed that being able to learn English would vastly improve students' schooling experiences. The elements that have been highlighted for discussion demonstrate that there are numerous potential sources of heterogeneity and inequality in students' experiences of learning English. These do not only relate to differences in material and financial resources, but also to the reactions of others to students' attempts to practise English, and to students' internal capabilities. But it is also clear that there are important connections between these different components of the capability of learning English. For example, students linked negative attitudes to speaking English to low levels of parental education, which was more likely in rural families with more limited material and financial resources. Finally, this discussion has highlighted tensions and conflicts between language attitudes, the high value placed on English on the one hand and social norm of Kiswahili use on the other, and

how these may interfere with students' opportunities to practise English both in and outside of school.

Conclusion

> 'The fact that languages - and language ideologies - are anything but neutral is especially visible in multilingual societies where some language and identity options are, in unforgettable Orwellian words, 'more equal than others'. Negotiation is a logical outcome of this inequality…' (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004, p. 3)

This chapter has highlighted the significant influence of the 'English Only' narrative on both students' and teachers' attitudes around language and learning. Combined with the discussion in the previous chapter, the data presented here seems to support Rubanza's (2000, p. 129) observation that 'English is perceived to be "superior" and thus pupils wish to speak it'. Speaking English is associated with the aspirational identity of 'being a good student', but for the vast majority of students, the monolingual ideal is unattainable. Kiswahili is the predominant language used in schools and this is presented as a regrettable necessity to compensate for students' linguistic shortcomings. But this chapter has challenged this explanation, arguing that the data from this study suggests that it does not reflect the complex and plural nature of participants' language beliefs and values. Kiswahili itself is valued not only as a means to effective communication, but also as an important component of culture and sense of 'being'. Although the data in this study about ethnic community languages is notably limited, it is clear that for some students, ECLs are also valued for similar roles. Although English is undoubtedly associated with educational success, in day-to-day interactions with families and peers, there seemed to be an expectation that the choice of Kiswahili was the accepted norm. This suggests that the idea of a language hierarchy that has been mentioned in previous chapters is not static, but that language values could be more dynamic and situational (Prinsloo and Krause, 2019), and that students are constantly negotiating their language choices in response to their own senses of being and the real and perceived reactions of those around them. But the monolingual ideal and the positioning of English and Kiswahili in opposition greatly restricts the linguistic flexibility that students have in

relation to learning, and in the context of schooling, some language choices are undoubtedly 'more equal than others'. Presenting English and other languages as a dichotomy not only turns use of Kiswahili into a marker of student failure, but it creates a disconnection and conflict between the two languages that means that some language values must be prioritised and others depreciated. The next two chapters explore the influence of this forced disconnection in the classroom.

8. Classroom Negotiations of (and around) Understanding

In the lessons observed as part of this study, there was a common and returning motif. After explaining something or giving an instruction, the teacher asked, "Do you understand?" This question came in a number of forms: "Do you understand?"; "Is it understood?"; "Are we together?"; "Do you get me?"; and frequently their Kiswahili equivalents. The response to these questions was most often, though not always, "yes", delivered in chorus. Sometimes, this response was what the teacher felt he or she required as permission to move on. On other occasions, though, the teacher followed up with questions on the content that had just been delivered, to check understanding. Answers to these questions were much less enthusiastically given. More often than not, these follow-up questions were met with silence.

Undoubtedly, these repeated exchanges and regular silences demonstrate a challenge of understanding. This is unsurprising considering that lesson content is at least partially conducted in English, a language in which the vast majority of students struggle to communicate effectively, as the discussion of LOI research in chapter 3 demonstrated. Brock-Utne (2004; 2007b; 2013) has repeatedly commented on the fact that using a foreign language of instruction results in students not being able to understand their teachers. A 2013 study of language preferences surveyed students from 11 secondary schools from the same region of Tanzania as this study, Morogoro, and found that 69.5% of students reported that they did not understand well when they were taught using only English (Kinyaduka and Kiwara, 2013, p. 92).[32] Concerns about levels of understanding and participation when English is used are repeatedly raised in studies that draw upon lesson observations in African classrooms (for example Opoku-Amankwa, 2009 in Ghana; Rea-Dickens and Yu, 2013 in Zanzibar; Samuelson and Freedman, 2010 in Rwanda). Commenting on observations from a study of a 4th grade class in Kenya, at the point where the language of instruction shifts to English with a similar policy of a monolingual LOI, Kiramba (2018, p. 303) notes that 'the main effect…is silencing'. This current study found that lack of understanding was not the only factor contributing to these

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[32] Neither of the schools in this study were amongst Kinyaduka & Kiwara's sample.

silences, but it was a key part of the explanation for many of them. Another important factor resulting in students' lack of response was fear, which will be discussed as the focus of chapter 9.

This chapter argues that it would be more accurate to talk of student 'understandings'. Classroom observations and discussions with students clearly emphasised that there were two key learning processes that were trying, uncomfortably, to exist side-by-side. The first is learning of a language, English. But the second is transmission of subject content. Understanding in relation to each of these goals means something different, and this chapter demonstrates that understanding of subject content was regularly achieved, at least to some extent, but through the use of Kiswahili as the medium of communication. Although this thesis is generally supportive of multilingual classroom practice, the majority of examples shared in this chapter demonstrate strategies that, although they may enable in-the-moment understanding of the topic under discussion, represent trade-offs or 'missed opportunities' in relation to the other classroom learning goal, the development of English.

The question of understanding was perhaps one of the most challenging parts of this study as my observations as a researcher often seemed at odds with students' narratives. Undoubtedly, levels of understanding varied depending on individual students' capability in English, but it also became clear that students did not consider understanding as being in a binary relationship with non-understanding. Instead, these states existed on a spectrum alongside other elements of 'knowing English'. Thus, what students understood by 'understanding' forms the first part of this chapter before the focus turns to explore how understanding was negotiated in classrooms. The actions of teachers were found to be central in either enabling or constraining student understanding, and so are allocated a significant portion of the discussion. The data from this study also shows, though, that students had their own strategies, both for supporting understanding, or for managing a lack of understanding.

The final section of this chapter steps away from observations of common practice and presents an example from Kijijini School that stood out from the rest of

the data due to the teacher's comfortable and flexible multilingual practice that seemed both to enable students' understanding and boost their confidence. This is offered to suggest that understanding in relation to learning English and understanding of subject content are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and points to the developing literature about translanguaging in education. Ultimately, though, this chapter tells a cautionary tale as the forms of code-switching used most commonly in the classrooms in this study are shown to limit learning opportunities and encourage trade-offs between understanding in the moment, and understanding and language development for the future.

'Understandings' - on a spectrum of language skills

This chapter identifies two key types of understanding that were related to different classroom learning goals. 'Understanding English' related to the process of learning English as a language, but 'understanding lesson content' was part of the process of covering the subject curriculum. These processes are not necessarily mutually exclusive. In fact, the previous chapter has explained that the ideal was that 'understanding lesson content' should be achieved using English as the language of communication. But this chapter demonstrates that this was most often not the case. One student explained, *"Understanding the teachers is a problem…until they speak in Kiswahili" [Female, Form One, Mlimani, 28/08/15].* In the vast majority of the lessons observed as part of this study, understanding was facilitated by the teachers translating and discussing subject content in Kiswahili, examples of which are presented in later sections of this chapter. This section, instead, explores the ways that students discussed and framed the notion of 'understanding' as this is considered to be a crucial basis for appreciating their explanations of the silences described at the opening of this chapter.

No matter whether it was asked in English or Kiswahili, the question, "do you understand?" invited a binary 'yes/no' response, but it became clear from talking to students that their experiences of understanding were not so absolute. When I spoke to students about silences in the classroom, there were certainly instances when little of what the teacher said had been understood, and understanding was

undoubtedly a significant challenge. But often, students claimed that they had understood, prompting further explorations of reasons for not answering teachers' questions. The data discussed in this section point to students' framing of understanding as being on a spectrum that includes not only different degrees of comprehension, but also other skills that students considered part of 'knowing English', for example 'reading', 'writing', 'pronouncing', and 'memorising'. Students presented it as quite normal that individuals might have ability in some skills but not others. This section then considers how this conceptualisation might present a challenge for thinking about language learning from the perspective of capabilities, but also how the concept of capabilities helps to problematise students' framing by identifying that it results in capability trade-offs.

"So the problem is they say they understand but they don't understand."[33]

There were definitely instances when students did not understand what the teacher had said. But instead of saying that they hadn't understood, students explained that it was preferable to join in the positive chorus response to the teacher's question, "have you understood?". One student explained:

> *"They follow the crowd. It could be that they haven't understood but they think, "Mhh…in this class, many have understood, so if I say that I haven't understood, I will look like an idiot, so I will say the same…that I have understood"" [Male, Form One, Mlimani, 28/08/15].*

Students' fear of their lack of understanding being exposed is discussed in more detail in the next chapter. But it is useful to observe here that several students talked about there being an expectation that they *should* have understood and so they felt they should respond positively when the teacher asked. This perhaps offered some insight into the expected relationship between students and teachers. For example, one student explained that, *"the first requirement is that a student…cooperate with them [teachers] in the studies" [Female, Form One, Kijijini, 18/08/15].* In the context of this interview, the student suggested that cooperation means responding to the teacher. When asked a question like 'do you understand?', students were able to

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[33] Female student, Form Two, Milimani, 21/08/15.

respond and meet this expectation. But if they had not understood the content, they would not be able to answer a follow-up question and so would remain silent.

Students also suggested that responding positively when asked if they understood may encourage the teacher to move on faster. In a number of interviews, students mentioned that there were students who were not engaged in learning. For example, Peter suggested that there are others who stay quiet to discourage the teacher from pursuing further questions:

> *"In the classroom, there are few who like studying, many of them don't like to study. Because of this, when the teacher says, "have you understood?", they will say yes, so that the teacher will leave early and they can continue with their noise". [Male, Form 1, Mlimani, 31/07/15].*

Although regularly referred to by other students, it was not easy to identify students who didn't like studying. When I approached students who had come across in observations as disengaged, they always portrayed themselves as hardworking students. It is not the aim of this study to challenge this self-portrayal. To have reached secondary school, students have performed comparatively well in the primary school exams. The discussion of the notion of "*soma kwa bidii*" in chapter 6 also showed that 'being a good student' was an important aspiration. However, it is worth noting that the drop-out rate for the four-year stage of lower secondary is higher than 50% and, although language is not the only contributing factor, it has been identified as a key influence in students dropping out of school, particularly in the first two years (Vuzo, 2018). In this study, both teachers and students talked of others who had 'given up' because of the extra layer of challenge created by the LOI at secondary school, or who were distracted by other priorities. But this should not be taken to mean that these students would not have valued better understanding. All the students spoken to as part of this study described feeling 'bad' when they did not understand. One girl explained, *"It hurts in your heart. You ask, "why don't I understand this?"…It hurts very much in your heart. Once again, you are hurt!" [Female, Form One, Kijijini, 25/08/15].*

"Those that say, "we have understood", are maybe 12, 18, 20…Others we stay silent."[34]

A small number of students challenged my perception that the majority of students were answering "yes" when the teacher asked if they understood. One student argued that, in their class of 86 students, fewer than a quarter usually responded to the question. This comment pointed to the fact that levels of understanding varied amongst students. At Mlimani School in particular, there was a small number of students in each class with a comparatively strong grasp of English and it is possible that they led the positive responses. These students often played a key role in classroom dialogue, both in supporting peers, as will be discussed later in this chapter, and as a reliable source of correct answers for teachers.

When teachers' follow-up questions were met with silence, one of the common strategies employed was for the teacher to call on a student by name to provide an answer. Often, these were the students who they thought were most likely to have a correct answer. In fact, Grace, one of the Form One students at Mlimani School who had attended an English-medium primary school talked about her first few days at secondary school, explaining that teachers had established early on who had been to English-medium schools and had directed much of their questioning to them[35]:

> *"Yes, they ask them. They are coming maybe in the class, they are asking, "hey class, who come from Medium schools?" We are raising up the hands…and then teacher say, "good, ok" and is starting teaching, and then he just focus on those people who maybe they are from medium schools."*
> *[Female, Form One, Mlimani, 25/02/15, spoke in English].*

Knowing that the teacher would direct the question to one of these students who have a stronger grounding in English may have discouraged other students from answering. For some, this might be a relief to know that they are unlikely to be put on the spot, but for others who wanted the opportunity to answer and to practise their language skills, but had not been to English-medium primary schools, this was

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[34] Female student, Form Two, Mlimani, 14/08/2015.

[35] In the classes that completed background questionnaires at Mlimani School, 8 out of 67 students in Form 1 and 5 out of 55 students in Form 2 reported having attended private, English-medium primary schools. At Kijijini School only one student reported having attended a private, English-medium primary school.

an area of frustration. One student expressed this, saying, *"But some of the teachers don't really trust on the student who come from government schools…they are just focusing on medium schools"* [Female, Form One, Mlimani, 25/02/15, spoke in English]. This group of students who had a stronger grasp of English act as a reminder not to assume that silence in response to teachers' questions was always an indicator of complete lack of understanding.

"There are those questions that you don't understand completely…they know the language, but they don't know it completely."[36]

As students talked about understanding, it became clear that they did not draw a binary distinction between understanding and not understanding. Although the previous sections have shown that there were certainly instances when some students did not understand what the teacher had said, many students frequently asserted that they had understood. Although it is possible that students might have been reluctant to admit lack of understanding to a researcher, students also pointed to the fact that teacher explanations were regularly repeated in Kiswahili, thus enabling their understanding. But silences in response to teachers' follow-up questions suggested that students did not 'understand completely'. In fact, the way that students talked about understanding placed it amongst a set of other language skills that might be considered as sitting on a spectrum.

At one end of the spectrum, students talked about the desirable situation of not only being able to understand English, but also being able to respond to teachers' questions. The majority of students felt that this was out of their reach. An example of this can be seen in this excerpt from the observation of an English lesson at Kijijini School:

> *'The boy at the front who has been an active participant in this lesson is the only one to put up his hand. He asks (in English) if he can answer in Kiswahili. The teacher tells him to try English, but the student replies (in English) that he cannot.'* [Observation, Form Two English lesson, Kijijini, 24/04/15].

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[36] Female student, Form Four, Kijijini, 21/07/2015.

At this point the teacher turned his attention to another student, without either allowing the first to answer in Kiswahili, or supporting him to answer in English. The key role played by the teacher in controlling when the use of different languages was sanctioned is discussed further in the next section.

It was not only in oral questioning that students felt frustrated by the challenge of responding. Examinations were arguably a greater concern to students as this was the main measure of a student's success. But, rather than testing a student's grasp of subject-related knowledge, concepts and skills, Bartlett and Vavrus (2013, p. 94) argue that they 'essentially constitute an English language assessment'. A Form Two student at the rural school described her frustration at this situation:

> *"So, in an exam…for example in this history exam…we got a very easy question, but we didn't completely understand the language. You can say to us, for example, what did the first colonisers do? An easy question, but the language confuses us, which means we fail." [Female, Form Two, Kijijini, 20/08/15].*

The same group of students went on to explain that the problem is often with the instructions given, describing a situation where the instruction said that students should choose two from a selection of questions, but most students had not understood and had tried to answer all the questions.

The more that students spoke about their abilities in English, it emerged that they conceptualised language as divided up into separate skills, and that it was considered common to be good at, or have some ability in one area, but not another. In the first few days in the field, teachers from Mlimani School had mentioned that students were good at writing, but not speaking.[37] I had thought little of this until students also started to point to examples of people who were strong in some skills but not others. Contrary to the urban teachers' observations, two girls in Form Four at the rural school, Mwajuma and Margret, explained that it was common to find someone who was good at speaking English, but not good at writing it, sharing an example:

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[37] Conversation with two teachers at Mlimani School, recorded in fieldnotes, 23/01/15.

> *"Mwajuma: Here there was a student who finished school, who was called Carlos. He knew English very well. He spoke well. You could speak to him and you would be able to understand him well. But, at the end of the day he found that he failed…for what reason? He knew how to speak, but he couldn't write."* [Female, Form Four, Kijijini, 27/08/15].

Distinctions between literacy skills such as speaking, writing, reading and listening are common in literatures relating to language learning (Hayes Jacobs, 2013). But it is telling that students divided skills up even further, making distinctions, for example, between different components of reading, including 'pronouncing' and 'translating what was read'. In addition, many students talked about the importance of the skill of 'memorising'. One student explained: *"There are others…they can manage to memorise English, and others who can read and translate"* [Male, Form Two, Kijijini, 27/08/15]. It seems that the student is suggesting that memorisation is a base-level skill that occupies the other extreme on the spectrum, before you would move on to higher-level skills like reading and translating. Another student drew a distinction between being able to sound out words correctly and being able to understand their meaning:

> *"…there are many words…it's not that you can't understand them all. There are many that even if you read them you can't understand their meaning…you will understand the way to pronounce it , but you don't know its meaning."* [Female, Form One, Kijijini, 18/08/15].

The strategies of translation and memorisation were both extremely prevalent in students' experiences of learning and are discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

When considering the relationship between language and understanding, it is noteworthy that the separation between being able to understand and being able to speak was not only identified in English, but also seemed to exist in other languages in which students were not fluent. When talking about his parents' tribal languages that he was exposed to at home, one student explained:

> *"My father you find...every thing that he says in his tribal language I am able to understand it, but to reply to him in that language, I can't, but I use Kiswahili to answer him, you see?"* [Male, Form Four, Kijijini, 21/07/15].

In addition to this student identifying ability in one language skill but not another, it is significant that his father allows him to answer in Kiswahili. This is in contrast to

226

most students' classroom encounters where they were usually offered the choice to answer in the language they were less comfortable with, or remain silent. The possibilities for a more flexible approach to language mixing are discussed in the final section of this chapter.

Considering the observations in this section from the perspective of capabilities both problematises students' framing of understanding as one of a collection of language skills, and presents a challenge to common presentations of the notion of capabilities. Robeyns (2017) argues that the way in which capabilities are often discussed may be too binary. Terming this issue a question of 'robustness', she asserts that there is an unhelpful implication in the way that capabilities are commonly written about that: 'either we have an option with a 100% probability, or else, if the probability is significantly less, it is implied that we do not have the capability' (Robeyns, 2017, pp. 97-98). In the process of learning in general, but particularly learning a language, 100% proficiency would not be immediately expected. The language capability might then be considered 'unrobust' for an extended period of time while a student developed linguistic competency. Moreover, students' characterisation of different language skills raises the question of whether these different functions of language, such as 'reading', 'understanding', 'responding' and 'memorising', are more usefully considered as separate and complete capabilities in themselves, or as partial capabilities. They can, after all, each be attached to separate functionings, such as 'reading a story' or 'responding to a question'. But, returning to Richardson's (2015) argument that we should identify the 'final ends' when considering capabilities as a basis for planning, for students in this study, these separate, more immediate capabilities were not the 'final ends' that were valued. This suggestion that we should keep the 'final ends' in mind is also related to Maddox and Esposito's (2011) critique of the dichotomy between measurements of literacy and illiteracy, in which they argue for a notion of 'sufficiency', tied to an identification of the full range of valued capabilities for which literacy is needed.

Although students valued capabilities related to classroom activities in the present, they also had longer-term aspirations for capabilities that would require language skills. Many of these have already been discussed in chapter 6, but it is when thinking about these longer-term goals that students increasingly identified being proficient in some language skills but not others as a problem, thus suggesting that these different language skills can be more usefully considered as partial components of a linguistic capability. For example, when the two Form Four students, Mwajuma and Margret, continued their discussion of the former student, Carlos, who could speak English, but failed the examination, they said the following:

> *"Mwajuma: It's better that you know how to write compared to speaking because it will help you. In the examinations you won't fail because you know how to write.*
>
> *Margret: But…Carlos…if he gets work with tourists…you have studied…fine…and you know how to write. But doesn't that tourist come to talk to you? It's important you know both."*
>
> *[Two female students, Form Four, Kijijini, 27/08/15].*

Here, Mwajuma suggests that the skill of writing would have been more useful to Carlos than speaking because it would have helped him to pass his examinations, but Margret suggests that passing examinations was not Carlos's 'final end'. Instead she suggests that the quality of employment opportunities might rely on him being able to both write and speak English.

Similar arguments were made by students in relation to the strategy of memorisation to compensate for lack of understanding. For example, one student stated that memorisation *"can **cost** them later when being evaluated in the workplace…they have passed but it will look like their certificates are stolen" [Female, Form One, Mlimani, 14/08/15].*[38] Recognising that students' 'final ends' relating to acquiring English are often beyond the classroom draws attention to the potential tension between 'now' and 'future' functionings. It also requires that we look more carefully at *how* capabilities are created. If functionings in the present, such as understanding subject content or passing exams, are achieved through strategies

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[38] Throughout this chapter, text in bold indicates that the speaker used English for these words.

such as teaching in Kiswahili or memorisation, they may not support the creation of capabilities related to future aspirations, such as acquiring and feeling competent in a good job. In these situations, the achievement of 'now' functionings might be considered a trade-off against the development of future capabilities. The next sections of this chapter present multiple examples of these trade-offs as they explore teacher- and student-led strategies for negotiating understanding.

Teachers as gatekeepers of understanding

> *"The most important for a student when they are in the classroom, when the teacher enters it's obligatory that they should listen to them. All the thoughts are with the teacher so, they should listen to what they say."* [Female, Form One, Mlimani].

Both in observations and in discussion with students, it was clear that teachers played a key role in the construction of understanding, but that they could act both as an enabler and a constraint. There were some key common strategies that students pointed to as supporting understanding, including translation, use of explanation, and repetition. Alongside students' perspectives about teacher-led strategies relating to understanding, this section analyses examples drawn from classroom observations. From the role of observer, the positive role of these strategies was obvious as they enabled greater classroom participation and a more animated classroom atmosphere. However, the way that these strategies were used primarily enabled the curriculum to be covered and tasks to be completed. Though these strategies may have supported understanding of what the teacher was explaining, in the present, there was little evidence of students being supported to record their understanding for them to return to later, or of teachers consciously using Kiswahili to support language development in English. This section identifies missed opportunities for supporting students' negotiation between English and Kiswahili.

The classroom language practices most commonly observed in this study might be viewed as a series of trade-offs between 'now' capabilities and 'future' capabilities. Teachers used 'reactive code-switching' to compensate for the fact that students could not understand the notes or explanations that had been given in

English (Probyn, 2015, p. 218), but the failure to support language acquisition in English meant that students' medium- and longer-term language goals and capabilities were unsupported. Students and teachers may have felt that the lesson content had been understood, in the present, but students would be unlikely to be able to use that understanding to perform well in examinations because the testing system is very much contingent on their ability in English (Bartlett and Vavrus, 2013; Mokgwathi and Webb, 2013). The examples in this section support warnings that, although multilingual learning strategies might have the potential to enable the goals of teaching subject content and language development to be approached contemporaneously, they need to be carefully and purposefully planned and structured, otherwise they could actually hinder learning (Clegg and Afitska, 2011; Clegg and Simpson, 2016; Mokgwathi and Webb, 2013; Mwinsheikhe, 2009). Although teachers at both schools acknowledged that they needed to use Kiswahili in the classroom if they wanted students to understand, the monolingual ideal discussed in the previous chapter meant that the use of Kiswahili was lamented as regrettable and teachers did not discuss how code-switching between languages might be used most effectively. Moreover, teachers were in ultimate control of when code-switching was acceptable or not acceptable and, in most cases, it was a strategy that was available to teachers, but not students. This meant that teachers acted as key gatekeepers of student understanding.

Translation

The most commonly observed practice was that teachers (or a student copying from the teacher's notebook) wrote notes on the board in English for students to copy down. The teacher then spoke about these notes in Kiswahili. This practice of translation was considered by most students as essential if they were to be able to understand lesson content. One of the Form Two students in town described this practice and its importance:

> "Those who don't translate to Kiswahili can't be understood. For example those teachers who speak English with you from start to finish, you can't understand. It's necessary that you speak English and then later you come to

speak a little Kiswahili, translating what it means, then later you return again to English." [Female, Form Two, Mlimani, 27/07/15].

A student at the rural school explained that this was the preferred method, and that, if teachers don't do this: *"We feel bad, meaning that it's better that they should teach us and should translate for us, so that we definitely understand well."* [Female, Form One, Kijijini, 18/08/15]. Although students were overwhelmingly positive about this practice of translation, questions have been raised about the extent to which it supports effective learning. For example, Brock-Utne (2004, p. 83) notes that, when translation is common practice, students may not listen carefully to the initial explanation in English because they know it will be followed with Kiswahili. Moreover, the practice of repeating and translating large sections of content is time consuming (Brock-Utne, Desai and Qorro, 2003). It was also observed that, although teachers spoke about the notes that students had copied down, they did not always refer to the notes, and so students did not always know which parts of the teacher's Kiswahili explanation related to which parts of the English they had copied down. This created difficulties later when students were preparing for exams, and contributed to the popularity of memorisation as a study strategy.

In addition to the translation of whole sets of notes or explanations, it was also common to observe the teacher sanctioning the translation of individual words into Kiswahili. The following example demonstrates this in the context of an English lesson where the teacher was discussing environmental degradation, speaking predominantly in English:

> *A male student offers the word "drought" in response to the teacher's explanation and he asks, sounding surprised, "You know the meaning of drought? Drought means what?" A number of students answer together in Swahili, "ukame". The teacher seems pleasantly surprised and moves on. [Observation of Form Two English lesson, Kijijini, 16/04/15].*

The teacher's surprise was clear, as the students were able to transfer their learning of the meaning of the word 'drought' from another subject to English. But the teacher took this as evidence that he was completely understood and moved on, without checking understanding of his broader discussion.

It was repeatedly observed that the point when the translation to Kiswahili occurred represented the end of the discussion and the end of the opportunity for students to grapple with the English. The following example is from a rural English lesson:

> *When the teacher comes to the girl next to me it appears that she has not understood. The teacher approaches her and tries to explain in English but then translates her sentence into Kiswahili, before going back to English and pretty much telling her what to write. I do not hear any audible input from the girl into the exchange. [Observation of Form One English lesson, Kijijini, 21/04/15].*

The teacher's choice to switch to Kiswahili was most likely driven by a combination of her own limited confidence and vocabulary English, as well as the student's struggle. What seems striking, though, is that, having switched to Kiswahili, the teacher assumes that her explanation is understood. This is despite the fact that the student offers no indication of this. In fact, the teacher dictates the correct answer rather than the student correcting her own mistake. Both this example and the teacher discussing drought above represent missed opportunities for language development and encouraging and supporting students to use English. In a study in secondary classrooms in Botswana, Mokgwathi and Webb (2013, p. 121) link the use of code-switching with a reduction in opportunities to practise English, which they argue has a negative effect on students' confidence, resulting in 'a 'fear' of speaking English in class'. The influence of fear is discussed in detail in the next chapter.

The examples so far have focused on the ways that teachers and students translated English notes and individual words to help understanding. But there were also a few occasions where translation was not used, but might have really helped with clarity. One memorable example was a Form Two lesson at Mlimani School which was focused around the use of conjunctions. In my fieldnotes I noted feeling very uncomfortable as the teacher struggled to elicit a definition from students, in English, of how the words 'because' and 'unless' should be used. The teacher did not allow students to look back at their notes and even those with stronger English were visibly struggling. Despite students declaring at one point: *"Hatujui maana ya maneno. [We don't know the meaning of the words]." [Observation, Form Two*

English lesson, Mlimani, 15/04/15], the key terms that were under discussion in the lesson were never translated into Kiswahili. This is just one of a number of examples where translation of these key terms might have cleared up confusion and enabled more students to access the learning. This example also points to the important observation that not all teachers used Kiswahili in their lessons as much as others. Some urban teachers who were themselves more confident with English used very little Kiswahili when delivering the content of their lessons.

When translations were offered, it was very rare that they were written down, which meant that students might not retain the information. For example, two rural students explained:

> *"Student 1: If the teacher only says the meaning of the word once in the classroom…you find that on another day we have forgotten.*
>
> *Student 2: From my part, the teacher can teach something just this minute and if they come to ask me, I have already forgotten. I ask, "Teacher, what are you asking?" and the teacher says, "I have taught you this right now and you don't understand!" [Two female students, Form One, Kijijini, 25/08/15].*

Although students in one interview did talk about noting down Kiswahili translations above their English notes, this was certainly not a majority practice. I specifically watched for students writing and the few examples when this happened outside of the times when they were copying notes or completing exercises were definitely exceptions to the norm. Most students only wrote anything down when directed to by the teacher.

With very few exceptions, translation was a teacher-controlled activity, which meant that teachers also controlled what students would have the opportunity to understand. Code-switching, though regularly employed by teachers, could only be used by students when sanctioned. Students suggested that this restriction limited their ability to participate and respond to teachers' questions. One student explained:

> *"…the teachers ask in English, then they translate for us, and if we ask them if they want the answer in **Swahili language or English language**, they say **English language**, so then every person feels weak. Even if they have a question they won't ask it." [Female, Form One, Kijijini, 18/08/15].*

Student-student discussion in the classroom was overwhelmingly in Kiswahili, even when students were engaged in directed exercises. But when addressing and responding to teacher questions, the expectation was that students would speak English. On numerous occasions, I observed a student struggling to express their answer in English and the teacher either dismissed them as wrong, or moved to another student before the first had finished. One notable exception to this is discussed in the final section of the chapter.

Use of repetition and examples

This sub-section is in part an extension of the previous discussion about translation because, when students talked about teachers' use of examples and their willingness to repeat information, they were overwhelmingly talking about examples given in Kiswahili and teachers repeating their points in Kiswahili. For example, one student clarified:

> *"Even in the classroom, if the teacher uses the English language, you can't understand until you ask them to repeat again. And if they repeat, it means they translate into Kiswahili." [Male, Form Four, Kijijini, 27/08/15].*

However, these pedagogical tools are worthy of special attention because they were mentioned as valued by students above and beyond direct translation of notes. Moreover, in addition to facilitating understanding of the content that was being delivered, these strategies also had a positive influence on classroom atmosphere and students' relationships with teachers. The importance of this is explored further in chapter 9 which looks in more detail at how students' comfort and emotions in the classroom influence both their understanding and capability to participate.

Students appreciated teachers who were willing to revisit and repeat information. One student was particularly enthusiastic about one of the student teachers: *"And if we tell her we haven't understood, she repeats again. She can repeat even 5 times or 6 until we understand" [Female, Form One, Kijijini, 18/08/15].* This enthusiasm was contrasted with comments that were made as part of an activity, run by the student researchers, about what makes a good / bad teacher.

234

One student suggested that a teacher's willingness to respond to students' questions was a distinguishing factor:

> *"The student can go after…a teacher with good manners, because they are able to explain to the student. The bad-mannered teacher might chase them off, saying, "I don't have the time to explain to you". And the student leaves." [Male, Form One, Kijijini, 25/07/15].*

A teacher's willingness to make time to go over material again was highly valued by students and was interpreted as a demonstration that those teachers cared about the students.

In addition to appreciating teachers who would repeat information, students also highlighted the importance of teachers' explanations and their use of examples in enabling understanding. Responding to a question about what makes a good teacher, one student explained: *"As I see it, the teacher who teaches well is the one who teaches with examples" [Female, Form One, Kijijini, 18/08/15].* There are, of course, many different forms that examples could take. One urban group of students were particularly enthusiastic about a student teacher who came to class with visual aids to support their understanding of geographical concepts, such as time-zones. Another group of students commented that they liked it when they could see how a concept was applied through short tasks and exercises. From lesson observations, though, perhaps the most powerful uses of examples were when the teacher used Kiswahili to expand their explanations and to tell stories that made their teaching point relevant to students' own lives. One of the rural English teachers was particularly adept at this. In one lesson he was trying to teach a set reading text with only one copy of the book. The book was passed from student to student who took turns to read in English. The story was about a female bus driver and I have written in the observation notes:

> *The teacher is translating the parts of the story that have been read into Kiswahili and using Kiswahili to explain it and to give examples of different ideas that students might have experienced in their lives. One sentence talks about the fact that the bus driver's vitumbua[39] are so good that other drivers say that they cannot drive in the morning until they have had one. He*

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[39] Vitumbua are similar to doughnuts, but they are made of rice. They are often eaten for breakfast with sweet tea.

discusses this in Kiswahili, explaining that it is a joke and obviously not really true. There is quite a lot of laughter from students. The use of Kiswahili and animated examples leads to quite a lot of response and laughter from students.

He uses Kiswahili, along with a simple diagram that he draws on the board to demonstrate why the driver must watch the road carefully when she is driving. He expands by linking his description to stories about accidents on the road between Mbeya and Iringa (this teacher is from Mbeya). He tells a story, first in English, about how people bet on the speed of the bus and when it comes to the village they stand by the side of the road and encourage it to go on faster so that they win. When he tells it in English there is no response from the students, but there is laughter at the Kiswahili translation. He also seems more animated when he repeats the story in Kiswahili. [Observation of Form Two English lesson, Kijijini, 21/04/15].

This teacher was particularly charismatic and well-liked by students. This example goes some way to demonstrating why. Although this lesson was essentially passive for students with the exception of when they might be asked to read, the teacher's use of explanations that made the aspects of the story relevant to students' lives, along with the fact they were delivered in a language students understood well, led to a positive classroom atmosphere filled with laughter. This also acts as an example of the 'social-psychological' role of code-switching, discussed also by Mokgwathi and Webb in their Botswana study, where the use of a familiar language can 'reduce the social distance between them [teachers] and their learners' (2013, p. 116).

Despite the fact that this English teacher's use of relevant explanation and examples helped students to understand the story as it was being read, this lesson still did not include opportunities for students to negotiate understanding between English and Kiswahili because it was all controlled and delivered by the teacher. Another example from a different lesson with the same teacher further demonstrates that teacher control can act as a limitation on opportunities for student learning. Students had been listening to a story about an elderly woman who was attacked by thieves that she had let into her home. It had been delivered initially in English but also translated into Kiswahili in this particular teacher's animated style. At the end, the teacher wrote a series of questions on the board that had been provided at the end of the story. One question asked students to say whether the

following statement was true or false: 'Aunt Eti was killed because of her kindness'. In my observation notes, I wrote the following:

> *(I noted down when I saw this statement that it was good to see a question that required interpretation of the story – when students came to answer it, though, they all agreed that it was false and the teacher agreed, saying that she is killed just for her money – my initial reaction to this statement was that it was true because it was her kindness that led her to invite the thieves into her home. I was sorry here that it was decided that this statement had a clear 'right' answer!) [Observation Form Two English Lesson, Kijijini, 24/04/15].*

This moment felt like a missed opportunity for student discussion and for the teacher to develop a more nuanced understanding of the meaning of kindness. The example suggests that the understanding of both the students and the teacher was limited to the literal fact that the thieves killed the woman because they wanted her money. No-one suggested any alternative interpretation of the story, which would have indicated a deeper level of understanding. It is also an example of the acceptance that there is one correct answer to any question, something that often seemed to shut down opportunities for extending learning. Qorro (2009b, p. 71) points to this issue when she argues that 'the language of instruction puts limitations on the teachers and the students to an extent that crucial classroom activities such as critical thinking…become impossible'.

This section has demonstrated the key role played by teachers in influencing students' capabilities relating to understanding. It has highlighted the importance of translation and the use of relevant examples in enabling students to understand the content that is being covered, but it has also pointed to a number of missed opportunities. In these situations, the way that Kiswahili was used, or not used, to enable understanding limited and closed-down opportunities for language development. Similar patterns of teacher-controlled and limited classroom dialogue have been observed in numerous studies in contexts where both teachers and students are not proficient in the language of instruction (Brock-Utne, 2004; Hornberger and Chick, 2001; Kiramba and Smith, 2019; Mwinsheikhe, 2009; Ngwaru, 2011; Rubagumya, 2003). It has been suggested that these strategies suit both

groups because they help teachers to retain control in a situation where their linguistic weakness feels threatening and allow students to feel like they are participating in learning, even when their level of understanding is low. In fact, it has been suggested that these forms of predictable classroom code-switching and 'safe-talk' represent the 'collusion of teachers and pupils in mutual face-saving over the adequacy of their classroom interaction' (Arthur, 1996, p. 17; see also Chick, 1996; McGlynn and Martin, 2009). However, these strategies also represent a trade-off between achieving 'now' capabilities, such as progressing through the lesson and covering curriculum content, and students' 'future' valued capabilities related to language. This section has also highlighted the interconnection between teachers' and students' valued capabilities, particularly as students' opportunities for understanding are so shaped by the actions, abilities and choices of their teachers.

Student negotiations of (and around) understanding

The discussion above has drawn attention to the fact that not all teachers were able or willing to continue returning to subject content until all students understood. Where they were not able to rely on the teacher to facilitate understanding, or if they forgot the meaning of notes that were translated in class, students talked about a variety of strategies that they could employ, but some of these were more accessible to certain students than others. If understanding was ultimately beyond a student's grasp, students talked about using the strategy of 'cramming' or memorisation to bypass the need for full understanding.

Dictionaries and bilingual textbooks

The previous chapter presented some students' comments about shortages of books and material resources and these were widely considered to be necessary to support understanding. Answering what she would prioritise if she were the Minister for Education, one student explained:

> *"I would like to contribute to being a school that has the idea of giving books in English and Kiswahili, together with dictionaries…so that all people could know how to translate English" [Female, Form Two, Kijijini, 20/08/15].*

A few students did have their own dictionaries in lessons. In one observation, I noted that one dictionary had made its way around most of the students in the class, though it wasn't clear what students were looking up or if it supported the learning in the lesson. Teachers also frequently appealed to students to buy dictionaries, sometimes quite forcefully. After giving back papers from an internal school exam, one teacher stated:

> *"Make sure you go and buy dictionaries…that's why you failed your test and your examination…buy dictionaries and then sit and read them". [From observation notes from a Form Two English lesson, Mlimani, 15/04/15].*

Although both students and teachers talked about the importance of dictionaries, there were no examples observed where use of dictionaries or bilingual books were having a clearly positive impact on understanding. I did not observe any teachers incorporating the use of a dictionary into their lesson. There was a lesson entitled 'Using a Dictionary', taught by a mathematics teacher, in the first few weeks of Form One at Mlimani School, when all lessons were taken over by a 6 week introductory English course, but it was lecture-based. One student did talk about dictionaries being used in class, explaining:

> *"…maybe there is…an English word that the teacher has mentioned and after every person asks them, they see that we don't know it. Maybe the teacher themselves doesn't know this word. In the classroom we tell someone to search for its meaning in the dictionary." [Male, Form Two, Mlimani, 23/07/15].*

But in the same interview there was also evidence from another student, Michael, that dictionaries or bilingual books were not always as useful as they were positioned. One student said: *"I have this book that has Kiswahili and English…but I feel this book isn't helping yet…I read, but I feel that it isn't helping" [Male, Form Two, Mlimani, 23/07/15].* The textbook that Michael is referring to has subject content in English, along with a few diagrams, on the left-hand page, while exactly the same content is written in Kiswahili on the right-hand page. There is no guidance for students about how to move between the two languages and, without some understanding of the grammatical structures of both languages, it would also be challenging to identify which words in English correspond to which words in

Kiswahili.[40] It is also important to note that Michael's family had been able to purchase this textbook for him, it was not available in school. For many families, the finances to be able to purchase textbooks were unavailable.

'Cooperation' with/from others

In the discussion in the previous chapter of enabling and constraining factors for the capability of learning English, access to out-of-school support, such as private tutoring or an English-speaking family member, has already been highlighted. These points were repeated in reference to the issue of understanding. For example, when I was teaching English to a Form One group at Mlimani School, there was one student who regularly caught my attention because she always chose to sit in the back and was often joking with a friend. I asked her if she understood what was happening in the lessons and she explained that she understood just a little, but that she was not worried because her father, who was a university professor, would explain it to her at home. This additional support was not available to everyone, though. Students from the rural school often noted in interviews that their parents were not educated. It was also perhaps one of the most striking points of comparison from the background profiles that I asked students in some of the classes at each school to complete, that many of the students in town had elder siblings who had completed Form Four. Some students were quick to point out that this was not always an advantage, though, particularly when siblings lived away from home, or when the household chores did not leave time for asking questions.

Another additional form of support that was more immediately available to students during lessons or during the school day was other students. Katrin, a Form Two student in town, explained that she could call upon a classmate if there was something she didn't understand:

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[40] At the time this research was conducted, the Language Supportive Teaching and Textbooks in Tanzania project was developing textbooks for mathematics, biology and English that included language notes and glossaries aimed to support language development as well as the understanding of subject content. (See: https://lstttanzania.wordpress.com/). There are also a number of published papers relating to this project (for example see Barrett *et al.*, 2014; Gabrieli, Sane and Alphonce, 2018; William and Ndabakurane, 2017).

"…for example you are with your friend…you can ask them "excuse me, please can you explain this here to me". They will explain to you. Later you will tell them, "please translate for me into Kiswahili what this question says"…" [Form Two, Mlimani, 14/08/15].

It has already been explained that, particularly in town, there were students in most classes who had a stronger grasp of English. They were regularly called upon by their classmates for support, both inside and outside of lessons. Some students, though not Katrin, reported that copying from a stronger student was also common, even during exams. Cheating in examinations has been reported as a regular occurrence in Tanzania with some arguing that the language situation and related teaching styles actually encourage it (Brock-Utne, 2004; Joyce-Gibbons *et al.*, 2018; Lyakurwa, 2012; Wandela, 2014). Katrin highlighted exams as particularly frustrating because this strategy of asking others for help is not available to her. She gave an example of a time when she had got 2 marks, but her friend had got 50. She protested, *"if that question were given in Kiswahili I would be able to get it"* [Form Two, Mlimani, 14/08/15]. Chapter 9 returns to the subject of peer language support because, although it played a key role in students' negotiations of learning and understanding, it also caused some tensions in relationships between students.

'Cramming' / memorisation

When students acknowledged that they couldn't understand, or couldn't understand fully enough to be able to respond to verbal or written questions, many of them talked about the strategy of 'cramming' or memorisation.[41] One student explained: *"Many they memorise (cram)…many memorise, they don't understand what is written there"* [Female, Form One, Mlimani, 28/08/15]. The prevalence of memorisation in Tanzania has been widely acknowledged by students, teachers, parents and scholars (Hachmeier, 2013; Nomlomo and Vuzo, 2014; Qorro, 2009b; Vavrus, Bartlett and Salema, 2013), but it has also been criticized, with Qorro (2009b, p. 73) associating it with a mode of schooling that 'becomes the best recipe to learn nothing'.

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[41] Students and teachers used the Kiswahili word 'kukariri' to describe this practice and translated it into English as 'cramming'.

The students in this study, on the whole, thought that memorisation was a negative and undesirable practice, with several students noting that it was a high-risk strategy that could fail them. For example, one rural student suggested that regular reliance on memorisation could actually prevent you from being able to understand:

> "Maybe in your work you are already used to memorising, so…you can't understand. Maybe you have sat in the exam room, you have been given your exam paper and you begin the exam, but now every question tells you to explain. But for you who have memorised, you can't do anything…you will fail to write…because you didn't understand, you are used to memorising". [Male, Form One, Kijijini, 25/08/15].

Not everyone was quite so negative about the strategy of memorisation, though. One student noted that, when 'cramming' you learned past questions and their answers. She explained: *"Some questions are changed to be different, but it's not all that are changed…"* This student accepted that it was true that you might fail on the questions that were different, *"but all those other questions that you have memorised you can answer them well and it will only be that one question where you lose marks"* [Female, Form Two, Mlimani, 14/08/15]. This student seemed to be arguing that memorisation was a better strategy than not being able to answer at all. Hachmeier's (2013, p. 42) interviews with Tanzanian youth who had completed secondary school also demonstrated ambivalent feelings towards the strategy of 'cramming', though they all recognised that it was related to not being able to understand the subject content.

The prevalence of memorisation within experiences of schooling, and the role that it plays in side-stepping the fact that students don't fully understand, has significant consequences for the education process. One student drew stark attention to this when she explained: *"The teacher isn't understood because in the past even they didn't study, they did the work of memorising…they didn't understand completely."* [Female, Form One, Mlimani, 28/08/15]. Qorro (2009b, p. 68) addresses this issue head on, arguing that, when a student who did not have a good grasp of English and understanding of the subject content goes on to become a teacher, this perpetuates a process of 'recycling poor-quality education and poor English

language'. There are a number of studies that highlight mistakes made by teachers and moments in lessons where the limitations of teachers' English results in confusion for students (Malekela, 2003; Vavrus, 2002b; Vuzo, 2010; Wedin, 2010). This study could offer numerous other examples. When students struggle to understand, teachers who do not have a sound level of English, or are not confident with using English, are less able to employ the strategies discussed earlier in this chapter to help them to understand. As a result, students become even more reliant on support outside of school, from each other, and ultimately memorisation.

What if students were encouraged to connect language capabilities?

> *The teacher asked if there were any questions and one boy towards the front left hand side asked the meaning of the word 'caravan'. The teacher asked if the other students knew the meaning and they said "no". The teacher gave a definition first in English, before explaining also in Kiswahili. He then asked the group, "thumbs up or thumbs down?" Some students (though not all) do it. He follows up with two individual students who had put their thumbs down. [Observation, Form Four History lesson, Kijijini, 16/04/15].*

The description above is drawn from observation notes of a history lesson at the rural school and is offered as a rare exception to the usual pattern of checking understanding discussed towards the beginning of this chapter. This teacher still regularly used translation as a key tool for facilitating understanding, as well as some of the 'safe talk' strategies, such as repeating sentences for students to complete in chorus. However, he seemed to go further to ensure that individual students understood the content and the language. Moreover, students in his lesson seemed more comfortable saying, or indicating using the 'thumbs up, thumbs down' tool, that they did not understand.

Another example from the same teacher shows him actively creating opportunities for students to practise and develop confidence in their use of English:

> *The teacher asks about the Triangular Trade, saying, "every name has a reason". One student offers an answer that includes what each of the countries involved did. The teacher asks another boy to make the same point, but to "make clear that point". After that, a third boy volunteers to try. All of the students seem to understand, but are struggling to express*

their points clearly. [Observation, Form Four History Lesson, Kijijini, 21/04/15].

Recognising that students are struggling to express themselves in English, this teacher encourages repetition and renegotiation of the point until he, and the students, are happier with the clarity. On other occasions, he encouraged students to make their points first in Kiswahili if they were struggling, and then either he helped with the translation, or asked for student volunteers to translate. This was a departure from other lessons I observed where an answer that lacked clarity would commonly be dismissed as wrong.

These examples are offered here because they point to the possibility of an alternative to the patterns that are discussed in the rest of this chapter. The teacher from whose lessons these examples are drawn appeared to demonstrate a flexible and confident movement back and forth between languages in a way that other teachers did not. Moreover, rather than retaining sole control of the code-switching, he allowed, and encouraged, his students to do the same. These are features associated with the multilingual practice of translanguaging that was introduced in chapter 3 of this thesis. From the translanguaging perspective, English and Kiswahili would not be viewed as two completely separate languages, but seen more flexibly as parts of an individual's 'linguistic repertoire' (Horner and Weber, 2018, p. 3). Viewed this way, use of Kiswahili in the classroom is no longer a regrettable necessity in the face of students' linguistic shortcomings, but rather the students' familiar language is viewed is an integral part of the negotiation of language learning and the construction of understanding. One student discussed the value of switching back and forth between languages:

> *"… for this other language [English] to properly go into the brain it's required that they should speak a little and then mix a little with Kiswahili….A person gets understanding that they compare…" [Female, Form One, Mlimani, 14/08/15].*

Translanguaging highlights and utilises connections between students' different languages. By welcoming students' existing language knowledge and understanding into the classroom, this form of multilingual practice also aims to build upon connections between school and home (Clegg and Simpson, 2016), and between the

knowledge that was already acquired at primary school and the new content and concepts tackled at secondary school. As such it has the potential to ameliorate some of the concerns expressed by advocates of Kiswahili as the sole LOI that were discussed in chapter 2 (Malekela, 2003; Rubagumya, 2000; 2009; Vuzo, 2018). Observing the lessons in which the teacher used a more flexible and constructive approach to code-switching also suggested that translanguaging might encourage positive connections between teachers and students.

The vast majority of the language practice observed as part of this study, and observed in other formal learning contexts in Tanzania, could not be considered translanguaging. In an analysis of classroom interaction at the University of Dar es Salaam, Shartiely (2016) discusses the growing literature around translanguaging, but concludes that it is not appropriate for the practices he observed for two main reasons. The first is that code-switching was 'one-sided…and gives learners no opportunity to participate in the process'. Shartiely's second reason is that the lecturers in his study 'perceive the switching between two languages as transgressing boundaries' (Shartiely, 2016, p. 220). Like the vast majority of teachers in this study, they viewed different languages as completely separate and the use of Kiswahili in lectures is positioned as a regrettable necessity when students cannot understand using solely English. This chapter, and this thesis more broadly, argues that the monolingual ideal that underpins the positioning of different languages as disconnected from one another, and in opposition, limits discussion and exploration of the potential for effective multilingual practice.

It is undoubtedly also significant that this teacher spoke English well and was more confident with the language than many of his colleagues. This may be a warning that effective classroom translanguaging requires teachers who are strong in both (or all) the languages being used. Certainly the majority of translanguaging research has been in contexts where participants might be described as 'bilingual' with more equal competence in both languages (Tikly, 2016)[42], though examples of

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[42] For example, translanguaging has been an influential concept in discussions and studies of Welsh-medium schooling in Wales (Jones, 2017), and of bilingual students in schools in the USA (García and Kleyn, 2016).

non-formalised translanguaging facilitating student understanding have been observed in other less well-resourced contexts where students are negotiating an unfamiliar LOI (Krause and Prinsloo, 2016). But the fact that the more fluid approach to the use of English and Kiswahili in this current study came alongside an atmosphere where students seemed to be more welcome and more confident to indicate that they had not understood something is important for the discussion in this chapter about negotiations of understanding. Though more observation of those lessons and discussion with students would have been necessary to understand if and how the willingness to indicate lack of understanding related to the way that the teacher used and switched between English and Kiswahili, these lessons suggest that there might be alternative approaches to multilingual learning that better support both student understanding and language acquisition.

Conclusion

Hornberger (2005, p. 607) asserts that 'learning is maximized when they [students] are allowed and enabled to draw from across all their existing language skills…, rather than being constrained and inhibited from doing so by monolingual language assumptions and practices.' This chapter has argued that, although use of Kiswahili was common practice in the lessons observed as part of this study, it was rarely used effectively to enable learning either of English, or of subject content. Instead, the form of teacher-controlled translation that was most common resulted in only temporary understanding for some students who were still left without the linguistic resources to be able to translate and negotiate understanding for themselves. When teachers were unable or unwilling to help students to understand, they relied heavily on others, either their classmates or family and friends to help facilitate understanding. But when these options were not available, students regularly resorted to memorisation, attempting to negotiate around the requirement for understanding.

Read together with the previous chapter, this chapter asserts that the monolingual ideal of 'English Only' prevents teachers from discussing how Kiswahili might be most effectively used to both enable students to understand subject

content and develop their ability in English. As a result, these two learning goals are brought into tension, forcing trade-offs between 'now' capabilities and 'future' capabilities. But the example given in this final section of the chapter suggests that the goals of understanding lesson content and supporting the development of English might not necessarily be mutually exclusive and points to the potential of a flexible, but purposeful, use of multiple languages to support these multiple goals. The data from the majority of the chapter should not be overlooked, however, and should act as a warning against assuming that all bilingual practice positively supports learning. This chapter has highlighted examples of code-switching strategies that limited learning and has pointed to the negative effects that these can have on students' emotions and relationships. The next chapter turns to explore the social-emotional impact of existing school language practices in more detail.

9. The Influence of Fear on Students' Capabilities and Functionings

During today's English lesson Alisha was one of the students selected to come up and present the sentences they had been working on in groups (c. every 3ʳᵈ-4ᵗʰ student was selected so 20 students total). She was probably the 11ᵗʰ or 12ᵗʰ student to come out (so she had seen plenty of examples). She made her reluctance clear as she shuffled her shoes heavily to the front of the classroom. But she absolutely refused to face the class – she stood facing the door. It did not initially look like she had brought any notes with her, although I later saw that she had a piece of paper screwed up under her headscarf.

The teacher kept trying to get her to turn around and speak (I think that she was trying to encourage her, but her tone, as usual, was quite stern and she was quickly getting frustrated). After a few minutes of the teacher trying, but Alisha refusing to turn around and speak, the teacher sent her out of the classroom while she continued with the next few students. When she was called back in, she still refused to face the class. The teacher physically took hold of her arms and tried to turn her around, but Alisha absolutely refused to change the direction of her feet, which stayed pointing out of the door. Eventually, the teacher gave up and Alisha returned to her seat.

At the end of the lesson, after the teacher had left, I asked Alisha why she hadn't just read her sentences. I knew that she had correct sentences because I had seen her group give their answers to Aiko (a student with good English) to check and she had even added more examples. I asked, "Kwa nini hukusoma tu? Ulikuwa na sentensi nzuri" [Why didn't you just read them? You had good sentences.]. Alisha said nothing, but she turned away from me and folded her entire body over as if she were trying to fit her head under the desk. I asked, "kwa nini unaogopa?" [Why are you afraid?] and one of her friends replied, "anajiona aibu" [She feels shy/shame].

[Researcher's observation notes, 29/04/2015].

This chapter returns largely to the classroom and to students' silences and argues that the communicative role of language as the medium of understanding and learning is closely connected to students' experiences of 'language as being'. The description above of Alisha's experience in a Form Two English lesson at Mlimani School demonstrates that issues of language were not limited to the efficiency of verbal communication, but were also experienced emotionally and physically. Although students described a variety of emotions that they experienced in relation

248

to speaking English, including happiness and pride,[43] the predominant emotion that was both discussed and observed was fear. Fear was found to be such a significant part of students' experiences of language in schooling, that this chapter is given over to analysing the work of this and the related emotion, shame, in influencing students' choices and behaviours in relation to language.

The strength of the image of Alisha's avoidance of the speaking task, to the point where she physically tries to make herself smaller and to become less visible while also wrestling with the teacher, might make this a particularly affecting example, but it is only one of many similar moments that I wrote about in my observation and field notes.[44] The previous chapter presented examples of students who attributed silence in response to teachers' questions to lack of understanding. But there were a significant number of students at both schools who insisted that they or their peers might remain silent even when they did know the answer. One student explained: *"It's not that they don't know…but if they are asked…that fear…you find it's difficult" [Male, Form Two, Mlimani, 12/8/15].* In Alisha's case, I knew that she had accurate sentences, written in English, on the piece of paper that she was hiding under her headscarf, and that she had discussed them with other members of her group. She had also observed multiple examples of other students presenting their sentences before her.

This chapter explores students' experiences and negotiations of fear. It introduces a capabilities-based framework for understanding the influence of fear on students' choices in relation to language use and classroom participation. In the context of this framework, this chapter then considers and analyses data relating to the sources of fear in students' experiences of language and learning and different factors that influence students' responses to fear.

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[43] Chapter 6 discussed several examples of students' positive emotions relating to English as part of the discussion of English and aspirations. Moreover, in the same lesson where I observed Alisha's discomfort and fear, I have also made observations about the body language of another student who completed the task well and 'is beaming when she is allowed to sit down again without comment or criticism' [Form Two English lesson, Mlimani, 29/04/15].

[44] The notes from lesson observations include 27 descriptions of students' body language displaying visible discomfort, while there are 5 additional examples of students getting into conflict with the teacher over refusal to contribute or answer a question.

What is fear and what does fear do?

> *"So they break a person's heart…even if you are interested in speaking, you shouldn't speak…because you are afraid." [Karim, Form Four, Kijijini, 27/8/15].*

This statement from Karim at Kijijini School, just two months away from sitting the national examinations, points to one of the greatest puzzles of this research project: why did so many students, who attached significant value to knowing and using English, regularly choose not to participate in activities that would support this aspiration? The previous chapter looked at examples of trade-offs between future capabilities and capabilities in the present, most of which were controlled by the teacher. Karim describes a very common, student-focused trade-off. Explaining why students felt that they shouldn't answer teachers' questions and, instead, should remain silent, one student said: *"you are afraid that if I speak, I will make a mistake, and I will be laughed at" [Male, Form One, Kijijini, 01/08/15].* This explanation was offered at both schools. One urban student asserted, *"You will be laughed at, which means we are afraid of the shame…fear, again" [Female, Form Two, Mlimani, 14/08/15].* Although there were also alternative sources of fear identified, as will be explored later in this chapter, fear of humiliation and shame was extremely prevalent. In the extract that opened this chapter, when Alisha's friend offered an explanation for Alisha's behaviour, she said, *"anajiona aibu".* This could translate as either 'she feels shy' or 'she feels ashamed', but both the strength of Alisha's reaction and students' broader discussions of similar experiences lead me to translate this as an expression of shame. Students felt that remaining silent offered them protection from humiliation and shame, and so a commonly observed and described trade-off was between the capability of avoiding humiliation and shame in the present and participating in the learning activity that might support their longer-term aspirations for learning and using English.

Fear regularly prevented students from responding to teachers' questions at all, even to say "I don't understand" or "I don't know". Instead, it was a common occurrence that a student would stand, knowing that they were being asked a question, but would then say nothing, until told to sit down by the teacher. Since it

is impossible to know when observing these encounters whether the student understood the question or not, the analysis in this section is focused around the capability 'to respond to the question' rather than a requirement to produce the correct answer. Alisha's speaking task is also an example of the requirement to respond to the question, although there was a delay and the opportunity for group work between the question being posed and the answer being expected. This chapter concentrates on verbal questioning and participation, partly because this was most easily observed, but also because fear appeared to have a particularly strong influence on tasks that involved speaking English, most likely because this was a public activity that carried the highest risk of exposure, and thus shame and humiliation. In fact, one student suggested that the requirement to speak English in front of others should be removed completely, arguing: *"It would be better if you give them [students] an exercise book, they answer the question themselves using their own intelligence, and they should give it to you [the teacher]…better than raising hands"* [Female, Form Four, Kijijini, 27/8/15].

The analysis in this chapter presents fear as a negative emotion that commonly resulted in a negative impact on the participation and learning of the students in this study. Fear has repeatedly been identified as a feature of students' schooling experiences in Tanzania and other, similar contexts (Human Rights Watch, 2017; Kiramba, 2018; Magulu, 2016; Makewa, Role and Tuguta, 2013; Mlay, 2010; Mokgwathi and Webb, 2013; Mwinsheikhe, 2009). However, the influence of fear has rarely been considered in detail. By considering fear from the perspective of students' capabilities and functionings, this chapter extends understandings of how fear influences students' behaviours and explores factors that might make some students more resilient to the negative impacts of fear. Several other capability-based studies of education have identified fear as a constraint on learning and student decision-making (Hart, 2012), in particular the capability lists discussed in chapter 4, all of which include a capability relating to emotions (Crosbie, 2014; Mutanga and Walker, 2015; Walker, 2006a; 2006b; Wilson-Strydom, 2015b). Defining the capability of 'emotional integrity and emotions' from her list of capabilities generated with reference to gender equity in South African secondary

schools, Walker (2006b, p. 180) writes that students must have the capability of 'not being subject to fear which diminishes learning, either from physical punishment or verbal attacks'. This chapter offers examples from the current study of both corporal punishment and teachers' criticisms relating to fear, but also highlights the prevalence of students' fear of the laughter and judgement of others. This chapter also goes beyond the identification of fear as a potential learning constraint to offer an analysis of *how* fear works to limit learning and why some students may be more resilient to fear.

To illustrate the points that will be made throughout this chapter, a framework has been designed for conceptualising the influence of fear on students' willingness to respond to questions, the first stage of which is shown in figure 9.1.

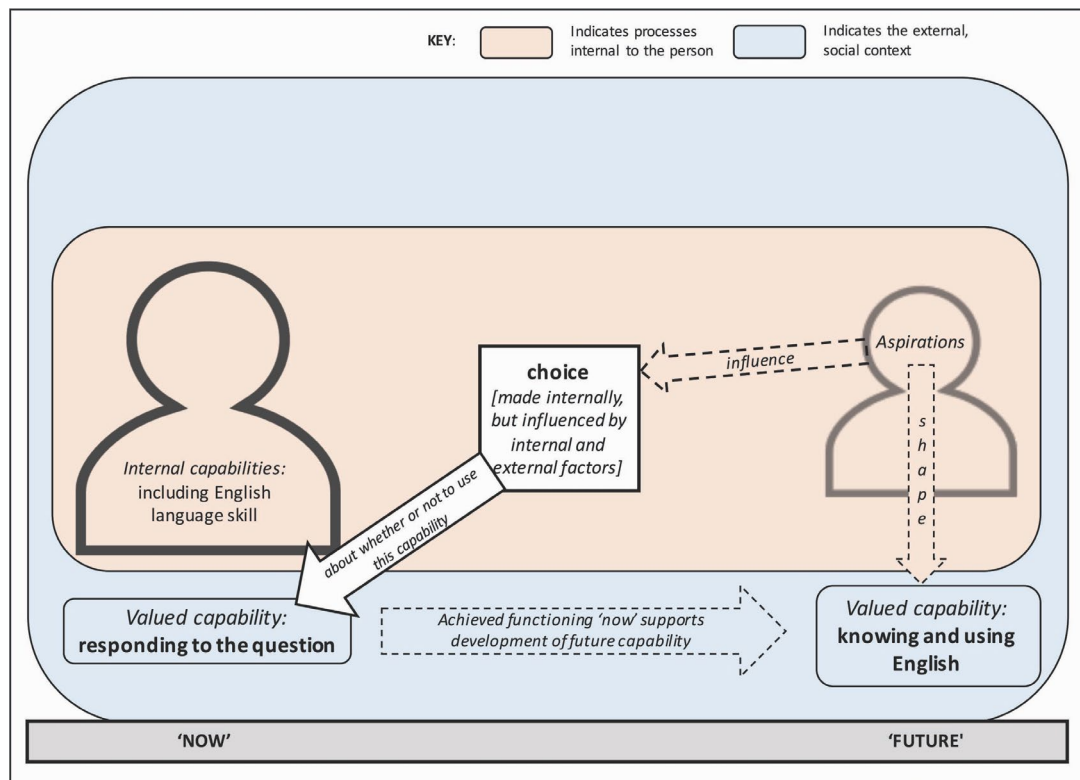

Figure 9.1: The capability of responding to the question

This thesis has argued that students' experiences and negotiations of language-in-education are complex, heterogeneous and are shaped by multiple aspirations and valued capabilities. It would not be helpful to try and represent all of this potential diversity and complexity in one diagram. For analytical clarity, this diagram focuses

on two capabilities. The first is the capability of 'responding to the question', which is valued by students in the present as it is part of the broader capabilities of participating in learning and cooperating with the teacher (see chapter 8). But the diagram also relates this to a valued 'future' capability, 'knowing and using English', which is shaped by students' aspirations for 'becoming' (see chapter 6). Figure 9.1 illustrates that there is an important connection between these two capabilities because 'responding to the question' in the present will support the development of the capability of 'knowing and using English' in the future.

In this diagram, the peach box indicates processes that are internal to the person, including internal capabilities in the present, and future aspirations.[45] These two different points in time are indicated by two person outlines, but they are parts of the same individual. It should be noted that, because the 'now' capability under discussion is 'responding to the question' rather than 'giving a correct answer', a student's internal capability relating to their English language skill should not prevent them from responding, even if it is to indicate that they don't understand. The larger, blue box represents the social context in which a student is situated. Bearing in mind Nussbaum's (2011) conceptualisation of combined capabilities as being constructed of both internal capabilities and external circumstances (see also chapter 4), the social context is depicted in important recognition of the fact that it includes a wide variety of factors that might enable or constrain students' capabilities, many of which have already been discussed in preceding chapters. The notion of choice sits at the centre of this diagram because it plays a key role in the capability approach. Recognising the existence of choice is also important to honouring the fact that students have agency. Figure 9.1 suggests that, faced with ideal conditions, students would face a free choice about whether or not to enact the functioning of 'responding to the question'. The fact that this choice is influenced by their longer-term aspirations relating to 'knowing and using English' might lead us to expect that they would choose to respond to the question, either with an

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[45] Aspiration itself is also a capability that is included explicitly on Walker's capabilities list for South African girls in secondary schooling (2006b; 2007), and included as part of 'imagination' in the other lists discussed in chapter 4. The construction of the capability to aspire has been explored at length by Hart (2012), and aspiration in the context of this study was analysed in chapter 6.

answer or to indicate that they did not understand. But this thesis, making reference to Kleine's (2013) Choice Framework (see chapter 4), has demonstrated that students' agency can be constrained by various factors, including language discourses and societal norms relating to language use. Moreover, it has been suggested that individual students' agency and the extent to which they can negotiate structural constraints is influenced by their access to resources.

In figure 9.2, fear is introduced to the diagram, and as a result, several other adaptations to the basic illustration offered in figure 9.1 are necessary.
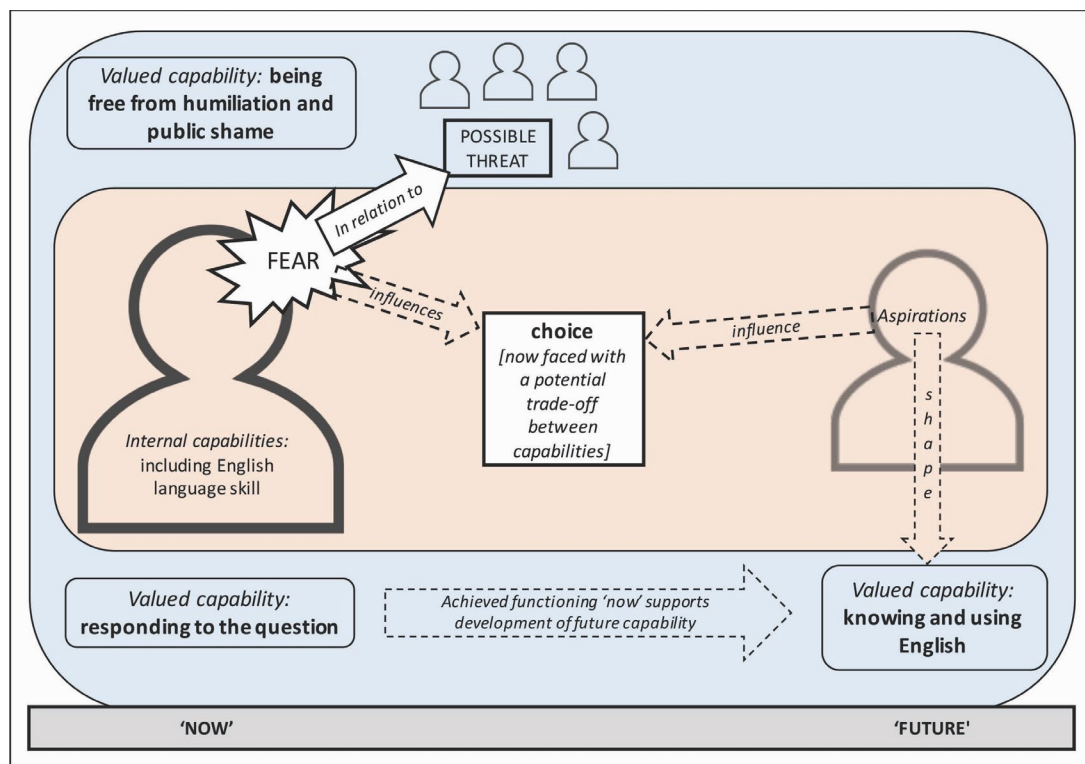
Figure 9.2: The capability of responding to the question in conditions with fear

An additional valued capability is introduced, 'being free from humiliation and public shame', as a way of avoiding the outcome that students fear. This presents students with a choice similar to the trade-off discussed in chapter 8 between the functionings of 'understanding lesson content' in the moment, that was achieved through the use of Kiswahili, and 'development of English' that would support students' future aspirations. In the case of fear, students may feel that they need to trade off the opportunity to respond to the question, which would have supported their learning of English, in order to protect themselves from the possibility of humiliation and

public shame. It is also significant that other people are now specifically identified on the diagram. Although other people are always part of the social context, the fact that students frequently linked their fear to the potential reactions of others emphasises that their influence on individual students' capabilities and choices must be explicitly acknowledged and incorporated into an analysis of the impact of fear. Having introduced fear into the diagram, it is also important to return to the notion of choice and to question whether it is still an appropriate notion for an individual experiencing fear.

Fear, risk evaluation and choice

In Western philosophy, emotions have traditionally been presented as irrational. Nussbaum suggests that emotions have been, in many cases, assumed to have an 'adversarial relation to "rationality" in the sense of cool calculation or cost-benefit analysis' (2001, p. 22). For some, particularly in economics, rational choices would be those which maximise the interests of the individual (Kahneman, 2011, p. 377). However, Robeyns (2016, p. 401) cautions that 'adults frequently make *systematically* irrational or bad choices'. She continues that 'many of our choices are the result of the impulsive, unreflective, habit-driven part of our brain rather than the deliberative and reflective part'. This might be taken to mean, then, that a student's choice to stay silent, rather than to answer the question is an 'irrational' choice made by the impulsive part of the brain. Certainly, the choice to stay silent does not support the development of the functioning 'knowing and using English' that was identified as a common long-term aspiration in chapter 6.

But the influence of emotion should not necessarily lead to the dismissal of choices as 'bad' or 'irrational', rather an emotion response is one part of the information available to the individual in the deliberative process. Nussbaum, arguing for the importance of a 'cognitive/evaluative theory of emotions', asserts that emotions are 'parts, highly complex and messy parts, of this creature's reasoning itself' (2001; 3). Nussbaum's philosophical argument is compatible with theories from psychology. For example, similar to Robeyns's (2016) discussion of there being two different parts of the brain, Kahneman (2011, pp. 20-21) identifies

two particular brain systems, one more 'intuitive' (System 1) and the other more 'deliberate' (System 2).[46] Crucially, though, Kahneman argues that there are interactions between System 1 and System 2, and that, although System 1 might suggest a response to a situation driven by impulse or habit, System 2 has the ability to either accept or override these suggestions (2011). In the case of a student experiencing fear when asked a question in English, both Nussbaum's and Kahneman's arguments suggest that the choice of whether or not to answer the question involves a process of evaluation. Because fear is attached to an object that is associated with danger, in this case the possible reactions of the teacher and other students and the potential for humiliation and public shame, this evaluative process can be considered a risk evaluation.

The following student's description of an experience of fear in an examination can be seen as a clear example of the type of fear reaction associated with System 1:

> *"It reaches the stage that if I go to take the paper it's like I am sweating…my hands are already full of sweat…because of fear. So, I reach there to the exam…if I know everything…some of the things, maybe I know around 80%…When I get there, maybe I start to write broken English, I begin to fill the answers. After the answer 'A' I find that I also fill 'B' because I'm trembling. If I remember the way I did the exam in Form One, I didn't fill in the first answer…because I didn't see it…Because I was afraid." [Male, Form Two, Kijijini, 13/8/16].*

This student found himself unable to complete the exam. This experience can be explained as his System 2 immediately accepting the instinct of his System 1, which was to shut down his ability to focus. This might be seen as an example of a 'fight, flight or freeze' response to danger (Gray and McNaughton, 2000; Heym, Ferguson and Lawrence, 2008). In contrast, when a student says, *"A person is afraid of being laughed at. If they put their hand up and if they ask a question, their classmates will laugh at them." [Male, Form Four, Kijijini, 27/8/15]*, the conditional language he uses suggests that System 2 is weighing up the evidence to make a more conscious decision, even if the choice is still to remain silent.

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[46] Kahneman acknowledges that he has borrowed and developed the labels 'System 1' and 'System 2' from the work of Stanovich and West (2000).

An appreciation of the interactions between System 1 and System 2 adds value to this discussion of the impact of fear on students' capabilities because the experience and influence of fear differed from student to student, suggesting that there were a number of situations in which System 2 chose not to follow the advice of System 1. There were some students who more regularly responded to questions, or who responded to questions in certain circumstances. A small number of students appeared to respond to teachers with some confidence, but for others, fear was visible in their body language or audible in their voice if they did try to speak. All of the students I talked to described feelings of fear in these situations, but some argued that these needed to be ignored. One student with reasonably good English explained that students should, "*Stop listening to people's laughs. Just focus on what you are doing.*" *[Female, Form One, Mlimani, 26/8/15, in English].* It is perhaps impossible, and certainly beyond the scope of this study, to measure the levels of fear that different students experience in different situations, but the final section of this chapter will look more closely at those students who demonstrated more resilience to fear. Having now offered a framework for analysing students' experiences of fear from a capabilities perspective, this chapter turns to students' discussions of fear and why they so frequently felt fearful.

Where does students' fear come from?

Fear and the language of instruction

The use of English as the language of instruction was a powerful source of fear. Students were particularly worried about making mistakes in English and being laughed at. The requirement for students to use English to respond to teachers' questions meant that the chances of making mistakes were high, and so the language of instruction compounded students' fear. One student explained:

> "*…because it's language itself…you know, the words in English. And a person is afraid of being laughed at. If they put their hand up and if they ask a question, their classmates will laugh at them.*" *[Male, Form Four, Kijijini, 27/8/15]*

Fear in the context of foreign language learning is a widely documented and studied phenomenon in the broader literature about second language acquisition (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986; MacIntyre, 2017), but there are relatively few examples of this concept of language anxiety being discussed with reference to the language of instruction in Sub-Saharan Africa (Madonsela, 2015; Opoku-Amankwa, 2009). Pavlenko writes that language anxiety:

> 'stems from perceived threats to the student's sense of security or self-esteem, and from fear of failure, fear of negative evaluation, and apprehensions about communicating in a language in which one may appear incompetent or ridiculous' (Pavlenko, 2005, p. 33).

This description seems to fit particularly well with the feelings of fear that students in this study talked about experiencing when they felt there was an expectation that they would use English.

Students' fear of failure was often expressed as the fear of making mistakes, and students talked about the potential negative reactions of others. The following interview section offers examples of both:

> *"Student 1: They are afraid to try. If you make a mistake they laugh at you.*
>
> *Student 2: (Clicking sound of agreement) You're right! It's completely true…*
>
> *Student 3: If a person gets it wrong even just a little they are laughed at.*
>
> *Student 2: They laugh…or they hiss…*
>
> *Student 1: Even if you just make a little mistake, they look at you and think, "they are retarded…the teacher has already said it, has already explained the spelling and the way of pronouncing it and still they can't get it right"."[Female, Form One, Kijijini, 18/8/15]*

This discussion demonstrates that, in an unfamiliar language, it is not just about giving the wrong answer, but there were a number of different types of mistakes that could be made, including in spelling and pronunciation. This excerpt also offers a variety of different reactions from other students that constitute negative evaluations, including laughing, hissing, and judgements of intelligence. In was also clear from the interviews that these experiences could have an ongoing impact on students' self-esteem. For example, one student explained: *"Your classmates laugh at you until you feel bad and say to yourself, "I won't ask a question again on another*

day"…you are afraid" [Female, Form One, Kijijini, 25/8/15]. This suggests that previous experiences also contribute to students risk evaluations and choices around whether or not to respond to questions.

When students talked about why they laughed at each other's mistakes, despite the fact that the vast majority disliked being laughed at, there was no clear consensus. One of the more common explanations was that this was a learned response that students had become used to and had become a behavioural norm. One student said: *"It's…the habit of the person. They have already given themselves the habit that if someone makes a mistake, it's necessary that I laugh at them."* *[Female, Form Two, Mlimani, 23/7/15].* But a more compelling explanation suggested that some students felt that joining in the laughter might divert attention from the fact that they didn't know the answer either. One student suggested:

> *"And even those who laugh, most of them don't know it [the correct answer]. If they see their classmates are laughing, they laugh too…So the person who doesn't know laughs with gusto until you hear their voice."* [Female, Form One, Kijijini, 25/8/15].

The suggestion here is that joining in the laughter may itself be motivated by fear of being exposed for not knowing the answer and thus experiencing public humiliation and shame.

Fear of public humiliation and shame was common across the experiences of all the students I spoke to in this study, whether they associated it more with the laughter and perceived judgment of their peers or with other forms of criticism and punishment. Writing about the experience of shame related to socioeconomic poverty, Chase and Walker (2013) write:

> 'shame is almost always co-constructed – combining an internal judgement of one's own abilities; an anticipated assessment of how one will be judged by others; and the actual verbal or symbolic gestures of others who consider, or are deemed to consider, themselves to be socially and/or morally superior to the person sensing shame' (Chase and Walker, 2013, p. 740).

Chase and Walker's description is applicable to students' experiences of living in linguistic poverty, where their language skills fall short of the required level. Students' shame does not exist only when it is publicly exposed. Students are

constantly aware that their language skills are not at the expected level. But this 'internal judgment' is combined with fear of the 'anticipated' response of others, highlighting the importance of recognising the role of other people in influencing capability construction and students' choices about which capabilities to enact.

Laughter is an example of the 'verbal or symbolic gestures' that are perceived as signs of negative judgement. Although Chase and Walker make it clear that an individual experiencing shame might make inaccurate assumptions about the thoughts and judgements of others there were examples in the data from this study that students' competence in English was used as a measure of students' overall intelligence and abilities. Similar to the findings of Opoku-Amankwa's (2009) study in Ghana that showed that students who struggled with English were often labelled as 'weak' overall, those who struggled to express themselves and demonstrate learning in English were sometimes labelled as 'slow' learners.[47] It is highly likely that this belief would influence the thinking of the students. Moreover, although teachers often spoke of the importance of making mistakes, suggesting that "then you will remember", their behaviour reinforced the value of correctness. There were numerous examples of students' answers being dismissed not only for being incorrect, but for not being the answer that the teacher wanted, even when I believed they were perfectly acceptable alternative answers to the teacher's question. The risk of public humiliation and shame was already high, and students were afraid of the reactions of their classmates to mistakes. If the teacher did not acknowledge the student's effort, or even correct their mistakes, there was little incentive for the student to take the risk.

Many students also experienced other forms of poverty and so their disadvantage, and shame, may have been compounded (Smith and Barrett, 2011; Tikly, 2016). At Mlimani School, the presence of students who had attended private, English-medium primary schools served to strengthen the feeling for students from

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[47] Examples of teachers making this assumption are recorded in fieldnotes from 24/04/15 at Kijijini School and 05/03/15 and 31/07/15 from Mlimani School. See also Walker (2019) for discussion of how these labels affected educational inclusion in secondary schools in Morogoro Rural and Handeni districts in Tanzania.

government, Kiswahili-medium primary schools that they were not good enough. One student explained:

> *"If they [students from government primary schools] come here they discriminate against themselves because there are others that they see know English…they are already used to speaking Kiswahili. English was only one subject [at their primary schools]. It contributes to failure, because they are afraid of those who came from private [schools]. They think, "Ah. If I go there they will put me down, they will laugh at me and look at me like I am boastful, they will laugh at me." For this reason you are afraid, which means that it contributes to failure." [Male, Form Two, Mlimani, 14/8/15]*

The students who did have a more established background in English, and managed better with the LOI relative to other students, still fell short of the 'English-Only' ideal and described feelings of shame. Their specific experiences are discussed further later in the chapter.   Although there were no students at Kijijini School who had attended private, English-medium primary schools, there was a private primary boarding school just 2km away, and teachers and students talked about the advantages of both English-medium primary schooling and boarding schools. As a result, students had a strong perception of their relative disadvantage, something that Unterhalter (2012a) has pointed to having a significant impact on students' identification of constraints, compared to students who live in situations of absolute poverty.

Students were painfully aware of their shortcomings in English and the expectation and ideal that classroom participation should be in English undoubtedly contributed to the prevalence of fear in their experiences of schooling. But the fear they described was not solely language anxiety related to the use of an unfamiliar language. Fear was also employed by teachers as a conscious strategy.

Fear as a teaching strategy

The use of fear as a tool in schooling has been recognised across a wide variety of contexts. It is perhaps most obvious where corporal punishment is still practised, as it is widely in Tanzania. But even in countries where physical violence in schools is both illegal and culturally unacceptable, fear in the form of threats relating to other forms of punishment or consequence, commonly the threat of failure, are regularly

used by teachers trying to motivate students to behave or to work harder (Harber, 2004; Jackson, 2010; 2013; Sprinkle *et al.*, 2006).

Corporal punishment (CP) was a routine practice in both schools in this study. The use of CP in schools is legal in Tanzania, but within limits set out by the government (Hecker *et al.*, 2014; Human Rights Watch, 2017). Most teachers in this study were aware of limits, but consciously disregarded them, making it clear that they believed that the use of CP was necessary both to control students, but also to 'force' them to learn. [48] This is in line with the findings of other regional and national studies (Feinstein and Mwahombela, 2010; Hecker *et al.*, 2014; Human Rights Watch, 2017; Tao, 2015). Approaching teachers' behaviours from the perspective of the capability approach, Tao (2015) has suggested that Tanzanian teachers use CP in order to contend with constraints on teachers' valued capabilities, such as: 'being able to help students learn'; 'not losing face'; and 'being respected'. This explanation seems particularly applicable to the teachers at Kijijini School who expressed anxiety about poor student performance. One teacher, who was engaged in an argument and accusing another teacher of not being 'serious' and not hitting students hard enough explained: *"we are aiding them to learn…we will be blamed when they fail."* *[Recorded in fieldnotes, 30/4/15].*

In addition to using fear of corporal punishment as a tool for compliance, teachers frequently used 'fear appeals' (Sprinkle *et al.*, 2006). These are statements intended to evoke fear of failure in students, and motivate them to alter their behaviour. One of the most common fear appeals I observed was the teacher stating that, if a student couldn't, or wouldn't do something now, it would be a problem in the future. For example, in the observation notes from a Form Two English lesson at Mlimani School, I have written: *"The teacher switches to Kiswahili to complain that the students are not contributing answers. She says that if they will not answer now in Form 2, it will become a big problem for Form 3."* *[22/7/15].* In another Form Two English lesson, but this one at Kijijini School, when the teacher asked a specific

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[48] Teachers demonstrated different understandings of what the limits on CP were. Confusion might relate to changes to, and relaxation of, the government's policy towards corporal punishment that were suggested in 2013 by the then Deputy Minister for Education and Vocational Training, Philipo Mulugo (see Human Rights Watch, 2017 and Hecker et al., 2014).

student for an answer and she did not respond, the teacher laughed and said to her, *"Shida kwenda Ulaya!" (You will have a problem going to Europe!) [recorded in observation notes, 30/4/15].* Statements such as these are intended by teachers to draw an emotional reaction from students that will urge them to participate more or work harder.

There is some research that demonstrates the use of 'fear appeals' to be effective, but it is stressed that the threat must be accompanied by a clear statement of what the individual could do to avoid the negative outcome (Sprinkle *et al.*, 2006). In many of the cases I observed, teachers' invocations of the possibility of failure were not accompanied by clear advice and it was rare for the teacher to follow up on a student's silence, checking for example to see if they needed the question or learning point repeated. There were some examples where the teacher's expressed anger at a student's silence did lead the student to respond. For example, in the observation notes from another Form Two English lesson, I have written:

> *"Another girl was very reluctant to speak when she was called upon and was told, "Salma! Shame on you". When she eventually gave a sentence, it was correct and the teacher told the other students to clap for her." [Form Two English Lesson, Mlimani, 11/2/15]*

The teacher's admonishment in this case motivated Salma to respond, and when she did, she was praised for giving a correct answer. This was not the most common outcome in the data, though, and many teachers failed to acknowledge students' efforts in similar situations. It is also of interest to this chapter that the teacher appeals to Salma's sense of shame. If Salma had not been confident that her answer was correct, it is possible that she would have chosen not to answer the question, as the majority of students in this study talked about their fear of making mistakes.

The frequency of the use of fear as a teaching strategy may be exacerbated by the language of instruction. In another Tanzanian study that compared English-medium classrooms with Kiswahili-medium classrooms, it has been observed that negative reinforcement was more prevalent when English was the language of instruction (Mwinsheikhe, 2009). Mwinsheikhe (2009, p. 228) categorises negative reinforcement as a 'coping strategy' for teachers who lack confidence with English. Joyce-Gibbons et al. (2018, p. 1160) also suggest that teachers are not adequately

trained for teaching using a foreign medium of instruction in poorly resourced schools and, as a result, 'the only resort is to well-established sanctions, including punishment for failing tests or for misbehaviour'. Certainly, in this study, the systematic use of corporal punishment as a response to poor test scores or inability to complete classwork was regularly observed. One particularly memorable example involved a Form One class who were all made to individually repeat the sentence, 'at quarter past six in the morning' until the teacher was happy with their pronunciation. The following was recorded in the observation notes from the lesson:

> *The teacher got progressively more frustrated with the students, raising her voice. She kept saying to me, "You see the problem?" Sometimes I could hear the mistake, but sometimes it was not clear to me. She made some students repeat before moving onto the next. Sometimes students giggled when someone repeated a mistake and some of the teacher's comments seemed to be targeted at humiliating the student. She did not say anything after each student had read their line, just indicated the next person….One student struggled, despite repeating a line several times. She told him to come to the front and kneel down in front of the board…As she had said she would, the teacher called students to the front, one after the other. She told them that if they 'shindwa' [fail] they will kneel by the board like the other student 'na nitawachapa' [and I will strike you]. [Observation of Form One English lesson, Mlimani, 28/01/15].*

In this example, corporal punishment is combined with the teacher consciously humiliating students in front of their peers. In a study of bullying in secondary schools in Dar-es-Salaam, Moris (2008) found humiliation by teachers to be the one of the most frequent types of bullying in schools (see also Tangi, 2019). These studies do not specifically link these uses of fear as a strategy to the language of instruction, but the other examples discussed here suggest that insecurities with language could definitely be an exacerbating factor.

This section has noted the prevalence of fear in students' experiences of schooling and has considered different sources for students' feelings of fear. The most dominant explanation in the data related experiences of fear to the use of English as the language of instruction and this section considered ways in which language anxiety influenced students' willingness to respond to questions, particularly highlighting fear of negative judgement and of humiliation and shame. But it has also

been shown that anxiety around using an unfamiliar language was compounded by the fact that teachers employed fear as a conscious strategy for control and motivation.

What influences students' responses to fear?

> *The teacher then chooses a boy to answer…He is shifting from one foot to the other as he speaks, suggesting that he is nervous. When he reaches the end, the teacher says that's not what she wants, she wants to know the routine at home. He gives one statement about the weekend and she decides that it's enough, dismissing him and telling him to sit down. When this boy sits down again I notice that he flops his head down onto the desk. [Observation of Form One English Lesson, Kijijini, 21/4/15].*

> *"What do you understand by the meaning of word author?" The first 2 students to answer give examples of authors. "You are not understanding what I am asking?" A girl volunteers to answer, but he is not happy with her pronunciation and expression and the teacher quickly goes to someone else. (Her confidence does not seem to be too knocked by this, though, as she volunteers to answer the next question too). [Example from observation notes, Form Two English Lesson, Kijijini, 21/4/15]*

These two examples, both from observation notes from English lessons at Kijijini School, demonstrate two quite different responses to a similar situation. Although both students' answers are dismissed by the respective teachers, the first student slumps into his seat, and his physical response is similar to Alisha's at the opening of this chapter. He did not speak again in that lesson. The student in the second example seemed to be less affected by her experience, though. She had initially volunteered, rather than being picked out by the teacher, and she continued to raise her hand to answer the teacher's questions throughout the remainder of the lesson. Thus far, this chapter has focused on the potential for fear to act as a silencer. Although this was a very common phenomenon, both observed and discussed by students, silence was not the only response. This section explores some of the reasons why students' responses to fear differed.

To better conceptualise this diversity in students' responses to fear, one final set of adaptations to the fear framework are suggested, as shown in figure 9.3. Here, the internal capability of 'confidence and resilience to fear' is introduced. It is

suggested that students with a robust version of this capability, when engaged in the risk evaluation relating to their choice about which capability to enact, are more able to override the fear response that might be offered by their brain's System 1 and to choose to achieve the functioning of 'responding to the question'. This capability and its relationship to the notion of *"soma kwa bidii",* that has been a recurring theme throughout the previous three chapters, is discussed in more detail in this section. But the capability of 'confidence and resilience to fear' was not experienced equally and so this section also considers the different factors that emerged as acting as either enablers or constraints on this capability.
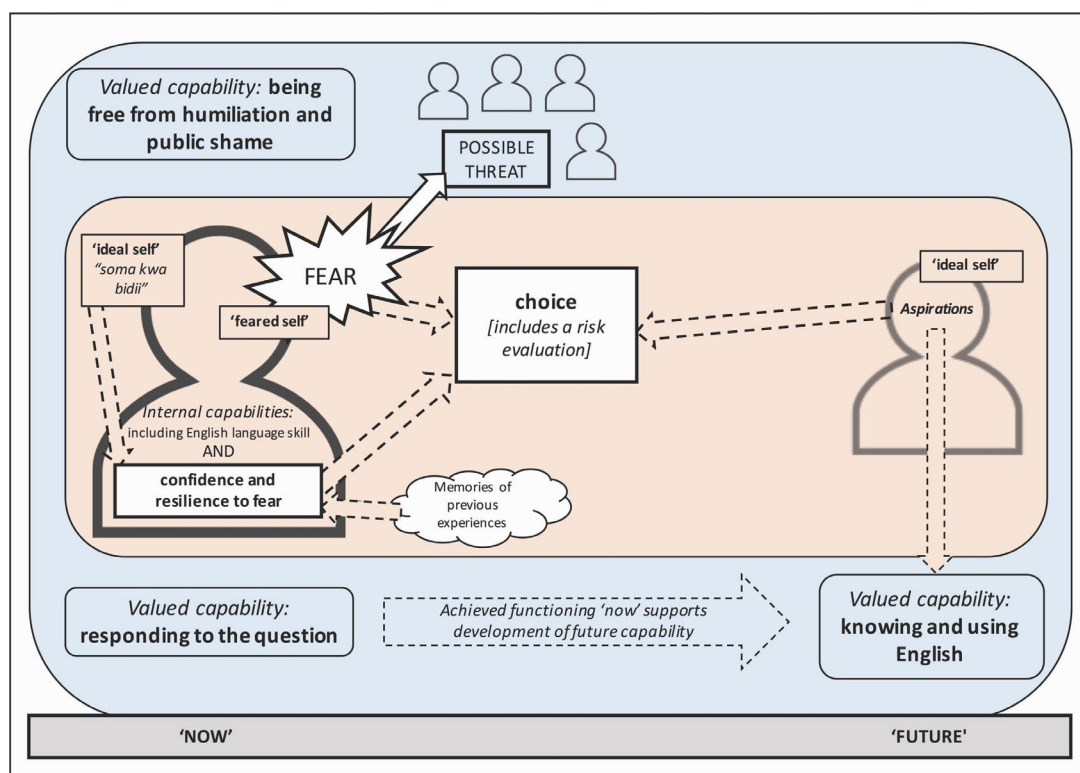
Figure 9.3: The capability of confidence and resilience to fear.

The capability of confidence and resilience to fear

The capability of confidence and resilience to fear is undoubtedly part of the picture of *'soma kwa bidii'*, the aspirational combination of mindset and behaviours that was discussed in chapter 6, and which students believed would help them to succeed. However, in conditions where students experienced fear, it was clear that they did not always behave in accordance with the ideal of *'soma kwa bidii'*. Often, this

inability to act the way that students felt they would have wanted to if they weren't experiencing fear was explained by a lack of confidence. One student at Kijijini School explained:

> *"A person is afraid most of the time…A person can have their answer and they go to say it but they fail, they tremble. They are not confident with their answer because they don't believe in themselves." [Male, Form One, Kijijini, 25/8/15].*

Within the literature focused on language anxiety, the tension between fear and self-esteem has been highlighted, with Rubio-Alcalá (2017, p. 198) going so far as to argue that 'no other affective factors exert so much influence in the FL [foreign language] classroom as self-esteem and anxiety do'. He points to the influence of *'imagined selves'*, a concept that has already been shown to be influential for students in this study who describe the aspiration of 'being a good student' who can *"soma kwa bidii"*. Interestingly for the context of fear and capabilities, Rubio-Alcalá distinguishes between the *'ideal self'*, 'who they would like to become', and the *'feared self'*, 'who they are afraid of becoming' (2017, p. 200). By identifying the close association between self-confidence, fear and shame, it might be suggested that students feel that they are trying to manage two identities, the ideal self that they would like to be and become, and would like to portray to others, and the imperfect self that they are afraid will be exposed. This chapter has shown, then, that this tension has a significant influence on the capabilities that students feel able to enact in the classroom.

The tension between confidence and fear and between students' 'ideal self' and their 'feared self' can grow in strength in relation to experiences, particularly when they act to reinforce students' beliefs about themselves. One student explained why he did not like to answer teachers' questions by referring to an example from his primary schooling, five years previous:

> *"When I was in the second class at [primary] school there was a teacher who used a whip to teach…First, if he asked a question and if a person didn't want to answer he struck them across the back. Because of this, when he came into the classroom, I began to be afraid. And I tried to find ways to make it like I wasn't in the classroom." [Male student, Form Two, Kijijini, 13/8/15].*

This memorable and traumatic experience was part of the information that informed this student's choices about participating in class and influenced him to develop strategies and habits for trying to remain invisible to the teacher. In the examples that opened this section, the body-language that the male student adopts throughout the rest of the lesson suggests that his negative experience remained in his mind, likely influencing his evaluation of the risk of answering a question at another point. In the case of the female student, though, she continued to volunteer to answer questions, suggesting that her experience of being dismissed by the teacher was less influential in her future choices. Memories of previous experiences are depicted in figure 9.3 as influencing the capability of 'confidence and resilience to fear', and this discussion demonstrates that they might act as either enablers or as constraints.

The discussion of *"soma kwa bidii"* in chapter 6 raised concerns that students were shouldering too much responsibility for their success because they believed that, through their own hard work and determination, they should be able to overcome other obstacles to their learning. A similar concern is relevant here. One student who had attended a private, English-medium primary school recognised that it was difficult for some students because they didn't know a lot of English, but she was also quite critical of students who did not participate in lessons, saying: *"Stop listening to people's laughs. Just focus on what you are doing."* [Female, Form One, Mlimani, 26/8/15, in English]. The implication was that individual students have the agency to ignore their fears relating to responding to questions, if they choose to. But this thesis has drawn from Kleine's (2013) Choice Framework to demonstrate firstly that individual students' agency is related to their personal characteristics and the resources that they have access to, and secondly that agency exists in tension with structural factors that must be navigated and negotiated as part of the process of capability construction. The rest of this section considers patterns of difference that seemed to influence students' capability of confidence and resilience to fear.

The influence of personal characteristics

There were two personal characteristics that seemed to influence expectations and norms around how students would respond to fear – gender and ethnicity. Focusing firstly on gender, it was noticeable in observations that teachers frequently talked about gender equality, and made a point of selecting equal numbers of girls and boys to contribute in lessons. However, there were noticeable differences between the ways that boys and girls behaved in the classroom, including their responses to fear. In her ethnography of education in a community in Northern Tanzania, Stambach (2000) observes the workings of cultural, gendered behaviour expectations in the classroom, including girls being quiet and submissive and boys more outspoken. Stambach's observation resonated in the context of this study, and students' responses to fear in particular, because boys appeared to have the option of the strategy of humour. By making jokes, they could take some control of situations where they risked humiliation and shame. Girls, on the other hand, talked most frequently about their concerns that other girls would 'gossip' about them.

There were plenty of examples in interviews of boys expressing fear of being laughed at for making mistakes in class. But in some interviews and lesson observations there was evidence of a different attitude to laughter. Referring to particular boys in her class who had a reputation for playing the fool, one female student explained: *"There are some who have already got themselves used to it and they speak on purpose to make the class laugh" [Female, Form Two, Mlimani, 23/7/15].* She is suggesting that boys consciously use comedy and incitement of laughter as a strategy that forms part of their negotiation of the classroom environment. This was held up by my observations. In the activity that caused Alisha great distress, there were several boys who, when they came to the front of the class, moved in a way that was designed to induce laughter. Some of them also delivered their sentences through bouts of their own laughter. This gave the impression that the student was in control of the laughter. If others joined in, it felt more like 'laughing with' the student rather than 'laughing at' them. This distinction is important because, although discussions of laughter in relation to fear have positioned laughter as something to avoid, there were examples of laughter that

indicated enjoyment of lessons. For example, some of the teachers that students liked the most had very charismatic personalities and used humour in their teaching. One student explained: *"We like jokes, you know. The students like jokes…not all the time, but sometimes the student likes jokes."* [Female, Form One, Mlimani, 26/8/15].

Boys still talked about habits and expectations that required that students laugh at mistakes, but they also talked about supporting one another after those knocks. One student explained:

> *"It's…let's say friendship…closeness. You know, you are already used to one another…Often you are already good friends…they must laugh at you…because you messed up. After that, because you suffered a lot, they will pick you up, they will correct you. But the first stage is that they must laugh at you because you have both got used to it being that way…it's every day… So, with that person, you laugh at him, you laugh at one another… this is something a person is used to."* [Male, Form Two, Mlimani, 12/8/15].

He suggests that the habit of laughing at mistakes or 'messing up' is so ingrained that that it is unavoidable. Throughout the data from this study, students used the explanation 'we are used to it' to refer to practices that they consider to be ingrained and inevitable. Being laughed at for making mistakes was a common experience for both genders, but some of the data suggests that boys may have been able to cope with laughter more easily, sometimes using humour to assert their own control over the situation. The example above also suggests that boys might be able to move on from being laughed at more quickly.[49]

The most observed and discussed strategy employed by girls to reassert control in situations where they experienced fear and shame was to use cruel words to put down the person that they felt was exposing their shortcomings. This was labelled 'gossiping' and students explained it to be a form of jealousy. This practice was most clearly discussed by a small group of girls at Mlimani School, one of whom regularly chose to sit amongst the boys, despite the fact that their classroom was otherwise clearly divided into two by gender:

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[49] I am grateful to Charley Nussey for discussions that helped to develop my understanding and analysis of laughter in the classroom, informed by her study of literacy classrooms in rural South Africa (Nussey, 2019).

"Girls gossip…they are always gossiping and it's disruptive. Gossip is very disruptive. Up to the point someone doesn't study. Others they say they are done with girls and they go to sit with boys." [Carolin, Form Two, Mlimani, 23/7/15].

A previous conversation with Carolin and another student, Aiko, had offered greater clarity of what they meant by 'gossip', describing quite a malignant practice of criticism and judgement:

Aiko: "One thing is gossiping. Like, if I speak fast like you (referring to the way I speak English) they will say, "Oh you are pretending"".

Carolin also explained that she really disliked the gossiping, saying "That's why I like sitting with boys - they are not jealous. They have cooperation".

[Informal conversation with Form Two students at Mlimani, recorded in fieldnotes, 8/5/15]

Chapters 7 and 8 also presented examples of students criticising others who they believed had strayed from expectations and norms around language use or had not fulfilled their responsibility of helping others. This can perhaps be viewed as a strategy of shifting attention away from one student's limited English, which would lead to public shame, to another student behaving contrary to expectations. Carolin's reaction to the practice of gossiping and the suggestion that she preferred to sit with the boys was also interesting because it was quite unusual. In most classrooms, students could be observed as sitting in single-gender groups. Carolin was a confident student with a relatively strong grasp of English and her choice to sit amongst the boys might be seen as an expression of agency and part of her negotiation of the norms and expectations of the classroom.

The social norms and expectations that existed in the classroom seemed not to apply, or to apply differently to students who were not considered to be Black Tanzanian. There is a long-established Asian, predominantly Indian, community in Tanzania, which is estimated to be comprised of around 50,000 people nationally (World Population Review, 2020), and there were a small number of Asian students attending the town school. When students used the term *Watanzania* to describe 'Tanzanians', they excluded non-African ethic groups, and Asian students were instead referred to as *Wahindi* (Indians). This 'othering' was reflected in the experiences of these students in the classroom. Hajirah was an Indian Tanzanian

student in one of the Form One classes that I observed regularly. She had been selected by the teacher as the form monitor and spoke almost exclusively English in the classroom. Hajirah did speak fluent Kiswahili, but explained to me that she felt she had a responsibility to set an example to other students to help them to learn. In some of my interviews with other students in Hajirah's class, it became apparent that they assumed that Hajirah did not speak Kiswahili. One explained: *"We tell her that she should learn Kiswahili so that we can understand her, because she uses many words that we don't understand. We are bored if she speaks English". [Female, Form One, Mlimani, 28/8/15].* In the interview, the student was talking about students who talk English outside of the lesson time when the teacher is present. Where Aiko and Carolin above reported some very hurtful comments about their use of English and the suggestion that they were 'pretending' to be *Wazungu* (Europeans), criticisms about Hajirah's use of English were not linked to her identity, but rather framed in terms of helping the majority in the class to understand. Hajirah said that she did not mind the comments of other students, and although others clearly got frustrated with her, students' positioning of Hajirah as 'other' seemed to mean that she was not subject to the same types of critical comments as Black Tanzanian students.

Aiko was a girl in Form Two at Mlimani School who was of multiple heritage with a Black Tanzanian mother and a Japanese father. This dual identity appeared to mean that she was faced with two sets of expectations. On the one hand, as was discussed above, she was subject to the same criticisms as her Black Tanzanian peers if she used English when others felt it wasn't necessary, or if she demonstrated too much proficiency in English. But the non-Tanzanian part of Aiko's identity seemed to carry an expectation that she would be good at English, despite the fact that she had been brought up only by her mother and had attended a government, Kiswahili-medium primary school. Teachers had high expectations and Aiko was called on frequently to answer questions. Her classmates also regularly called on her for help with their English. In fact, it was Aiko who had checked Alisha's sentences in the description that opened this chapter. When I was introduced to the class for the first time, the teacher specifically pointed to Aiko, suggesting that her racial 'otherness'

would make her a student that I would have a particular affinity with. Aiko was a very motivated learner who was desperate to please both teachers and classmates, and who saw English as important for her future aspiration of living in Japan, but she was also very anxious. Although this anxiety was, in part, related to the challenges of her socio-economic circumstances (she lived a long distance from school and referred to family financial struggles), she talked often about the pressure of these expectations relating to her mixed identity.

The influence of students' resource profiles

The resource that made the most obvious contribution to students' capabilities of confidence and resilience to fear was a student's ability and background in English. Having a better grasp of English did not exempt students from feeling fearful about speaking in class, but it did seem to make answering teachers' questions more accepted, and even expected, by classmates. Chapter 8 shared an example of a student who suggested that teachers at Mlimani School had specifically asked which students had attended English-medium primary schools and had directed the majority of their questions to them. One of the students who spoke English well, but had attended a government, Kiswahili-medium primary school suggested that it was the previous school that a student had attended that made speaking English in class more acceptable. She suggested that, because she had been to a government school, her answers were under particular scrutiny:

> *"Like the students who are coming from the government schools, maybe if the teacher is choosing him or her to answer the questions, those other students are being prepared for laughing…"what is he or she going to say? She come from the government school. That word it's too difficult. Let's listen if she'll make a mistake…"" [Female, Form One, Mlimani, 26/8/15, student spoke English]*

Overall, though, there was a sense that having a stronger command of English helped students to overcome fear. One student who was a regular attendee at the English Club I ran at Mlimani School stated: *"You know, somehow English makes you confident." [Female, Form One, Mlimani, 28/8/15]*. For students with a high level of English, the risk of making mistakes, and thus being laughed at, was lower. The fact

that they were generally regular contributors in class, and both students and teacher expected them to answer questions also perhaps made it easier for them to participate.

It should not be assumed, though, that having greater competence in English exempted students from experiencing and having to negotiate fear. Several examples have been shared in this thesis of students experiencing criticism and cruel words from others for speaking 'too much' English and the students in this group still described instances of fear constraining their capabilities and influencing their choices. For example, one student noted that, having moved from an English-medium primary school where the use of English amongst students was common, the reactions of others meant that she was now using a lot more Kiswahili. She lamented this change, saying: *"I am heart-broken because I am forgetting English."* *[Recorded in fieldnotes, Mlimani, 4/5/15].* In an interview with a group of similar students I asked whether they could suggest to other students that they stop the practice of laughing at mistakes and the suggestion was met with tutting and other noises of disbelief. One girl explained: *"They will make groups against us…(pained noise). [Imitating the mocking voices of other students] "She feels she can do anything…she can change us". It is difficult" [Female, Form One, Mlimani, 26/8/15].* The capability of 'confidence and resilience to fear' was important for all of the students I encountered in this study, even if the object of their fear was related to different functionings than 'responding to the question'.

When considering the influence of students' language resources and ability in English on their capability of confidence and resilience to fear it is crucial to acknowledge that it was often connected to students' relative advantage in terms of access to other resources. For example, those students who had attended English-medium primary schools were able to do so because their families had the financial means to send them there. The discussion of the capability of learning English in chapter 7 demonstrated the wide variety of material, social and personal resources that students believed enabled the learning of English. The analysis in this chapter, combined with the discussion in chapter 8, suggests that those who arrive at secondary school with more developed levels of English are more able to participate

in the activities that further extend their language skills. This is in contrast to many of those who start secondary school with lower levels of English. The data in this study suggests that these students are more likely to be silenced by the fear they experience in relation to making mistakes or admitting that they do not understand, thus limiting their opportunities for practice and language development. This analysis of inequality in both language resources and language learning opportunities contributes to deepening understanding of observations in the LOI literature that the use of English as the language of instruction widens the achievement gap between students and that this gap grows between the early and later years of secondary school (Brock-Utne, 2007a; Mwinsheikhe, 2008; Rubagumya, 1989).

This section has explored different potential influences on students' responses to fear and has highlighted patterns relating to gender, ethnicity and students' abilities in English. It is also useful to remember that choices about participation are being made in different classrooms and in response to different teachers. Zembylas (2002) talks about the role of teachers and pedagogy in the creation of 'emotion rules' in the classroom. Though beyond the scope of this current study, it would be valuable to explore the construction of fear in more detail and to consider interventions to try to reduce the prevalence of fear in the classroom (for example see Bledsoe and Baskin, 2014; Hargreaves, 2015). These steps might go some way to improving the equity of experience for students because their opportunities to participate would be less contingent on the robustness of their internal capability of confidence and resilience to fear.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the prevalence of fear in students' experiences of language-in-education, thus demonstrating that students' challenges in relation to English as the language of instruction are inseparable from a lived experience of 'language as being' that is often uncomfortable and dominated by negative emotions. Linking the analysis back to students' aspirations for 'being a good

student', introduced in chapter 6, this chapter suggested that students are faced with a significant tension between their imagined 'ideal self' and the shame that they feel for not being able to live up to this ideal. Seeking to better understand the role of fear in students' negotiations of their school language environments, this chapter offered a capabilities-based framework for the analysis of students' responses to fear. In the majority of examples and discussions with students, fear acted as a silencer as students felt forced to trade off the functioning of 'responding to the question', that would in turn support their longer-term aspirations for 'knowing and using English', in order to 'be free from humiliation and public shame' associated with making mistakes. But this was not always the case and this chapter explored different influences on students' responses to fear.

When teaching and learning is conducted in a context of fear, more is required of students if they are to succeed. This chapter has argued that, further to the requirement that students develop the internal capability of 'being able to understand and communicate in English' in order to be able to respond to teachers' questions, the prevalence of fear means that students also need to develop the capability of 'confidence and resilience to fear'. For students whose English skills are less well-developed, the demands on this capability are potentially greater because the risk of making mistakes and facing negative judgement from others is high. Considering confidence and resilience to fear as a capability is argued to be an important contribution because it highlights that this is not simply a state of mind that a student either chooses to adopt or not, but rather, like any capability, the capability of confidence and resilience to fear is enabled or constrained by a wide range of factors, including a student's personal characteristics, social norms, and the range of resources that students have access to. This thesis has shown that differences in these areas can result in inequality in relation to a variety of different capabilities for participating in learning. This chapter has argued that these inequalities are amplified by the experience of fear in the learning process.

10. Conclusion

This thesis has explored students' negotiations of language and learning in their multilingual school environments. The overall conclusion and key original contribution of this thesis is that language plays multiple roles in students' lives and that these shape a series of influential connections between valued language- and education-related capabilities. This contribution is significant because the preceding chapters have presented numerous examples of connections between capabilities being neglected, or even actively broken, by existing language discourses and practices. Capabilities that could be mutually supportive are positioned in conflict or tension with one another, resulting in students and teachers feeling forced to make undesirable, and potentially unnecessary, trade-offs between valued capabilities.

These findings have been possible because this study has broadened the focus of language-in-education research and has taken a more holistic approach to students' experiences of language and learning. This was deemed necessary because the LOI debate in Tanzania and elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa is effectively in stalemate, preventing unified efforts to create meaningful change in language policy and practice. This thesis analysed competing arguments, resulting in the assertion that the seemingly irreconcilable nature of the debate stems in large part from the fact that different contributors are driven by different priorities in relation to language. Although there is a growing body of empirical evidence in relation to LOI, it has not adequately acknowledged and addressed all of these concerns. This thesis has contributed a typology for considering the multiple roles that language plays in students' lives and imaginations and has demonstrated the usefulness of the capability approach for supporting multidimensional analysis that recognises multiple reasons for valuing language.

This thesis has drawn on detailed ethnographic data from two secondary schools in Tanzania and has contributed a rich empirical account of language meanings and patterns of language use that is situated in students' aspirations for 'being' and 'becoming' in and through education. The focus on students' experiences has drawn attention to questions of agency and enabled this thesis to present an alternative narrative to those that have positioned students as 'passive' or

'problems'. The account offered in this thesis supports arguments that existing policy and practice negatively affects learning. But this thesis has gone beyond this to explicitly analyse the ways in which language and learning are closely interrelated with issues of student social-emotional well-being, including the quality of social relationships, and classroom experiences of fear. In exploring these different aspects of students' experiences and negotiations of language and learning, this thesis has demonstrated the value of a capabilities perspective not only for acknowledging the multiple roles played by language, but also for analysing *how* language plays these roles. This analysis has identified a wide range of valued education- and language-related capabilities and the importance of the temporal, relational and linguistic connections between them. Ultimately, this thesis argues that efforts to recognise, understand and strengthen these connections could result in better quality and more equitable learning experiences for students in multilingual contexts.

Multiple languages, multiple language roles, multiple valued capabilities

This thesis has shown that students' school language environments were characterised by the presence of multiple languages, the influence of multiple reasons for valuing language, and tensions between multiple valued education- and language-related capabilities. Within this context, students' negotiations of their experiences were shaped both by dominant language discourses and norms relating to language use, and by individual students' characteristics and the resources that they could draw upon. Ultimately, the answer to the question that guided this research is that students' negotiations of their school language environments differed in relation to all these potential sources of diversity. However, there were observable common situations and behaviours that offered insight into how students' experiences of language-in-education might be improved. This thesis has made particular contributions to understanding in this area through its empirical and theoretical explorations of: the capability to *"soma kwa bidii"*; students' framing of 'understanding' as sitting on a spectrum of language skills; and the influence of fear on students' capabilities.

This thesis has contributed a typology for recognising the multiple roles that language plays in people's lives. The dominant language narrative was focused on the importance of English as an aspiration. Combined with assumptions about how English was best learned, this worked to depreciate the value of Kiswahili, which was positioned as a deficit-addressing tool, and to hide the existence of ECLs. But this was not the only language narrative. Although statements of value were more implicit, this thesis has uncovered the key roles played by Kiswahili. Not only did Kiswahili enable communication and understanding, it was also a valued marker of national identity and played a significant role in students' negotiations of 'being'.

In identifying and analysing the multiple roles played by multiple languages in students' language environments, this thesis has demonstrated the usefulness of the capability approach to issues of language-in-education. A broad range of capabilities have emerged as important in students' experiences, some of which are summarised in figure 10.1. This diagram also maps valued capabilities against the different language roles that have been referred to throughout this thesis. Although the delineations are not clear-cut, the vertical alignment in the diagram suggests that specific capabilities can be associated with particular language roles. 'Language as social (in)justice' is viewed slightly differently to the other roles because it is considered that inequality and language injustice were related to an uneven playing field across all of the other language roles. As such, it is depicted as extending alongside all of the other language roles, and the implications of this thesis for 'language as social (in)justice' are explored separately at the end of this chapter. The dotted line in figure 10.1 indicates a divide between functionings that the data demonstrated tended to be associated with Kiswahili, and functionings that tended to be associated with English. Of course, these delineations are not definitive, and the preceding chapters have also included discussion of examples that differed from the more commonly observed practices.
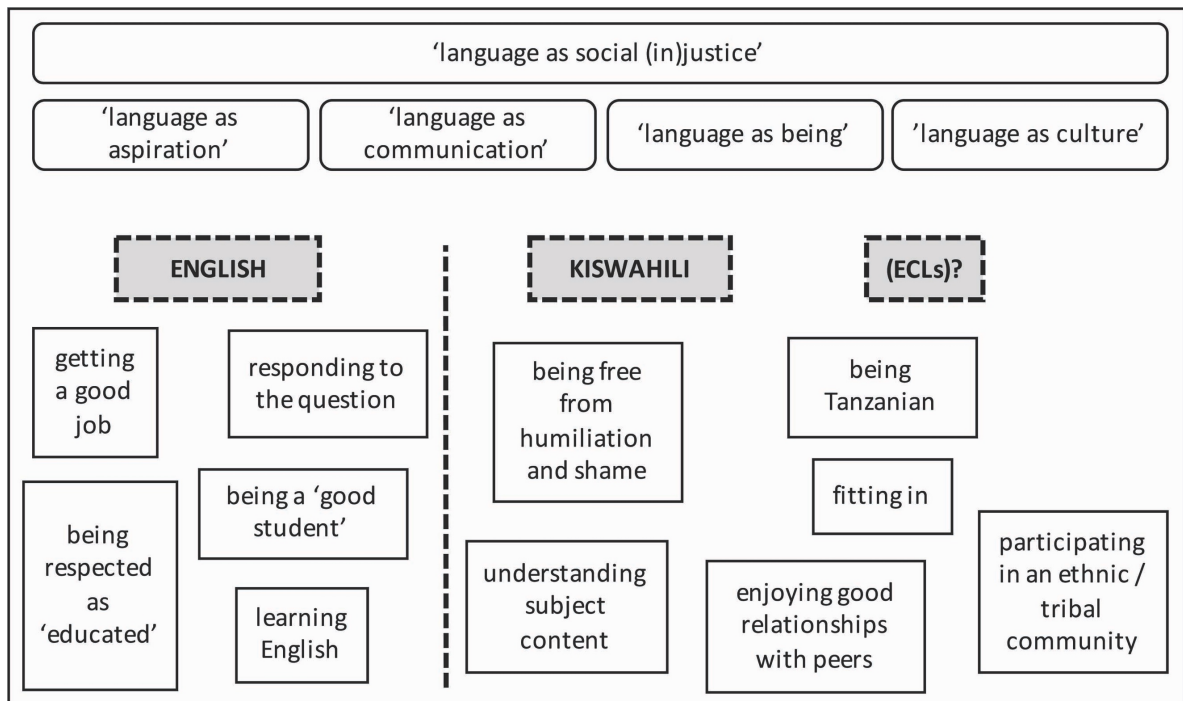
Figure 10.1: Multiple languages, multiple language roles and multiple valued capabilities

This thesis has argued that the current system of language beliefs and practices, based around the ideal of language separation and monolingual use of English, results in different valued capabilities being positioned in tension with one another and, ultimately, students and teachers feeling forced to make trade-offs between capabilities. In identifying these tensions and trade-offs, the central contribution of this thesis has been to draw attention to the importance of considering the connections between the different capabilities involved in students' experiences of language and learning.

Capability connections for language and learning

Beyond simply identifying connections between multiple language values and language- and education-related capabilities, this thesis has contributed to understanding of the nature of these connections. This is not the first time that the concept of connection has been used in relation to language of instruction in Tanzania. In chapters 2 and 3 it was noted that Rubagumya (2000) and Vuzo (2010) have separately raised concerns about 'disconnection', both between home and school languages and between learning at primary and secondary school levels. But neither scholar has explored the full extent of disconnections or the way they work.

This thesis has addressed this gap and has demonstrated and analysed connections between values and capabilities, both empirically and theoretically. The capability approach has played a central role in enabling this analysis. But the work in this thesis has also uncovered important conceptual areas where the capability approach has not yet been thoroughly developed.

An important contribution of this analysis has been to highlight the temporal connections between capabilities, particularly in the context of learning. This thesis has demonstrated that students' negotiations of schooling were influenced by capabilities and aspirations both for 'being' and 'becoming', and that these were often related to one another. Students talked about prioritising behaviours in the present that would support their longer-term goals. However, in practice, many of the key trade-offs that have been explored in this thesis have shown students feeling that it was necessary to prioritise immediate capabilities that did not support their future aspirations. This connection between 'being' and 'becoming' is currently under-theorised within writing about the capability approach, but this thesis has contributed to this work and has offered an empirical demonstration of its importance, particularly for considering processes of learning and schooling.

This thesis has also contributed to developing understandings of the relational nature of capabilities in education. Connections between people have been shown to be important for students' capabilities in relation to language-in-education in two key ways. The first is the instrumental role of other people in enabling or constraining students' capabilities. But the connections between people were not only instrumental. This thesis has shown that students' ideas about themselves and about which 'beings' and 'becomings' they most valued were influenced by how they felt they were, and would be, perceived by others. The acknowledgement of the inseparability of individual students and their capabilities from the social connections with their teachers, their families and their peers presents a challenge to the notion of *'soma kwa bidii'* that was introduced in chapter 6. Students expressed a view of their own agency that relied on individual determination and responsibility, and the ability to 'ignore' or disconnect from the negative influences of others. But the data analysed in the rest of this thesis raises

questions about the idea that this form of social disconnection is possible or desirable. The recognition of the importance of relational connections has implications for education planners and classroom practitioners, suggesting that efforts to improve educational quality should look closely at the quality of social relationships.

The connection at the heart of this thesis has been the relationship between languages. However, it was overwhelmingly found that different languages were positioned as separate, disconnected, and even in conflict with one another. As a result, students and teachers were being denied the potential benefits of identifying and learning from connections between their different languages. This thesis has made references to developing understandings in the theories of multilingual learning and translanguaging, which suggest that flexible but purposive movement between different languages is not only a natural feature of bilingualism, but can also be beneficial and supportive of both the strengthening of the weaker language and understanding of the content being taught and learned (Creese and Blackledge, 2010; García and Li, 2014). However, with the possible exception of the history teacher discussed in chapter 8, the examples of code-switching and translation presented in this thesis have largely failed to make, or failed to build upon, connections between students' different languages. Instead, the monolingual ideal has established a clear preference for separation and disconnection between languages as the measure of good quality education. The key implication of this is that assumptions about language acquisition will need to be addressed as part of any attempts to improve multilingual classroom practice.

Language as social (in)justice

This thesis has identified two seemingly conflicting perspectives about what represents justice in relation to language-in-education. Those who advocated for the prioritisation of African languages argued that they would support improved equity and inclusion both at the school and global-structural level. But there was also a significant concern, expressed primarily by policy-makers, students, teachers and parents, that increased use of Kiswahili in schooling would constitute an injustice, as

students would be denied access to English and the benefits that it is associated with. When looking beyond perspectives on which LOI would be the most just, this thesis has also highlighted several related sources of inequality that influenced processes of language and learning. Students were found to have access to different levels of material-financial and social resources, and that these also affected students' personal resources. The unequal levels of resources that students had access to, and their different experiences of primary schooling and English language teaching, meant that students arrived at secondary school with varied levels of competency in the LOI. This was particularly evident in town where the student body was more varied socio-economically and there were a number of students who had attended private, English-medium primary schools. These students had a significant impact on the data generated in this study because, although they were not immune to language-related struggles, they highlighted the advantages of having a higher level of ability in English.

The connections between access to more resources, an improved level of English, and greater participation and success in learning and examinations are significant. Different forms of socio-economic disadvantage and inequality have been found to have negative effects on schooling outcomes across a wide range of African contexts (Dumas and Lambert, 2010; Posti-Ahokas and Palojoki, 2014; Shabaya and Konadu-Agyemang, 2004; Smith and Barrett, 2011), but this study offers a clear illustration of the multiple ways in which language acts as a compounding factor.

It was a striking feature of the data generated as part of this study that students themselves rarely acknowledged the importance of different circumstances on students' capabilities for engaging with learning, suggesting that challenges could and should be compensated for through increased personal determination. However, the commitment that the urban student researchers had to this belief was shaken by their experience of travelling to the rural school and working with students there. The inclusion of student researchers and student-led workshops as part of the research design for this study was motivated by an awareness of uneven power dynamics between researcher and researched and a commitment to the

importance of maximising opportunities for students' voices not only to be heard, but also to guide the research process. Bringing students from different schools together also demonstrated the potential for involvement in research to shift perspectives. Although it would be necessary to conduct follow-up interviews to explore ways in which taking a more active role in research may have influenced student researchers in the longer-term, the experience in this study suggested that it may have increased their awareness of social inequalities and injustice and their relationship to language-in-education.

The findings of this thesis strongly support evidence from other studies that the use of Kiswahili as the predominant LOI would best promote social justice. The use of a familiar language would greatly improve inclusion in classroom activities, would reduce levels of fear, and would do less to exacerbate existing inequalities between students. However, the data and analysis presented have also clearly shown that replacement of English as the sole LOI with Kiswahili as the sole LOI would not be perceived as just by the majority of students, parents and policy makers, who have criticised suggestions for a change in LOI as threatening opportunities for access to English. Crucial for allowing progress towards meaningful change in language-in-education policy and practice will be to reframe the debate in a way that distinguishes the language and learning process from desired language-related outcomes, without neglecting aspirations for English. It is an important contribution of this thesis that it has demonstrated that the capability approach, with its key distinction between functionings and capabilities and its commitment to value pluralism, can facilitate this need.

The capabilities analysis in this thesis, and the importance of connections between capabilities that has been revealed, also challenges the applicability of monolingual LOI policies in multilingual societies. Even if Kiswahili were to act as the predominant language of instruction and examination in Tanzanian secondary schools, the evidence from this study, considered alongside theoretical and empirical research from the field of translanguaging, suggests that there could be significant value in not only allowing, but also celebrating and developing strategies for, multilingual practice in school environments. This could be especially relevant in

contexts where a national *lingua franca* is not available, or where ECLs play a more prominent role. Encouraging students to draw from their full linguistic repertoire would not only enable them access to a wider set of language resources with which to negotiate meaning and understanding, but it would also help to validate and to connect the different knowledges, identities and experiences that are currently disconnected by the association of different languages with different spaces and activities.

Research questions

This thesis has addressed the overarching question: *how do students negotiate their school language environment?* In order to answer this question, this research was also guided by the following sub-questions, designed to generate information and understanding both about the nature of the school language environment and students' experiences and negotiations within that environment:

1) *How do students value the different languages they use?*
2) *What are the challenges that students face when trying to learn English, and when learning using English as the language of instruction?*
3) *What strategies do students employ to negotiate these challenges, and how do these strategies enable or constrain their capabilities?*
4) *How do teachers enable or constrain students' negotiation of language and learning?*

These questions, and their answers, are highly intertwined, and so the data that was presented and discussed in chapters 6-9 did not align clearly to individual research questions. Rather, the account of students' negotiations developed and was strengthened through all four chapters. However, it is possible to highlight sections where particular research questions were especially relevant. For example, the issue of students' language values was particularly pertinent to chapters 6 and 7, which explored students' aspirations relating to language and education, and the simultaneous valuing of English and Kiswahili that was brought into conflict by the persistent belief that the use of Kiswahili undermined the process of learning English.

In the context of the discussion of language attitudes and broader school language practices in chapter 7, students' perspectives of the challenges they faced in developing the capability of 'learning English' were discussed. Appreciation of the challenges that students faced in both learning English and learning using English as the language of instruction was then developed further through the consideration of negotiations of classroom understanding in chapter 8, and the analysis of the influence of fear in chapter 9. Students' strategies for responding to the challenges of their school language environment were visible in all four chapters. For example, chapter 6 introduced the practical and imaginative strategies associated with the notion of *"soma kwa bidii"*, which returned and was relevant in each of the subsequent chapters. Chapter 8 considered a number of practical strategies for enabling understanding, or bypassing the need for full understanding, while chapter 9 explored silence as a strategy for negotiating a classroom environment characterised by fear. Although this study has been centred on students, the final research question asked about the actions of teachers. This was in recognition of the fact that teachers had a highly significant influence on the language environment and students' opportunities for negotiation. In chapter 8, in particular, teacher control of code-switching between English and Kiswahili limited the strategies available to students. In chapter 9, teachers' use of fear dramatically shaped the classroom environment that students had to navigate. Together, these research questions have enabled this thesis to develop and present a picture of students' negotiations of their school language environment that is socially-situated and multi-dimensional. This is in line with the aim of offering a holistic account of students' experiences of language-in-education that highlights and explores student agency.

Limitations and areas for further research

This study aimed to broaden the scope of language of instruction research, but this meant that less attention was paid to the detailed patterns of classroom discourse, and classroom talk was not recorded. As a result, I did not have the type of detailed data that would have enabled close analysis of the mechanics of code-switching and

translanguaging. This did not prevent me from analysing students' perspectives and broader strategies for negotiating their school language environments. However, as this thesis has highlighted the importance of connections between languages, there would be great value in better understanding under what circumstances code-switching tends to be more supportive of the goals of both facilitating understanding of subject content and language acquisition. This would also be in line with the trend in the literature in recent years towards greater interest in multilingual classrooms (Heugh, 2015; Probyn, 2015; Shank Lauwo, 2018b).

The location of this study in an area where ECLs were little used in school means that it may offer findings about language use patterns and language values that are not immediately perceived as applicable across all Tanzanian contexts, or in other country contexts with a different linguistic profile. There would be great value in applying a similar research approach in one of these alternative contexts. However, the introduction of an additional language(s) would not be expected to challenge the overall conclusions of this thesis. Instead, the introduction of additional languages into the multilingual schooling environment would make the issue of connection between languages within a student's or a teacher's repertoire even more important.

It was critical to this study that I was able to conduct research and generate and analyse the data bilingually. However, as a researcher conducting a study primarily in a language that I was not as comfortable with as my native English, I will always be aware of my own linguistic limitations and the extent to which these affected the questions I asked, the focus of observations and my interpretation of the data. However, the duration of this study as well as the close relationship built with students, student researchers, some teachers and the individuals who helped with transcription of the interviews, meant that I had numerous opportunities to revisit questions to check my understanding. The fact that some of the people involved were quite comfortable using English also meant that we could flexibly switch between both languages to negotiate meanings, thus utilising the practice of translanguaging as one of the research tools.

The importance of emotions in students' experiences of schooling was an unexpected finding of this study, meaning that it was not a specific focus for data collection from the outset. This limitation on the data means that this study does not represent as fully as it could the ways in which both negative *and* positive emotions work in the creation of students' capabilities and their choices about which functionings to enact. In the period of time since the fieldwork for this study was completed, I have worked as a UK secondary school teacher with responsibility for teacher development and teacher and student engagement with research. In this role I have become increasingly aware of discussions about the role of emotions in learning, informed by research in both psychology and neuroscience. Although it must not be assumed that US and European-focused research can be transferred into the Tanzanian context, it would be an interesting area for future research to explore whether greater understandings of brain anatomy and functioning might affect students' and teachers' perspectives on supportive environments for learning.

Finally, this study found that giving students an active and creative role as researchers was a useful and influential feature of the research design. Although there were also restrictions and challenges that may have acted as limitations of this element of the methodology, the experience from this project suggests that there is potentially great value in empowering young people to contribute to designing, carrying out, analysing and presenting the findings of research about their own experiences. Although the role of students-as-researchers is discussed in the wider research methods literature, it has been noted that it is still an under-used approach (Fleming, 2011). It is hoped that studies such as this one might act as advocacy for the inclusion of young people in leading roles in language-in-education research. For example, students might be very well placed to work alongside their teachers in an action research project aimed at tackling ingrained habits such as laughing at mistakes and replacing these with more supportive and less threatening peer and teacher responses.

Final thoughts

In Tanzania, the 2014 Education and Training Policy and its declaration that there is a role for both Kiswahili and English as languages of instruction at all levels of education, presents an opportunity for identifying and building upon connections between students' and teachers' language capabilities. However, there is a risk that this opportunity could be squandered if the policy change is only seen and intended as a concession to current classroom practice in which two languages are commonly used. Instead, if the policy were to be viewed as an aspirational commitment to the development of purposive bilingual or multilingual practice, and teachers trained and supported appropriately, it has the potential to enable both students and teachers to make the most of their existing language knowledge and resources, whilst developing competency in English. At least trialling these types of carefully planned multilingual approaches could place Tanzania among the forerunners of research into the use of translanguaging in the African context. A publicised, government commitment to multilingual practice as reflecting the most up-to-date research available might also go some way to reinvigorating, and ultimately shifting, public discussion about language learning.

If the government is unwilling or unable to take the lead in challenging public misconceptions in relation to 'the undeniable truth' that the best way to learn English is to use it as the sole medium of instruction, then researchers will need to keep repeating and reframing their message. This thesis has demonstrated that reframing the LOI debate from the perspective of capabilities helps to separate desired language-related outcomes from the school learning process. Taking a capabilities approach to the question of language-in-education would also encourage some form of public deliberative decision-making exercise. Varied stakeholders could be introduced to the body of evidence about the current state of language in schools, to which this study contributes, and to accurate and up-to-date knowledge about processes of language acquisition. Together, they could agree a set of valued capabilities relating to language and education that reflects the multiple roles that language plays in people's lives and aspirations. With those agreed, they

could then evaluate the most effective ways to support the development of these capabilities for all young people.

In taking a more holistic view of the impact of LOI policy and practice, this thesis has turned a spotlight on students' broader experiences of language and schooling. In doing so, it has importantly highlighted examples of students' agency, resilience and determination. But it has also raised significant concerns about the quality of the learning processes that students are engaged in and about students' social-emotional well-being. To improve students' educational experiences, there needs to be a meaningful change in language policy and practice, as argued above. But change in language practice alone will not necessarily be enough to transform other, ingrained norms and beliefs that contribute to students' fear and discomfort in schooling. The interconnections that have been identified between different aspects of students' capabilities and aspirations have important implications for interventions aiming to improve educational quality, and suggest that a more joined-up and holistic approach is necessary. In the same way that the impact of language reform might be limited if practices like corporal punishment are not addressed, the success of a wide range of interventions will be restricted if they neglect the crucial role of language. As such, the findings of this study should be of concern to all those who take an interest in educational quality in multilingual contexts, not just language specialists. Moreover, they are of particular relevance to efforts to achieve SDG 4 and its aspiration to 'ensure that inclusive and equitable quality education' is available to all.

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12. Appendices

Appendix A: Definitions from education and language related capability lists

Walker's 'ideal-theoretical, multidimensional list taking up the specificity of gender equity in education'	
Capability	Description of capability from Walker (2007, pp. 189-190)
Autonomy	being able to have choices, having information on which to make choices, planning a life after school, independence, empowerment
Knowledge	of school subjects that are intrinsically interesting or instrumentally useful for post-school choices of study, paid work and a career; girls' access to all school subjects; access to powerful analytical knowledge, and including knowledge of girls' and women's lives; knowledge for critical thinking and for debating complex moral and social issues; knowledge from involvement in intrinsically interesting school societies, active inquiry; transformation of understanding; fair assessment/examination of knowledge gained
Social relations	The capability to be a friend, the capability to participate in a group for friendship and for learning, to be able to work with others to solve problems and tasks, being able to work with others to form effective or good groups for learning and organizing life at school, being able to respond to human need, social belonging
Respect and recognition	Self-confidence and self-esteem; respect for and from others; being treated with dignity; not being diminished or devalued because of one's gender, social class, religion, or race; valuing other languages, other religions, and spiritual practice and human diversity; showing imaginative empathy, compassion, fairness, and generosity; listening to and considering other persons' points of view in dialogue and debate in and out of class in school; being able to act inclusively
Aspiration	Motivation to learn and succeed, to have a better life, to hope
Voice	For participation in learning, for speaking out, not being silenced through pedagogy or power relations or harassment, or excluded from curriculum, being active in the acquisition of knowledge
Bodily integrity and bodily health	Not to be subjected to any form of harassment at school by peers or teachers, generally being safe at school, making own choices about sexual relationships, being able to be free

	from sexually transmitted diseases, being involved in sporting activities
Emotional integrity and emotions	Not being subject to fear, which diminishes learning, either from physical punishment or verbal attacks; developing emotions and imagination for understanding, empathy, awareness, and discernment

Walker's 'ideal-theoretical list of higher education capabilities'	
Capability	Description of capability from Walker (2006a, pp. 128-129)
Practical reason	Being able to make well-reasoned, informed, critical, independent, intellectually acute, socially responsible, and reflective choices. Being able to construct a personal life project in an uncertain world. Having good judgement.
Educational resilience	Being able to navigate study, work and life. Able to negotiate risk, to persevere academically, to be responsive to educational opportunities and adaptive constraints. Self-reliant. Having aspirations and hopes for a good future.
Knowledge and imagination	Being able to gain knowledge of a chosen subject – disciplinary and/or professional – and its form of academic inquiry and standards. Being able to use critical thinking and imagination to comprehend the perspectives of multiple others and to form impartial judgements. Being able to acquire knowledge for pleasure and personal development, for career and economic opportunities, for political, cultural and social action and participation in the world. Awareness of ethical debates and moral issues. Open-mindedness. Knowledge to understand science and technology in public society.
Learning disposition	Being able to have curiosity and a desire for learning. Having confidence in one's ability to learn. Being an active inquirer.
Social relations and social networks	Being able to participate in a group for learning, working with others to solve problems or tasks. Being able to work with others to form effective or good groups for collaborative and participatory learning. Being able to form good networks of friendship and belonging for learning support and leisure. Mutual trust.
Respect, dignity and recognition	Being able to have respect for oneself and for and from others, being treated with dignity, not being diminished or devalued because of one's gender, social class, religion or race; valuing other languages, other religions and spiritual practices and human diversity. Being able to show empathy, compassion, fairness and generosity, listening to and considering other person's points of view in dialogue and

	debate. Being able to act inclusively and being able to respond to human need. Having competence in inter-cultural communication. Having a voice to participate effectively in learning; a voice to speak out, to debate and persuade; to be able to listen.
Emotional health	Not being subject to anxiety or fear which diminishes learning. Being able to develop emotions for imagination, understanding empathy, awareness and discernment.
Bodily integrity	Safety and freedom from all forms of physical and verbal harassment in the higher education environment.

Wilson-Strydom's 'pragmatic capabilities list for the transition to university'	
<u>Capability</u>	<u>Description of capability from Wilson-Strydom (2015a, p. 131)</u>
Practical reason	Being able to make well-reasoned, informed, critical, independent and reflective choices about post-school study and career options
Knowledge and imagination	Having the academic grounding needed to be able to gain knowledge of chosen university subjects, and to develop methods of academic inquiry. Being able to use critical thinking and imagination to identify and comprehend multiple perspectives
Learning disposition	Being able to have curiosity and a desire for learning. Having the learning skills required for university study. Being an active inquirer.
Social relations and social networks	Being able to participate in a group for learning, working with others to solve problems or tasks. Being able to form networks of friendships and belonging for learning support and leisure. Mutual trust.
Respect, dignity and recognition	Being able to have respect for oneself and for others as well as receiving respect from others, being treated with dignity, not being diminished or devalued because of one's gender, social class, religion or race. Valuing other languages, other religions and spiritual practices and human diversity. Being able to show empathy, compassion, fairness and generosity, dialogue and debate. Having a voice to participate effectively in learning.
Emotional health	Not being subject to anxiety or fear which diminishes learning. Having confidence in one's ability to learn.
Language competence and confidence	Being able to understand, read, write and speak confidently in the language of instruction.

Appendix B: List of interviews

Date and Time	School	Who?	What?
16/2/15, 4pm	Urban	5-6 Students from F5 English Club	Discussion about LoI and importance of English
16/2/15, 2.15pm	Urban	Female student F2	About English competition we had attended and her learning English from Grandmother
19/2/15, 4pm	Urban	2 male students F5	How they managed to succeed and continue to Advanced Level
25/2/15, 4pm	Urban	3 female students F1	About English competition and about what it's like to be a relatively good English speaking
2/3/15, 2.30pm	Urban	2 female students F1	Questions about being form monitor and about being strong English speakers
2/4/15, 10am	Urban	F1 Boys (varying numbers and a girl at one point)	Questions about their experiences of beginning Form One
22/4/15, 2.15pm	Urban	2 female students F2	Talking about the challenges that they face and what they would do if they were the President
27/4/15, 3.15pm	Urban	5 students from F5 English Club	Talking about why they use English for some things, the status of English for students, attitudes to English, private vs government schools, 'old' and 'new' culture
6/5/15, 2pm	Urban	Female student F2	Talking about challenges with language, but also more general concerns relating to school
20/7/15, 2pm	Urban	2 female students F2	Semi-structured interview talking about school experience and challenges as well as focusing in on language.
21/7/15, 11.30am	Rural	2 students F4 (1 male, 1 female)	Semi-structured interview talking about school experience and challenges as well as focusing in on language.
23/7/15, 9.30am	Urban	2 female students F2	Semi-structured interview talking about school experience and challenges as well as focusing in on language.
23/7/15, 10.20am	Urban	2 male students F2	Semi-structured interview talking about school experience and challenges as well as focusing in on language.
27/7/15, 8.30am	Urban	2 female students F2	Semi-structured interview talking about school experience and

			challenges as well as focusing in on language.
31/7/15, 10.15am	Urban	2 male students F1	Semi-structured interview talking about school experience and challenges as well as focusing in on language.
1/8/15, 11.30am	Rural	3 students F3 (2 male, 1 female)	Semi-structured interview talking about school experience and challenges as well as focusing in on language.
12/8/15	Urban	3 male students F2	Semi-structured interview talking about school experience and challenges as well as focusing in on language.
13/8/15	Rural	8 students F2, mixed gender	Semi-structured interview talking about school experience and challenges as well as focusing in on language.
14/8/15, 8.15am	Urban	2 female students F2	Semi-structured interview talking about school experience and challenges as well as focusing in on language.
14/8/15, 8.40am	Urban	3 male students F2	Semi-structured interview talking about school experience and challenges as well as focusing in on language.
14/8/15, 10.30am	Urban	3 female students F1	Semi-structured interview talking about school experience and challenges as well as focusing in on language.
18/8/15, 12.30pm	Rural	3 female students F1	Semi-structured interview talking about school experience and challenges as well as focusing in on language.
18/8/15, 1.30pm	Rural	3 male students F1	Semi-structured interview talking about school experience and challenges as well as focusing in on language.
18/8/15, 2.45pm	Rural	3 female students F1	Semi-structured interview talking about school experience and challenges as well as focusing in on language.
20/8/15, 3pm	Rural	5 female students F2	Semi-structured interview talking about school experience and challenges as well as focusing in on language.
21/8/15, 2.15pm	Urban	2 female students F2	Semi-structured interview talking about school experience and challenges as well as focusing in on language.
25/8/15, 1.30pm	Rural	3 students F1 (2 female, 1 male)	Semi-structured interview talking about school experience and

			challenges as well as focusing in on language.
25/8/15, 2.40pm	Rural	3 female students F1	Semi-structured interview talking about school experience and challenges as well as focusing in on language.
26/8/15, 2.45pm	Urban	F1 English Club (3 girls, 2 boys)	Semi-structured interview talking about school experience and challenges as well as focusing in on language.
27/8/15, 12.10pm	Rural	5 male students F4	Semi-structured interview talking about school experience and challenges as well as focusing in on language.
27/8/15, 12.45pm	Rural	3 female students F4	Semi-structured interview talking about school experience and challenges as well as focusing in on language.
27/8/15, 1.20pm	Rural	3 students F2 (2 female, 1 male)	Semi-structured interview talking about school experience and challenges as well as focusing in on language.
28/8/15, 9.30am	Urban	4 male students F1	Semi-structured interview talking about school experience and challenges as well as focusing in on language.
28/8/15, 10.10am	Urban	3 female students F1	Semi-structured interview talking about school experience and challenges as well as focusing in on language.
31/8/15, 5pm	Urban	F6 Students who had been involved with workshop	A feedback discussion asking students to reflect on the discussions in the groups that they were leading and to think about what they considered to be interesting/important and what they had learned.

Student researcher interviews

Date	Student Researcher	Interviewees
5/5/15	Male F5 Urban	Form 1 and 2 students from another local school
5/5/15	Male F5 Urban	Students in Standard 6 and 7 (primary school)
3/5/15	Male F5 Urban	Students from a secondary school that is for students who failed Form 4 the first time (to resit) or adults taking the Qualifying Test

8/5/15	Male F5 Urban	Students in F5
8/5/15	Male F5 Urban	Students in F5
25/7/15	Male F5 Urban	Group of F1 students from Rural school
25/7/15	Female F4 Rural + Female F5 Urban	Group of F1 students from Rural school
25/7/15	2 x Female F5 Urban	Group of F1 students from Rural school
25/7/15	Male F5 Urban	Group of F1 students from Rural school
25/7/15	Male F5 Urban + Female F5 Urban	Group of F1 students from Rural school
25/7/15	All	Whole group of F1 students from Rural school
25/7/15	All	Feedback discussion from day's activities
29/7/15	Female F4 Rural	Group of F4 classmates
29/7/15	Female F4 Rural	Group of F4 classmates
1/8/15	Female F4 Rural	Group of 3 F2 students
1/8/15	Male F4 Rural	Group of 3 F2 students
1/8/15	Male F4 Rural	Group of F4 classmates
15/8/15	Female F4 Rural	Group of F4 classmates

Appendix C: Documents included in formal research permission process

C.1 Research proposal included in application for research clearance from the Tanzanian Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH)

APPLICATION FOR COSTECH RESEARCH CLEARANCE

RESEARCH PROPOSAL – LAELA ADAMSON

ABSTRACT

This study will investigate how students in Tanzanian secondary schools negotiate the challenges of their multilingual learning environments. Although Tanzanian students should, according to national policy, only be taught using English, this is not the reality in the vast majority of classrooms and students are not achieving expected learning outcomes, as demonstrated in national examinations and literacy assessments. Language of instruction in Tanzanian schools has been the topic of fierce and politically-fuelled debate. But these debates have reached an impasse. I assert that this is, at least partly, because neither side has adequately acknowledged the complexity of the sociolinguistic reality on the ground where decisions to, and attitudes toward, language are deeply embedded in competing social realities and discourses. For this research, I will approach these issues from an ethnographic perspective, conducting 8-10 months of fieldwork in Tanzania. I will observe, discuss and attempt to describe and explain language and literacy practices both inside and outside of the classroom. Moreover, I will design and conduct participatory research with students with the aim to better understand how they use language and literacy in their lives, the meanings and values attached to different practices and how these interact with student aspirations for education. I will use the Capability Approach as an evaluative tool to maneouvre through complexities in the data and to produce findings that can usefully contribute to a new, and hopefully more productive wave of language in education discussions.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research is to better understand the reality of the experience of the language in education policy in Tanzanian secondary schools. My interest in this topic has grown from 2 years' experience on the ground in Tanzania volunteering for a small UK NGO with an interest in improving resources and conditions for reading in secondary schools. I have visited more than 200 Tanzanian secondary schools and conducted project evaluations, interviewing teachers, students, volunteers and education officials. I believe that the current language situation is detrimental to both student learning and personal development. Although Tanzanian students should, according to national policy, only be taught using English, this is neither the reality, nor achievable in the vast majority of classrooms and students are not achieving expected learning outcomes, as demonstrated in national examinations and literacy assessments. It has also been noted to have an impact on other factors, including democratic understanding and self-esteem (see Brock-Utne, Desai and Qorro, 2004). Language of instruction in Tanzanian schools has been the topic of fierce and politically-fuelled debate. But these debates have reached an impasse. I assert that this is, at least partly, because neither side has adequately acknowledged the complexity of the sociolinguistic reality on the ground where decisions about, and

attitudes toward, language are deeply embedded in competing social realities and discourses. With these aims in mind, I will focus in on the student experience and ask: *how do Tanzanian students respond to and negotiate the challenges of the language environment in secondary schools?* I hope that more in-depth investigation of this issue may contribute to moving debates forward and might highlight even small changes that could improve both educational outcomes and the student experience.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Language is integral to education. It is the medium through which learning is communicated and most often demonstrated. Literacy, the ability to interact with language in its written forms, is considered both to be the aim of early education, and a pre-requisite to learning in the later stages (see Perlman Robinson, 2011). Yet for many young people around the world, including in Tanzania, meeting the standards of literacy that are expected by national and international measures of learning, and the levels that would allow them to fulfill their aspirations for the future, is a significant challenge. It has been suggested that this is for a wide variety of reasons, including socio-economic background, level of parental education, lack of relevant reading materials and quality of teaching (see Tikly and Barrett, 2013). For many, the struggle is magnified by the fact that they are not accessing learning through a language that they understand. This is particularly pertinent to Sub-Saharan Africa where a large number of countries have made the choice to deliver teaching, and require students to demonstrate learning, through a European language, in most cases the ex-colonial language. As regional and international surveys of educational quality grow in popularity and indicate a distressing picture of achievement across a number of contexts (see Beatty and Pritchett, 2012; SACMEQ, 2010; Uwezo, 2011), it seems particularly important to also look in depth at these contexts to try to understand more, not only about the practicalities of learning in multilingual environments, but also about the complexities of competing sources of power, identity and aspiration that influence attitudes and decisions. I believe that this task can only be adequately addressed from an ethnographic perspective.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tanzania acts as a particularly interesting case when considering issues of language and literacy in education because it has a history of debate around the language of instruction (LOI) in schools that has been particularly fervent since independence in 1961. However, these debates have reached an impasse. The main focus of discussions has been on secondary level schooling where there is a whole-scale shift from Kiswahili as LOI to English, and students are required to sit their national examinations in English. A large body of writing exists asserting that this policy is anti-democratic and inequitable, and work continues to be done that demonstrates the challenges that students and teachers face when trying to access and facilitate learning through English. Yet, despite the overwhelming evidence and a number of efforts to inspire change, the desire to retain the status quo has triumphed (see Afitska *et al.*, 2013; Brock-Utne, Desai and Qorro, 2004; Roy-Campbell and Qorro, 1997; Rubagumya, 1990). Seeing that the LOI policy in Tanzania is unlikely to change soon, this study aims to contribute to a broadening of the debate beyond the English vs Kiswahili dichotomy and to explore how students respond to and cope with a schooling situation that academics have shown to create so many obstacles to their learning. It is widely recorded that students and teachers routinely employ strategies of code-switching and translation, but few in depth studies that consider why different

techniques might be chosen in different situations, or ask what it means to students to employ these. By adopting an ethnographic perspective to look at language use, I hope to be able to offer some suggested answers to these, and other questions. If the overall LOI policy cannot, or will not, change, it then becomes crucial that students have the best possible strategies to thrive under the current policy. The starting point for this has to be to better understand current practices and perspectives.

Though issues around which languages are used in schools are clearly important in this study, questions of how language is used are also critical, and literacy in particular has become a key focus in the education community (for example see UNESCO, 2005b). It has been suggested that general literacy challenges are being masked by the LOI debate and that, if the LOI in Tanzania were changed to Kiswahili, learning outcomes would not dramatically improve because students do not have adequate literacy in Standard Kiswahili (see Kadeghe, 2003). An East African regional learning assessment survey conducted annually since 2010 offers compelling evidence to support this claim (Uwezo, 2011). An in-depth study in one location will allow for this issue to be explored in greater detail. It will also allow for the concept of literacy to be interrogated and understanding of its local meanings to be developed. Influenced by the work of New Literacy Studies (NLS) since the 1980s, I believe that literacy and language use are always socially embedded (see Street in Grenfell, 2012). Street talks about 'multiple literacies', the idea that literacy can concurrently take on different forms and meanings in a community and be valued in different ways depending on the situation (as before). These conceptualisations seem especially relevant to the Tanzanian secondary school environment where different languages take on different roles both in- and outside of the classroom and where a particular form of literacy in English is a requirement for success in national examinations, yet poses such a challenge for students and teachers alike. Moreover, students must incorporate literacy into their identities, which respond differently to perceived local, national and global conditions. An ethnographic perspective will require that multiple meanings, complexities and seeming contradictions are highlighted.

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this research is to develop in-depth understanding of the student experience, particularly as regards language practices, in a sample of Tanzanian secondary schools. In addition to focusing on the main research question, this project also aims to empower students to feel that their voices are being heard, but also to reflect on their own strategies and responses and to consider improvements that could be made.

METHODOLOGIES

I intend to conduct this research from an ethnographic perspective. As has been stated, I believe that issues of language and literacy are socially embedded and thus the ethnographic lens seems particularly appropriate for developing an in-depth understanding of the student experience. The bulk of the time, roughly 6 months, will be spent in one secondary school in Morogoro region, to be selected in discussion with the REO. This length of time will allow me to develop relationships with students and teachers and cement a thorough understanding of student responses and perceptions in that context. My intention is then to follow this main period of fieldwork with a number of shorter visits, of perhaps one week each, to other secondary schools in the same region. Having developed understanding in the first school, I expect that I will be able to observe

much more quickly in additional schools whether or not student behaviours and attitudes seem to be similar or contrasting. These additional visits will allow me to develop confidence in my conclusions.

Within the schools, I intend to focus on students in Form 1 and Form 4. These two cases will offer insight into the student experience at two very different stages, those who have just begun secondary school and for whom English would be expected to be a challenge, and those who, in theory, should be ready to succeed in national examinations. In the initial stages the main method of data collection will be observation. I hope to observe students in their lessons as well as interactions outside of classrooms and potentially also outside of the school environment. Although I am a qualified teacher, I would like to avoid taking on a big teaching load so that I have plenty of time for observations. I do, however, think it is important that I contribute to the life of the school and think I could be useful spending some time in the school library, helping students to access relevant books, supporting with homework and running and English language club. As well as observing, I will gather data using interviews and through writing field-notes that capture more informal discussions. I also plan to design short activities for students to encourage them to consider some of the challenges they are facing around language and how they respond. In the later stages, I would like to include a participatory element where I work with a small number of students and help them to understand the research process that I am involved in. The aim of this would be to empower them to consider how the question might be researched and then take the lead on some of the data gathering themselves. It is hoped that this might offer alternative perspectives in the data, but also ensure that students feel that their voices are being heard and valued.

Of course, working in a school environment raises some ethical issues. I have already mentioned the importance that I contribute to the life of the school and I have stated that I will aim to help some students, at least, to develop research skills. I recognize the importance, though, in ensuring that any activities I will carry out do not interfere with student timetables and learning.

My competence in Kiswahili will be very important to this research. I have a solid grounding in the language and am continuing to take lessons during these preparatory stages in Dar es Salaam. My competence will also grow when I am immersed in school. Where possible I will make audio-recordings of interviews and discussions around activities so that I can transcribe and have translations checked. If funds allow, I may also look to employ a research assistant for a short period to conduct observations and interviews along with me so that we can compare our perspectives.

RESEARCH BENEFICIARIES

The main output from this research will be my PhD thesis, but I will also offer summary of findings to the Tanzanian educational authorities. I hope that both students and teachers will benefit from involvement in this research, both in terms of increased confidence in current strategies and possibly also some new ideas. Students involved in the participatory elements may also gain research and problem-solving skills. Overall, I hope that this work will contribute to the wider discussions about language and literacy in education and thus help to develop strategies that may improve both quality of learning and the schooling experience.

University of Dar es Salaam

School of Education

Associate Dean (Academic), Sisal House

Our Ref: SOED/Ref 01. 2014

Director, Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH)
Ali Hassan Mwinyi Road
Kijitonyama Area
P.O. Box 4302
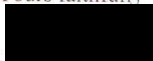Dar es Salaam
Tanzania

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: SUPPORTING LETTER FOR RESEARCH CLEARANCE APPLICATION FOR MS
LAELA BAIRD ADAMSON**

Kindly refer the heading above.

This communication is to kindly support application for research clearance by the above named
student. Ms Laela Baird Adamson is a PhD student from the Institute of Education University of
London. She is applying for a research clearance to enable her collect data for her PhD research.
The data will be collected from Morogoro region and her research title is *"Language, Literacy
and Learning: An Ethnographic Perspective on Student Language Practices in Tanzanian
Secondary Schools"*

Kindly assist her considerably.

Yours faithfully

Dr. Aneth A. Komba
Associate Dean School of Education

Institute of Education
20 Bedford Way
London, WC1H 0AL
2nd October 2014

The Regional Administrative Secretary
P.O. Box 650
MOROGORO

RE: Permission to Conduct Research in Morogoro, Tanzania

I am writing to introduce myself and to request permission to conduct field research for my PhD in Morogoro Region, Tanzania.

My name is Laela Adamson and I am a PhD researcher at the Institute of Education, University of London, UK. I hope to conduct research in Tanzania as part of my doctoral thesis. I am supervised my academics in the UK, but have also discussed my research with the Dean and Associate Dean of Education at the University of Dar es Salaam and have been granted a permit to conduct research from COSTECH (a copy is enclosed).

I am studying the ways that Tanzania secondary school students use language and the relationship between language and learning. I am interested in the different languages that are used in different situations, in confidence in using spoken and written language and in attitudes towards different languages and the impact these might have on the students. I aim to better understand the strategies that are already in use amongst students. I hope that increased understanding will make it easier to design initiatives to improve learning.

I am asking permission to be in Morogoro for a total of 10 months, beginning in January 2015, though I will need to make some trips back to the UK during that time. I have designed an ethnographic study, meaning that the majority of my time would be spent in one secondary school, though I may want to make comparisons in the later stages of the research and spend some time in a small number of other schools. It is my current preference that the first school be in Morogoro Town and I think ████ ██ School would be suitable.

The main methods for collecting data in this study will include: observation, interviews, surveys, and activities with students. I would like the opportunity to work with some students outside of class time, but it will be important that this does not interfere with their studies. I hope that I will also be able to contribute to the life of the school.
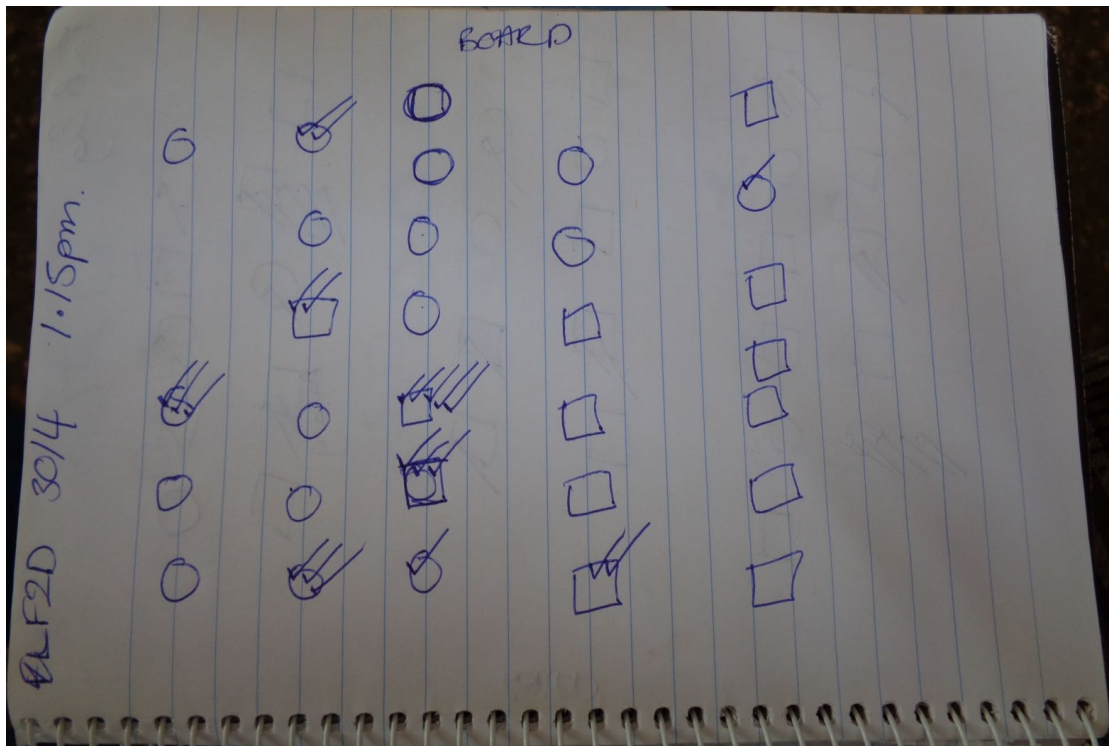
I thank you for your time and consideration and hope that you will grant me permission to conduct my research. If you have any further questions, please do not

hesitate to contact me. I will also visit Morogoro towards the end of October to introduce myself.

Yours sincerely,

Laela B. Adamson, PhD Student

Appendix D: Example participation map from Kijijini School

Participation map for observation of a Form Two English lesson, Kijijini School, 30/04/15
- *Circles represent female students*
- *Squares represent male students*
- *Ticks indicate the number of times that a student contributed during the lesson*

Tuesday 20th January - Afternoon	
We then travelled, again in the Head's car, but driven by a different man, to the A-level campus. By this time it was raining again and so it was very muddy underfoot. The main classrooms seem old and worn. There is also hostel accommodation on this site. I was led into the staffroom and introduced to a group of teachers. I was asked to speak to them. I spoke Swahili, using some phrases from the speech I had prepared, but I made a number of mistakes. I believe that I was understood, though. We were then asked to sit and people moved so that I could sit next to the Head. There was discussion of soda and biscuits and the Head made it quite clear that this would not happen every time he visited.	*Although I understood a lot of what was going on today, there is definitely a huge amount of vocabulary that I don't know and some people speak more clearly than others.*
I spoke briefly with a male history teacher in a striped shirt. I was later told that he is the head of history. I tried to explain my research in more detail and to explain that my taking notes was for my own memory. When I mentioned language he said that, because there are students in A-level from different schools, some had been to English Medium primaries and others had not. He said that there are big differences in English ability amongst the students. He also mentioned the psychological effect of learning in a language that is not the mother tongue, but I did not get a chance to expand on this discussion.	*This was the point in the day when I felt most like my question might be important. Language was not specifically referred to at any other point in the meeting, even though the discussion was about reasons for students underachieving. Several of the points raised may refer to language though – e.g. not choosing good questions or not reading. [I wonder how much 'not reading' is to do with it being difficult]. Another thought – if some students were at English Medium Primary Schools, do they have problems with Swahili?*
It then became clear that there was going to be a staff meeting. The Head began the meeting with again welcoming me and explaining that I had asked for 2 weeks to get used to the environment before I do more. He asked the teachers to 'mwe wabalozi' – to be ambassadors and to teach me about Tanzanian culture.	
The Head outlined that the other issues in the staff meeting would be about exams, certificated and marks.	*This is an issue that I suspect I will encounter again and again. I wonder if I will have to deal with this somehow in the research. If I am going to find that language affects self-esteem, might this also be a factor?*
There is a female teacher near the front with a headscarf and silver earrings who looks bored.	
There is the noise of a stick hitting something next door. It transpires that it is a student being caned. This begins a discussion amongst the teachers	

about how I will react to this. I explain that it is not my culture, it does make me uncomfortable and that I won't do it, but that I understand that it is common in Tanzania.

(Throughout the whole 3 hour meeting ahead, the Head's phone rings regularly and oftentimes, he answers it).

The Head talked a lot about results, particularly 'big results'. He went around finding out which teachers were responsible for teaching students for which exam papers. He asked them all if they were comfortable with their subjects. All but one says yes. One male teacher explained that he had never taught A-level History before and that the syllabus had changed since he studied it, but that he would be able. The Head then asked teachers if the students are happy with them. This question appeared to confuse people. When it reached the turn of one of the Geography teachers, the Head said that his students had complained about him. Everyone else was noticeably quiet. The teacher was moved from teaching Form 6 to Form 5.

When talking about performance, the Head repeated what I had said to him about choosing this school because it was a good school. He talked about the history of causing the students to succeed (kufaulishwa). He used the term 'lazima' a lot emphasizing the importance of what he was saying. He talked to the teachers about learning objectives (malengo) and stating that 'students should be able to…' He said that, if students weren't able to meet the objective at the end of the lesson then they hadn't been taught.

I noticed at least 2 teachers with their eyes shut and heads down.

The Head talked about the importance of maintaining or improving the status of the school. He stressed the need to help each other, several times. 13.10 "Sisi ni binadamu…tusaidiane, tupendane".

There then followed a discussion of the Form 6 Mock examination marks. He went through each subject and asked teachers to explain the problems their students faced. Different teachers spoke, but the points included: topics not covered yet and being behind with the syllabus; students not making a good choice from the questions.

I wonder how this public criticism and humiliation of a teacher represents the wider culture of the school. Does this also happen to students in classrooms?

It struck me that several of the complaints that were made about students were also features of some of my students in the UK. Might there be a confidence/motivation issue here?

I definitely need to look more into this question of reading. There is no library at this school. Where would students read? Using what time? Why don't they like it? Also more exploration of the issue of question choice.

Geography argued that it was impossible to finish the course, saying that other schools have 2 teachers and they teach half the course each and can finish early. Teacher Karen spoke[50]. She was very animated and blamed the students who don't want to study and want to be spoon fed. The Head responded, saying: "Wana bahati nzuri kwa sababu walimu wao wana akili" – they have good luck because they have clever teachers.	
I was not 100% sure that I understood correctly but there seemed to be a small argument between the teacher who had been to the UK and the Head. The teacher complained that students who had confidence could just go straight to the Head and complain about their teachers. The Head responded in a way that seemed aggressive saying: "ni haki yao" – it's their right.	*Which students take Kiswahili, what is their educational history?* *I felt very uncomfortable with his comparison here, but it seemed to be taken as a sort of joke by staff.*
When the head of English spoke he said that they had covered the syllabus and that "Hawa na sababu ya kufeli" – they don't have a reason to fail. He said that the students do not read the novels. Also another English teacher said that they do not write enough for essay questions. This same teacher also suggested that the students had a lack of seriousness and they don't choose/understand the questions well. He said that they do not recognize the difference between questions about form and content.	
The Head responded saying that teachers need to find ways for getting students to like to read. They just read summaries. Sometimes it might have some information that will help but mostly not and they can't answer.	
The Economics teacher also mentioned the problem of choosing and answering questions. He said that students believe the subject is hard and give up "wanakata tama".	
Head responded saying he remembers a time when Economics went very well at the school and students wanted to move there. He said that the ability is there to return to that time. He said to the Economics teacher that he had had the advantage to be called to marking many times and that he should use this experience 'uzoefu'.	
	I particularly disliked seeing the Head slap a child

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[50] All names are pseudonyms.

When the Head turned to the Advanced Mathematics teacher he explained that these were the worst marks and asked why. He said that students wouldn't be accepted into these A-level streams without good marks at O-level. Every year there are bad marks and he said he considers whether he needs to find another teacher to help the one already there. He explained that, at O-level they look at the subjects that students do best in, but at A-level, it is the overall mark for the total combination that counts.

The best results were in Kiswahili.

At this point I began to lose concentration as I was weary and uncomfortable, but I switched back on when the Head said 14:30 "Tunaua watu wengi" – we kill many people….he then compared this to Boko Haram. He continued: "Si hali mzuri kabisa" – it's not a good state at all. He did at that point say that he was happy when he arrived to see teachers preparing schemes of work.

The Head began what seemed like his conclusion, saying that he wants Division 3 to be the lowest this year: 'Division 4, Hapana". He said that students should get 65% and upwards. He then asked if teachers agreed or had other ideas.

There were several people keen to comment (at first mostly men). The Head of English said that this was not like other schools where all are boarders and teachers teach morning till evening. Some are day scholars. He said, "wanadiscuss a lot, lakini hawasomi". He said that they record other people's notes but don't read…that they don't have ways of revising themselves, 'bila kufuata kanuni' – without following rules. He suggested that they needed someone to sit near the classrooms and watch what students do: "wanapiga kelele au wanasoma?"

Another teacher said that "there are students who in the exam write a name only…name only…what do you do with that child?"

Another said: "Kila mtu wa *NAME OF SCHOOL* ni Mgonjwa".

(The contributors were mostly men, but after Karen spoke, 2 other female teachers added also.

across the back with his hand. The second girl he missed the first time and called her back to make sure he got her. Her face suggested this was quite a traumatic moment.

350

By the end, the Head was talking about a target of 60%. He then said that students should not be out of school without permission – this was received with nods, though there were also some questions. Right at the end just before the meeting was closed, there was a quick discussion about extra pay for remedial classes (which were being done for the first time this year). It was agreed at 10,000 Tsh per hour. (It was not clear if this was paid by the school or contributions from students). As we were leaving the school and I was to return home, 2 male students greeted me quite confidently in English. The students were going in for 'remedial classes'. I saw the Head shout at a number of students for being late and then hit 2 girls quite hard on the back for being late.	

Appendix F: Example research diary entry

Monday 2nd February, 2015

Today I sat most of the day with Form 4. It was an improvement that my plan from Friday worked out and I should be very pleased about that. In fact, I'm spending a higher proportion of my time in what seems like 'useful' activities, and I should be happy with that progress. I am also becoming more of a feature around school. Teachers greet me by name and some students are beginning to as well. Even those students who I don't know yet are mostly looking at me and greeting me. This is definitely progress in the right direction.

I'm still pretty panicky inside, though, about not knowing what I'm looking at. Nothing has particularly jumped out as a 'that's it' moment. I've been struck by the gender imbalance in participation in some classes. I was horrified by the approach to teaching pronunciation through fear. And I'm beginning to ask questions about inclusion.

I've had moments where I'm worried that this school is actually too good to give me useful data. Students in Form 5 seem to be competently asking and answering questions (this is perhaps to be expected since they have succeeded at Form 4 and have been selected from around the country). Form 4 today seemed to be understanding what was going on. When I asked if it had been understood, students told me yes. And I saw students writing in English that was better than I might have been expecting. But what I don't know is if I only saw the stronger students. Maybe those that have the biggest presence in the class and are most likely to talk to me are those high-achieving students. Certainly, Kevin[51], a boy who was very keen to talk to me today, seemed to be the student the others were calling upon for support with their maths exam paper.

But I'm worried about how I could get to those other students. In fact, I'm anxious about how I'm going to get access to students at all. Though sitting in the classroom with them seems to be a good start. It leads to them saying hello to me by name and hopefully passing the word around a bit about what I'm doing. I felt very happy today when Kevin asked me 'What is the benefit of research?' It suggested some real interest and got me thinking that student researchers might not be the craziest idea. I just need to know what I actually want to ask! Or maybe I should be trying to get them to choose the questions.

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[51] This is a pseudonym.

Sunday 7th June 2015 – Impressions of Key Things in the Data (before looking at it again in detail)

There are a number of phrases that regularly appear:

- complaint that there is no *"conducive environment"* for learning or speaking English

- explanation that students are not participating in lessons or approaching me because *"they are fearing"* (this comes from both teachers and students).

- description of those people who laugh at others or say cruel things to others as being "jealous"

- those who do speak English outside of accepted events in lessons criticized as "proud" or "pretending"

- when asked what makes some students succeed, both students and teachers talk about students needing to be "determined" and to have "discipline" and "the spirit of speaking English"

- those who do not participate or get low marks in exams/tests are described as "slow learners" or "stubborn"

- the frequent classroom chants, "are we together?", "mmeelewa?" (have you understood?) Nearly always answered with "yes" / "ndiyo", but with varying levels of commitment / numbers of voices. In very few cases, I've observed "no" as the answer to one of these questions or their variations.

- explanation that some students "wanakata tama" (they give up)

- "medium schools" to refer to private English-medium primaries. This enters discussion a lot, either to explain why some students speak better English, to make the distinction between private and government schooling, or also as the most common suggestion for improving education in Tanzania.

- at all levels, there is a lot of discussion of exams, with the verbs "kufeli" and "kushindwa" (to fail) used a lot.

<u>"It's not a conducive environment for speaking English"</u>
This phrase is often used as part of an explanation for the fact that the use of English in both of the schools is very much confined to lessons or to simple requests of the teacher, such as "Please teacher, can I get in?" when asking to

enter a classroom or the staffroom. The amount of English used in the classroom also varies. Most teachers use a lot of Kiswahili to explain what they are delivering, but whether or not students will be allowed to answer or ask questions in Kiswahili depends both on the teacher and the situation. Both teachers and students explain that Kiswahili is the language that is used outside of school too, so it is the language they prefer. Teachers in both schools converse with one another in Kiswahili, though there is some occasional code-mixing. There are some teachers who speak to me mostly in English, some because their English is very good, others make more of a show of it. There are some teachers who I have noticed stay absolutely silent around me. Both Headmasters also seem to use Kiswahili the majority of the time. Although people talk about the dominance of Kiswahili, most do not seem to lament it. They explain that Kiswahili is their national language and seem to be proud of it. The exceptions to this are some of the students who speak English quite well who express sadness or disappointment and not being able to speak it more.

Although the definition of a 'conducive environment' as it is used by teachers and students seems to be focused on the dominance of Kiswahili, there are a few other things that I have observed that I think are also related to the idea of the environment being supportive to language learning:

Attitudes to English Speakers
There appear to be 2 sets of attitudes to people that speak English well, or at times when it is not felt to be required. The first is a respect, the idea that it shows that someone is well-educated or a "fast learner". These students are often given positions of responsibility within the classroom and the school more broadly. However, these students also experience other students criticizing them, laughing at them, or "gossiping" about them. Common accusations are that a student is "proud" or is "pretending". In a focus group discussion with some Form 5 students, they also told me that these 2 attitudes exist outside of school. Some students expressed feeling a sense of status when they knew they were being heard speaking English at home or in town. Another boy said that his family and community consider it insulting for him to speak English at home because they cannot understand. (It is perhaps interesting that I have heard similar comments made about people who use their tribal languages when they know that there are others who do not speak that language around. There seems to be an attitude that everyone speaks Kiswahili and so that is the language that should be used so as not to exclude others).

Atmosphere of Fear
Fear seems to be a very prevalent emotion felt by many students. Particularly powerful seems to be the fear of making a mistake and/or being laughed at. Students do laugh at each other when they make mistakes, or delay or stumble. This was highlighted at one of the English Speaking Days that I attended. The teacher in charge asked them if they laughed at foreigners who make mistakes in Kiswahili. The suggestions was that they don't, so why do they laugh at each other,

though my experience is that people do laugh at me. This fear seems to lead to a variety of avoidance behaviours, some of which definitely draw more attention to the student than if they had done what was asked or answered the question. In every case I've observed, though, if a student hasn't answered, the teacher has eventually given up and moved to someone else, mostly without consequence for the student.

I have also wondered to what extent the lack of confidence / refusal to participate in some cases might be cultural – as I seem some of the same reluctance from some teachers in staff meetings and other gatherings. People often talk of Tanzanians lacking confidence compared to Kenyans. I don't have any data that would really support a discussion of this, but it does make me reluctant to accredit too much of the reluctance to participate to language.

There is also a fear of failure in exercises, tests and exams, because corporal punishment is known to be the consequence. However, this doesn't always result in students making extra effort to succeed. Some students seem to be quite hardened to this form of punishment, perhaps because it is used so often, and they think that it is quickly over. What has also been interesting regarding punishment is that some of the teachers that I have observed with the best rapport with students in the classroom use this kind of punishment frequently.

Understanding / Comprehension / 'Correctness'
I have been quite confused by the idea of understanding. On occasion, when I have seen difficult vocabulary on the board or confusing phrasing, I have asked students if they understand it. The answer is always yes, though some will confess that they don't understand all of it. But observing students during events when they are required to use English, most struggle. Rather than assume that students are not telling me the truth (although this might be the case) I began to wonder whether we had different ideas of what it meant to understand. The most common pattern for lessons seems to be that the teacher (or a student before the teacher comes) writes notes on the board for the students to copy. When they have finished copying the teacher then reads them through and explains them further, often repeating and extending explanations using Kiswahili. So, perhaps students do feel that they understand what they have just copied because it has also been explained to them in Kiswahili. But then how long can that understanding be retained if they do not understand the vocabulary in the notes they have written down? The way that questions are most commonly asked in class require students to select the relevant piece of the copied text, so perhaps students also feel that they understand if they can choose the correct words or phrases. I have also observed that there is often not much tolerance for the possibility that there might be more than one answer, or sometimes even students rewording the phrases given.

Particularly in the urban school, it is also possible for the teacher to get the impression of understanding from the class because most groups have some

students who are stronger than others or have more background in English, and respond more enthusiastically to the question "have you understood?" Because there are 70-80 students in the classroom, it is very difficult to check what stage everyone is at.

<u>Differences between the urban and rural schools</u>
The biggest difference is the size. The urban school has roughly 1400 students in Forms 1-4 while the rural school has 630. At the urban school, there are 5 streams per year group while there are 4 at the rural school. The average class sizes that I have observed are between 65 and 80 in town, but around 30 in the rural school (though it seems that at both there are quite high absence rates on any given day). The thing that has surprised me the most, and I think must partly be related to class size, is that I feel that, in some lessons at least, the rural students are being offered a better learning experience. I have observed some teachers (but not all) make greater efforts to include students and to check their understanding. I have seen the use of AfL strategies such as allowing thinking time and "thumbs up, thumbs down" (sometimes with thumbs that were down followed up individually). There is also a lot less low-level disruption at the rural school, which could be for a number of reasons.

<u>Language Development</u>
I've also been struck by how few examples of teachers supporting students to develop their English I have seen. There are a number of instances of a word being verbally translated into Kiswahili, but I have only seen a couple of examples of vocabulary lists. And students don't seem to have a system for recording or practicing new vocabulary. Considering how much memorization is required, students do not appear to be being supported at all with study skills. It is just expected that, if they have the notes written down, they will learn them. And the Form 4 national examination can draw on information from all 4 years. Students spend the majority of their time copying, either from the board, a shared textbook, or from friends. There are very few instances of them creating text for themselves, especially anything longer than a sentence (they are asked to create example sentences in English when looking at different features of grammar). Homework is frequently copied and I haven't observed any instances of a teacher having an issue with that.

Appendix H: Semi-structured interview questions

There are examples of questions that were asked in most of the semi-structured interviews, but every interview includes a variety of different follow-up questions in response to students' answers or things I had observed that day.

1) Firstly, can you tell me a little about your experience of being a student at *NAME OF SCHOOL*?
2) What sorts of challenges do you face here at school? It there anything that you think hinders your learning?
3) Can you tell me a little about the situation concerning languages in your life? Which languages do you speak? Where do you use them?
4) Now let's talk about languages at school. How do you think different languages help you to succeed at school?
5) Is there perhaps a teacher that you like, who you think teaches well and who you understand well? What do they do differently to other teachers?
6) If you don't understand what is being said, how do you feel?
7) If students want to succeed in Form Four, what do they need to do?
8) What would you like to do in the future?
9) If you were the Minister for Education, what would you do?
10) I have now finished with my questions. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me?

Appendix I: List of interview questions created by the student researchers
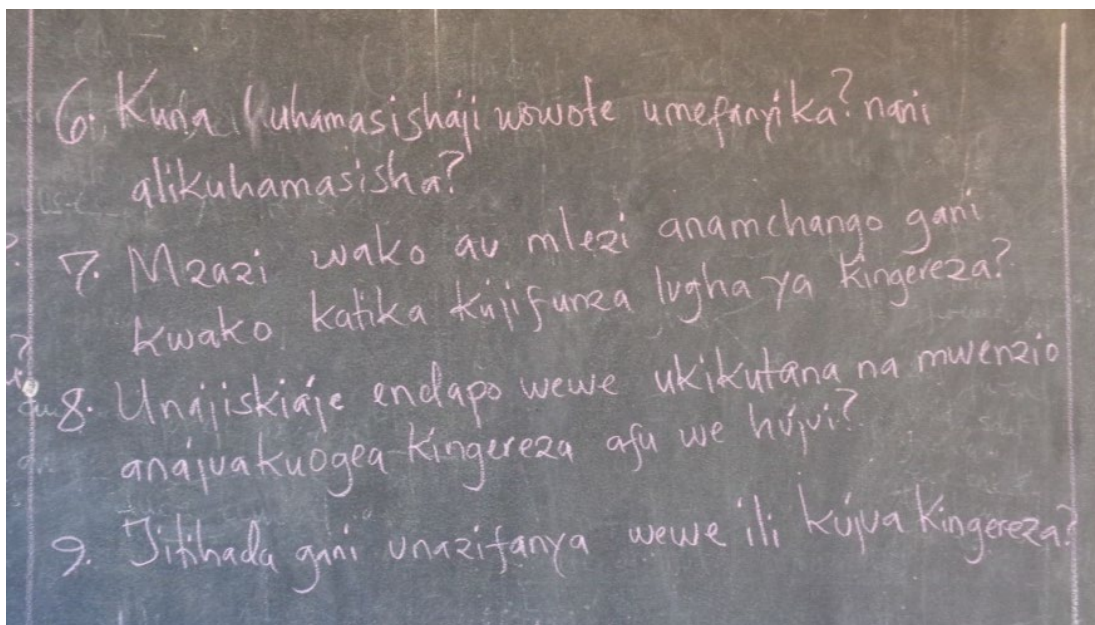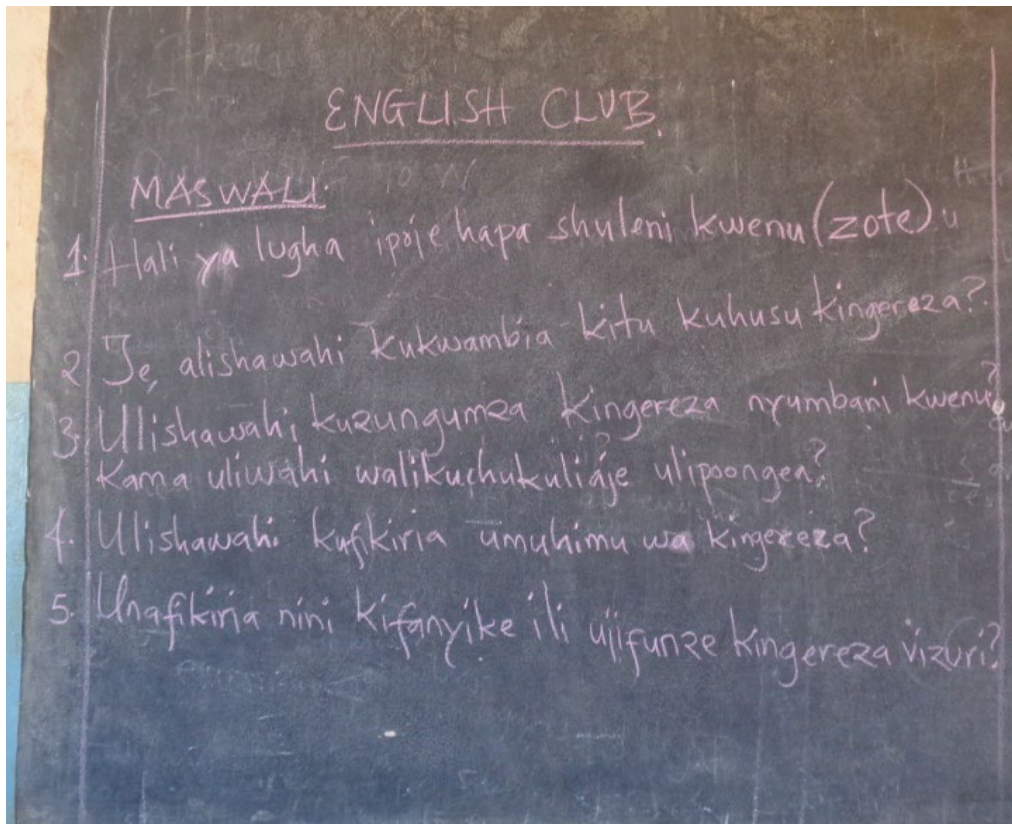
1) What is the situation with languages here at your school (all languages)?
2) Have you ever been told anything about English?

3) Have you ever spoken English at your home? If you have, how did people treat you when you spoke?
4) Have you ever thought about the importance of English?
5) What do you think can be done in order to learn English well?
6) Is there any encouragement? Who encourages you (to learn English)?
7) What have your parents or guardians contributed to your learning the English language?
8) How do you feel if you meet with someone who knows how to speak English, but you don't?
9) What efforts do you make yourself in order to know English?

Appendix J: Student background questionnaire

SHULE:_____FORM: _____

Ninajaribu kuelewa uzoefu wa kuwa mwanafunzi wa Tanzania na kutumia lugha mbalimbali kila siku. Naomba kujua zaidi kuhusu wewe. Hakuna mtu mwingine ataona majibu yako.

Wewe ni mvulana au msichana?   1. MVULANA   2. MSICHANA

Kwenye nyumba yenu au ya mlezi wako, mnatumia sakafu ya aina gani?
1. SAKAFU YA UDONGO   2. SAKAFU YA SUMENTI
3. AU CHOCHOTE (andika hapa) _____

Kwenye nyumba yenu au ya mlezi wako, mnamiliki vitu gani? (Andika yote).
1. UMEME   2. VIDEO   3. BASKELI   4. RADIO   5. PIKIPIKI
6. GARI

Kwenye nyumba yenu au ya mlezi wako, kuna vitabu? (Chagua mmoja):
1. HATUNA   2. PUNGUFU YA 5 (<5)   3. 5 – 20   4. ZAIDI YA 20 (>20)

Wazazi au walezi wako wanafanya kazi gani?
1. Mama / Mlezi wa kike: _____
2. Baba / Mlezi wa kiume: _____

Lugha gani unazojua vizuri? (Andika zote)_____

Lugha gani unazojua kidogo? (Andika zote)_____

Kwenye nyumba yenu, lugha gani mnayozumgumza? (Kama mnazozungumza zaidi ya lugha mmoja, andika zote) _____

Shule yako ya msingi ilikuwa ya: 1. SERIKALI   2. BINAFSI

Lugha ya kufundisha katika shule yako ya msingi kulikuwa:
1. KISWAHILI   2. KIINGEREZA

Una dada au kaka wakubwa? 1. NDIYO   2. HAPANA

Kama una dada au kaka wakubwa, wapo Form ngapi? Au walisoma mpaka Form ngapi?
_____
_____
_____

<u>TRANSLATION</u>

SCHOOL:_____FORM:_____

I am trying to understand the experience of being a Tanzanian student and using different languages every day. I would like to know more about you. No other person will see your answers.

Are you a boy or a girl?   1. BOY   2. GIRL

In your home or guardians' home, what type of floor do you have?
1.EARTH   2. CEMENT   3. OTHER (write here) _____

In your home or guardians' home, which things do you possess? (Write all).
1.ELECTRICITY   2. VIDEO PLAYER   3. BICYCLE   4. RADIO
5. MOTORCYCLE   6. CAR

In your home or guardians' home, are there books? (Choose one):
1.NONE   2. FEWER THAN 5   3. 5-20   4. MORE THAN 20

What work do your parents or guardians do?
      1. Mother / Female guardian:_____
      2. Father / Male guardian:_____

What languages do you know well? (Write all):_____

What languages do you know a little? (Write all):_____

In your home, what languages do you speak? (If you speak more than one language, write all of them):_____

Your primary school was: 1. GOVERNMENT   2. PRIVATE

The language of instruction at your primary school was:
1. KISWAHILI   2. ENGLISH

Do you have older sisters or brothers?   1. YES   2. NO

If you have older sisters of brothers, which Form are they in? Or which Form did they study until?_____

Appendix K: Example interview transcript

28-8-15 U F1 3 girls

Kwa sababu kuna wanafunzi wengi wanaopiga kelele.
Sasa swali la kwanza ni..
Tafadhali niambie kidogo kuhusu uzoefu wako wa kuwa mwanafunzi wenu wa kuwa wanafunzi. Kwa mfano…kwa mfano hapa shuleni mnapenda nini, hampendi nini… kuna changamoto gani….
Hapa shuleni, tunapenda kwanza kusoma.
Ndiyo
Kwa mimi kwa hapa shuleni ni kusoma napenda… nacheza michezo, walimu wanatufundisha vizuri, tu naelewa; ila sema tu baadhi hatuwaelewi.
Mhh…
Kwa hiyo ndio hivyo [wengine hatuwaelewi].
Ila kuna wengine tunawaelewa.
Na tumeshazoea, tukifika asubuhi tunafanya usafi
 Mhh…
Lazima shule iwe safi… eee…
Ndiyo. Na…kuna changamoto au vitu vinawazuia wanafunzi na kujifunza?
Aaa.. sijaona
Hamna kitu
Niambie kidogo kuhusu lugha, katika maisha yenu mnajua lugha gani, mnatumia wapi?
Yaani kwa sasa, unajua tuna shule mbili tofauti. Kuna wale wanaosoma shule za serikali, ambao wanatumia lugha ya Kiswahili. Kuna ambao wanasoma shule za binafsi ambao wanatumia lugha ya Kingereza. kwa hiyo tunavyokuja huku tunakuwa tunachanganyikana. Kuna wanaosoma shule za Kiswahili na Kingereza. Hasa mwalimu anavyofundisha Kingereza kuna wale waliotoka shule ya msingi yaani shule za Kiswahili wanaelewa lakini sio sana. Lakini yule aliyesoma shule za binafsi, aliyekuwa anaongea Kingereza anakuwa anamwelewa mwalimu. Kwa hiyo….mara nyingi tuna…yaani tunapata shida pale kwenye lugha.
Ndiyo. Ndiyo. Na nyumbani mnatumia lugha gani?
Kiswahili [Kiswahili] lakini kwa nyumbani kwetu sisi tunatumia Kiswahili, Kingereza…
Sisi ni mara chache sana
[tunaongea] halafu na lugha. Tunajifunza hivyo hivyo kuongea…
Kuna lugha za asili
Saa nyingine unakuta labda…Kama mimi nina huyo bibi yangu, yaani yeye alishazoea kuongea lugha ya asili. Kwa hiyo anapendelea sana kutumia lugha ya asili.
Ndiyo. Ndiyo. Sawa. Na lugha ya Kingereza hapa shuleni, kinawasumbua wanafunzi?
Mhh… [sana]
(laughter)
Niambie

Ambao hawajatoka kama [ambao wa..] ambao hatujatoka shule za binafsi inatusumbua. Kuelewa walimu inakuwa shida. Mpaka aongee kwa Kiswahili. Tukipata mtu akitufundisha [tunaelewa] tunajua.

Ndiyo…ndiyo… kuna vitu vingine? Jinsi ya kuzuia au jinsi ya kusumbua.

Ok

Ila akitufundisha si baadaye na si tunakuja tunajua.

Mhh…

Eee…

Sema maneno mengine ndio yanakuwa magumu kwenye lugha ya Kingereza. Halafu ukipata mtu mwenyewe wa kukutafsiria anakuwa hataki. Wanafunzi mpaka uende kwa mwalimu. Wengine wanaogopa kwenda kwa mwalimu kuuliza, kwa hiyo anabakia hivyo hivyo haelewi.

Sawa, na mnasema kwamba Kiswahili kinawasaidia wanafunzi pia darasani?.

Mhh…

Na kama… fikiria kuhusu mwalimu mmoja mzuri sana. Niambie jinsi ya kutumia Kingereza na Kiswahili darasani pamoja.

Mwalimu anayetumia yaani Kiswahili na Kingereza

Ndiyo. Anafanyaje

Yaani akiingia darasani, anaongea kwanza Kingereza halafu baadaye anatutafsiria. Kwa hiyo unaelewa.

Vile anavyotufundisha anatutafsiria yaani neno moja moja ili wote kwa pamoja tuelewe.

Ndiyo

Anakuwa anatafsiri yaani lile neno linalokuwa gumu kwetu anaongea kwa Kingereza halafu anakuja anawatafsiria kwa Kiswahili. Kwa hiyo tunakuwa tunamwelewa

Ndiyo. Ndiyo.

Na mmesema kwamba kuna wanafunzi pale darasani ambao wanajua vizuri Kingereza.

Ndiyo.

kama wanaongea Kingereza sana labda nje ya vipindi mnajisikiaje?

Mhh! [ahh!]

Tunajisikia vibaya. [tunaweza tukakaa hivi]…Tunajisikia vibaya [tunaweza tukakaa hivi…] tunamwambia yaani awe anaongea yaani Kiswahili kama ▮▮▮▮. Tunakaa tunamwambia yaani ajifunze Kiswahili ili tuwe tunamwelewa, maana yake maneno mengine hatumwelewi. Kwa hiyo inakuwa…tunakuwa tunaboreka[52] akiwa anaongea Kingereza.

Mhh… Mnakubali?

Mhh…[eee…]

Na katika vipindi kama hamwelewi kitu mnajisikiaje?

Tunajisikia vibaya

Kuna… kuna wale wengine ambao wanaogopa kumwuliza mwalimu. Kama hujaelewa mwalimu anasema kabisa, ambaye hajaelewa…inabidi unyoshe mkono

---

[52] To be bored. Not grammatically correct in Kiswahili. Taken from English 'to be bored', not being interested in something.

mwalimu mimi sijakuelewa, na atarudia atakuelekeza. kuna yule mwingine ambaye anaogopa. Anamwacha mwalimu, yeye mwalimu atatoka kipindi kimeshaisha na anabaki hivyo hivyo. Kwa hiyo..

Ndiyo. Na ni rahisi kuwauliza walimu wote?

Mhh![sio wote] kuna wengine wakali. Lakini ukimwuliza swali pamoja kuwa mkali, ukimwuliza swali anakujibu.

Ndiyo….

Lakini kuna wengine wachache…wanafunzi wanaogopa kumwuliza kwa sababu ya ukali. Lakini unaweza ukamwuliza na akakujibu.

Ndiyo, ndiyo.

Na hawa walimu wakali, wanapofika darasani mnajisikiaje?

Mhh! Kunakuwa na uoga lakini akiingia darasani anakuwa sio mkali. Mhh… anakuwa anaongea na sisi vizuri anatufundisha vizuri, anapotoka ndio anakuwa mkali.

Ok…ok…sasa tatizo ni nje ya darasa. Sawa. Na kama hamwelewi mnaweza kumwuliza mwalimu? Kuna vitu vingine mnavyofanya?

Mhh…mwalimu akiwepo darasani

Mhh au baada ya vipindi kama kuna kitu ambacho hamkuelewa.

Kama mwanafunzi anaogopa kumwuliza mwalimu darasani, wengine wanaenda *staff* wanamfuata wanamwambia mwalimu nielekeze sehemu fulani sijaelewa. Wengine wanatafuta wale ambao wameelewa baada ya vipindi anamwambia amwelekeze. Kwa hiyo, wanakuwa wamekaa kimakundi wanakuwa wanaelekezana.

Ndio… ndio… kitu kingine? Mnaweza ku….kuna watu labda nyumbani ambao wanaweza kuwasaidia?

Kwangu mimi wapo…lakini! Wanakuwa yaani wapo *busy* sana na shughuli zao. Wengine wanafunzi, anakuwa na mambo yake anafanya ya shule. Kwa hiyo hata ukienda kumwuliza, anashindwa kukusaidia.

Mhh… Mhh… na ninyi?

Mimi kwa hapo, lakini…kama alivyosema huyu [kuna wengine] anakuwa ni mwanafunzi inakuwa inabidi naye asome. Kwa hiyo vile unavyoenda kumwuliza ananisaidia ndiyo, lakini sio vyote.

Sawa. Na mmm… swali lingine…. Kama…kama mnawauliza wanafunzi wengine ambao wanajua Kingereza vizuri. Mhh… wanawasaidia?

Mhh…. [Mhh…]Wapo wanaosaidia ila wengine wanakuwa wagumu. Ana…hata kama akiwa ameelewa anakwambia "Ah! Mi sijaelewa na mimi". Kwa hiyo anakuwa anakubania ile nafasi nafasi ya kukuelekeza mpaka uende utafute mwingine.

Ndiyo…ndiyo. Nimeona kitu darasani. Mara nyingi mwalimu anauliza "mmeelewa?" wanafunzi wanasema "ndiyoooo…" lakini akiuliza swali, hakuna mtu anajibu, au ni wanafunzi wachache ambao wanajibu. Kuna tatizo gani?

Mi naona inakuwa… saa nyingine unakuwa ni uoga; hicho cha kwanza. Uoga. Kwa nini unaongopa?[53]

Ndio hivyo, mwalimu wanavyomwona anavyokuwa mkali nje, kwa hiyo hata darasani akiingia wanakuwa wanamwogopa. Labda [wanajua na kule darasani

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[53] Kuongopa means to tell a lie. To say something that is not true. The proper word here should have been unaogopa (meaning being afraid of).

atakuwa…] labda atakapoinuka kumwuliza swali labda anaogopa hatojibiwa, atachapwa, ndio hicho kinachomfanya hata anakuwa anaogopa.
Sasa mnaogopa mwalimu tu au vitu vingine?
Walimu…walimu.
(laughter) na katika darasa lenu kuna wanafunzi wana…wanacheka kama mtu anakosa?
Mhh… Mhh…
Kwa nini mnacheka?
Yaani anakuwa kama amedharau kitu ambacho wewe umekisema, labda umeuliza au umekijibu , umekosea. Anakuwa anakudharau, anakuona we hauna akili kwa hiyo anakudharau, anakucheka.
Sasa kama mtu anacheka…anakucheka unajisikiaje?
Vibaya….vibaya wengine wanalia. Anajisikia vibaya kwa sababu anakuwa anamkatisha tamaa. Mwenzie anataka kujifunza halafu yeye anamcheka. Kwa hiyo ndio maana saa nyingine mwalimu anasema "mmeelewa?" na mi nitasema "ndiyooo…" kwa sababu gani, akiuliza swali wenzie wanamcheka; halafu pia anakuwa anamwogopa mwalimu.
Ndiyo…ndiyo… Na walimu wengi wananiambia kwamba tatizo kwa wanafunzi ni kwamba hawajiamini. Mnakubali?
Mhh… Mhh…
Kwa nini wanafunzi hawajiamini?
Yaani, wanafunzi wengi kama sisi wa *Form One* wanakuwa wameshazoea vitu vya shule ya msingi. Kwa hiyo wataka…wanavyokuwa wameingia sekondari wanakuwa yaani ile… hawako *serious* na kusoma bado wana michezo ya shule za msingi….
Ndiyo…ndiyo… Kuna vingine?
Na mnafikiri kama wanafunzi wanataka kujua… kujiamini vizuri zaidi ni lazima wafanye nini?
Mwanafunzi akiwa anataka kujiamini, yaani anatakiwa asiwe na woga akiwepo darasani mwalimu akiingia awe yaani *free* kuuliza ambacho hakijui. Hata kama akichekwa asikate tamaa. Awe anaendelea tu kuuliza maswali ..[kikubwa awe na msimamo].
Kwamba mtu akikucheka, "ah! Hata kama akinichecha bwana ili mradi mi najifunza". Yaani anatakiwa awe imani yake yeye mwenyewe. Asiwe anaogopa watu.
Ndiyo. Na ni mwanafunzi mwenyewe tu ambaye anaweza kubadilisha, au kuna watu wengine wanaoweza kusaidia…kumsaidia?
Kuna wale wengine ambao wanaweza akajielewa akabadilika mwenyewe. Lakini kuna yule mwingine mpaka…mpaka watu wakae wamwambie "fanya hivi…fanya hivi" anaweza akabadilika.
Ndiyo. Unakubali?
Mhh...
Umepoteza sauti?
(laughter). Ok. Na… kwa wanafunzi wakitaka kufaulu hapa shuleni ni lazima wafanye nini?
[Wajisomee]

Cha kwanza yaani akiwepo darasani, mwalimu anapoingia darasani lazima kwanza…yaani [mawazo yake yote yawekwe..]…amsikilize. Mawazo yote yawe kwa mwalimu, anachoongea amsikilize. Halafu kwenye masomo haya ya Kingereza awe anaelewa kinachoongelewa pale mbele. Awe anaandika *notes*, anakuwa anajisomea nyumbani.

Mhh… Mhh…

Hicho kinamfanya anaweza akawa anafaulu.

Ndiyo. Ndiyo. Na kwangu ni tatizo na hili neno ya kusoma. Kwa sababu katika Kingereza ina maana nyingi. Sasa niambie, kama mnasema ni lazima tusome, ina maana gani? Mnafanya shughuli gani?

Ahaa… yaani nikisema ni lazima tusome. Yaani tusome…ni kama pale mwalimu anavyoingia darasani; anakufundisha, si tunaandika *notes*. Ukifika nyumbani, kama mwalimu angekuwa anatufunisha tu hivi kwa mdomo hatuandiki, maana yake nikifika nyumbani naenda kukaa tu. Maana yake shuleni mwalimu tu kaongea, haja..hajaniandikia. nikifika nyumbani naenda nakaa. Kwa vile tunavyoandika, nikifika nyumbani naweza nikakaa nikapumzika, nikaanza kusoma. Nikajikumbusha yale aliyoongea mwalimu shuleni.

Na kusoma ina maana ya kusoma maneno tu au mnaandika?

Kusoma yaani mnakuwa ile mnasikiliza kile mtu anachofundisha, kuna kuandika na kuna kutafuta wewe mwenyewe *material* mbali mbali katika vitabu mbali mbali. Yaani unawauliza watu mbali mbali maswali, unakuwa unaelewa kile unachohitaji wewe kukielewa. Inakuwa vizuri kwenye kusoma.

Mna vitabu nyumbani?

Eee… vitabu vipo. Lakini [vichache] sio vingi vichache.

Mhh… aa.. inawezekana kupata vitabu hapa shuleni?

Kwa hapa shuleni mpaka uende kuomba kwa mwalimu. Ukienda kuomba kwa mwalimu unakuta labda kitabu kipo kimoja halafu wanafunzi wanakuwa wengi. Kwa hiyo inakuwa shida kupata vitabu.

Ndiyo..

Sawa. Na.. nitabadilisha swali kidogo.

Mnaamini kwamba ni muhimu kuja shule?

Ndiyo ni muhimu. Maana yake nikisema nikae nyumbani tu bila kusoma, halafu nitakapokuja kuwa mkubwa labda, hakuna mtu atakayeweza kunisaidia. Itabidi nijisaidie mwenyewe. Na sasa nitakapokuwa najisaidia sina elimu nitajisaidiaje nikiwa sina elimu lazima nije shule nisome, niwe na akili, nielewe walimu, ili hata nikija kuwa mkubwa nitimize malengo yangu mimi ninayotaka kuwa ili nifanikiwe

Mhh… mnakubali?

Mhh…

Kuna sababu nyingine?........ameshaelekeza vizuri.

Mhh…

Ehe..[kuja..]yah…niambie

Kuja shuleni ni lazima. Kwa sababu inatakiwa usome ili ufikie malengo yako. Kuna wale wengine…anaweza akakaa nyumbani. Wazazi wake waka…wazazi wake wanaweza wakamwambiaje "huyu mtoto hana faida hapa nyumbani". Kuna ile wanamfa…wanasemaje…

Wengine wanakuwa na ubaguzi, kuozeshwa sijui… yaani kuna wengine anaweza akaolewa kabla ya umri wake. Kwa sababu gani, anaweza kuna wengine anapata mimba kabla ya umri wake. Unakuta anazaa watoto yaani hafuati hata uzazi wa mpango. Kwa hiyo yaani inakuwa inamletea athari yeye kwa maisha yake. Halafu kwa wanafunzi sana sana wa kike ndio ambao wanakuwa hawana elimu sana [madam!]. Kwa sababu mzazi akiwa na watoto wawili labda wa kike na wa kiume, anakuwa yaani…anaona kuwa nikimsomesha mtoto wa kiume ndio ataniletea faida. Lakini nikimsomesha mtoto wa kike, anakuwa haleti faida. Kwa hiyo tu, bora asisome akae nyumbani labda au aolewe. Hiyo inakuwa shida hata mtoto wa kike atakapokuwa mkubwa… yaani anakuwa hana kitu cha kufanya kwa sababu hajasoma.

Ndiyo. Ndiyo

Na ni muhimu kujua Kingereza kwa maisha yenu baadaye?

Mhh…

Ndiyo ni lazima kujua kwa sababu lugha yaani ambayo inatumika sana katika nchi nyingi ni Kingereza. Kwa hiyo ukisoma halafu usipojua Kingereza ukawa na kazi nacho, hata ukienda mahali….halafu kama hujui kuongea Kingereza halafu wenzio pale mbele wanakuwa wanaongea Kingereza inakuwa yaani ni vigumu kuelewa. Kwa hiyo Kingereza ni lazima ukijue ili ukienda sehemu mnakuwa mnatumia lugha ya Kingereza, hivyo mnakuwa mnaelewana.

Ndiyo. Ndiyo. (acha kidogo)

[Addressing other students who are nearby: Wanafunzi! Wanafunzi! Mnaweza kusogea kidogo kwa sababu tunazungumza. Mnatusumbua sasa hivi. Asante.]

Niambie kuhusu Kingereza na maisha yenu.

Kingereza, na maisha yako..kuna kazi zingine huwezi kupata mpaka uwe unajua Kingereza. kwa hiyo inaku*cost* sana. Lazima ujue Kingereza.

Sawa. Na ni lazima kujua Kingereza kwa kufaulu hapa shuleni?

Mhh..mhh…

Kwa sababu masomo yote ambayo yapo hapa sekondari [mengi sana ni ya Kingereza] ni ya Kingereza. isipokuwa Kiswahili tu. Kwa hiyo usipojua Kingereza hata unapoingia chumba cha mtihani inakuwa ina…inakuwa ni vigumu we kujibu maswali yale ambayo yapo pale.

Sawa. Sawa. Kuna wanafunzi wananiambia kwamba inawezekana kukariri tu na kufaulu. Mnakubali?

Sasa utaelewaje swali?

Wengi wanakariri …wengi wanakariri hawaelewi kile kilichoandikwa pale. Lakini kukariri inakuwa inaku*cost* baadaye. Kwa sababu utakapokariri inakuwa haijakukaa kichwani. Umekariri tu kwa siku moja halafu ukaingia kwenye mtihani ukajaza tu basi, ukatoka umeshasahau. Kwa hiyo hata ukija ukafanikiwa katika kazi zako inakuwa ni vigumu kuelewa kitu kwa sababu unakariri hauelewi.

Mhh… Mhh…

Inakuwa ni shida

Mnakubali

Eee…..[Mhh…]

Na….Hata mwanafunzi hawezi akakariri masomo ni mengi. Hawezi akakariri. Anaweza akakariri kwa lisaa limoja baada ya hapo ameshasahau. Au anaweza

akakariri akaingia kwenye chumba cha mtihani akaandika baada ya hapo na asielewe ila kwenye mtihani ameandika.

Ndiyo.

Yaani anakuwa anajali tu, yaani bora tu nikariri ili niingie nifaulu. Ili amridhishe mwalimu labda na mzazi wake. Lakini kumbe yeye katika maisha yake inakuwa inakuja kum*cost* baadaye.

Ndiyo. Naelewa.

Ok... Ungekuwa waziri wa elimu, ungebadilisha nini katika mfumo wa elimu wa Tanzania?

Yaani… kwanza… [shule za serikali] katika shule ningekuwa kama ni waziri wa elimu….kwanza yaani walimu….kuwa na walimu wazuri katika shule, vitabu vingi vya kusomea, yaani….kungekuwa na maabara katika shule zote ili wanafunzi wawe wanaenda wanajisomea wanakuwa wanaelewa. Halafu…yaani…

Wangefanya yaani kama shule za serikali zile za *primary* kama…. Sio kama mpaka naniliu… shule za *English medium* ndio wanaongea Kingereza tu, hata shule za serikali wangekuwa wanafundisha masomo kwa Kingereza.

Kwa nini unafikiri itakuwa bora?

Kwa sababu ukiingia sekondari sasa utaelewaje? Wengine wanatoka shule za *English Medium*; wengine sisi kama sisi hapa tunatoka shule ambazo ni za serikali ambazo…za Kiswahili. Kwa hiyo inatu*cost* sana kwenye masomo ambayo ya Kingereza.

Mnajisikia kwamba…..

Kuwa na walimu, yaani walimu bora sijui niseme…Maana yake, kuna mwalimu mwingine sawa, hapa shuleni…mwalimu kila mtu anasoma. Kuna yule mwingine kama tulivyosema, anasoma kwa kukaririsha. Anaweza akakariri hata aingie darasani,….na hata hivi tuseme NECTA[54] hawaangalii huyu mtu…wenyewe wanaangalia pale kilichojazwa. Mwanafunzi anaweza akakariri akaingia. Na ikafika mwisho wa siku akawa amefaulu sana, kwa hiyo wakampeleka huko akasoma mpaka chuo. Akifika chuo kule, ndiyo anasoma lakini vile vile anakariri, yaani pale zinazojaliwa pale ni *tick* tu kapata pale wanamweka amefaulu, lakini mimi naona…. hamka kitu. Mfano akaja akasomea ualimu, akafaulu; akaja huku shuleni akatufundisha. Kumbe huku nyuma naye alikuwa haelewi kabisa, kwa hiyo unakuta saa nyingine wanafunzi hatumwelewi mwalimu, hata anachokiongea pale mbele. Mwalimu haeleweki, kwa sababu hata naye huku nyuma alikuwa hasomi, anafanya kazi ya kukaririsha. Sema ni *marks* tu.

Ndiyo… Ndiyo….. na…..[kuwa nawalimu bora]

Sawa. Na ▮▮▮ umesema kwamba… kuna tatizo hili kuliko wanafunzi wa shule za serikali za msingi … shule za binafsi.

Mhh…

Mmetoka shule za serikali.

Mhh…

Mnajisikia kwamba ni ngumu zaidi kwa wanafunzi wa shule za serikali kuja hapa sekondari na kufaulu?

---

[54] National Examination Council of Tanzania. But here used as a type of examination from the council that students are expected to sit for.

Inakuwa ni vigumu ndiyo kwa sababu wanakuwa hawawezi Kingereza.

Mhh…

Kwa hiyo inabidi wasome kwa kukariri tu. Hilo ndilo tatizo ambalo linafanya watu wengi wanakuwa wanakariri. Lakini shule za serikali na zenyewe wangekuwa wametuwekea yaani….masomo mengi tunasoma kwa Kingereza, kama shule za binafsi hata tunapoingia sekondari inakuwa inatusaidia katika masomo haya ya Kingereza.

Ndiyo. Ndiyo… Sawa. Ok. Mimi nimemaliza na maswali sasa hivi. Labda kuna vitu…vitu…eee.. nime..vyokosa…kuna vitu vingine muhimu kuhusu lugha na elimu, au tumeshamaliza? ……Kuna changamoto nyingine kuhusu lugha?

Hakuna.

Tumemaliza. Sawa. Asanteni sana. Nitazima kwa sababu kuna wanafunzi wengi wanaopiga kelele.

Appendix L: Thematic network map
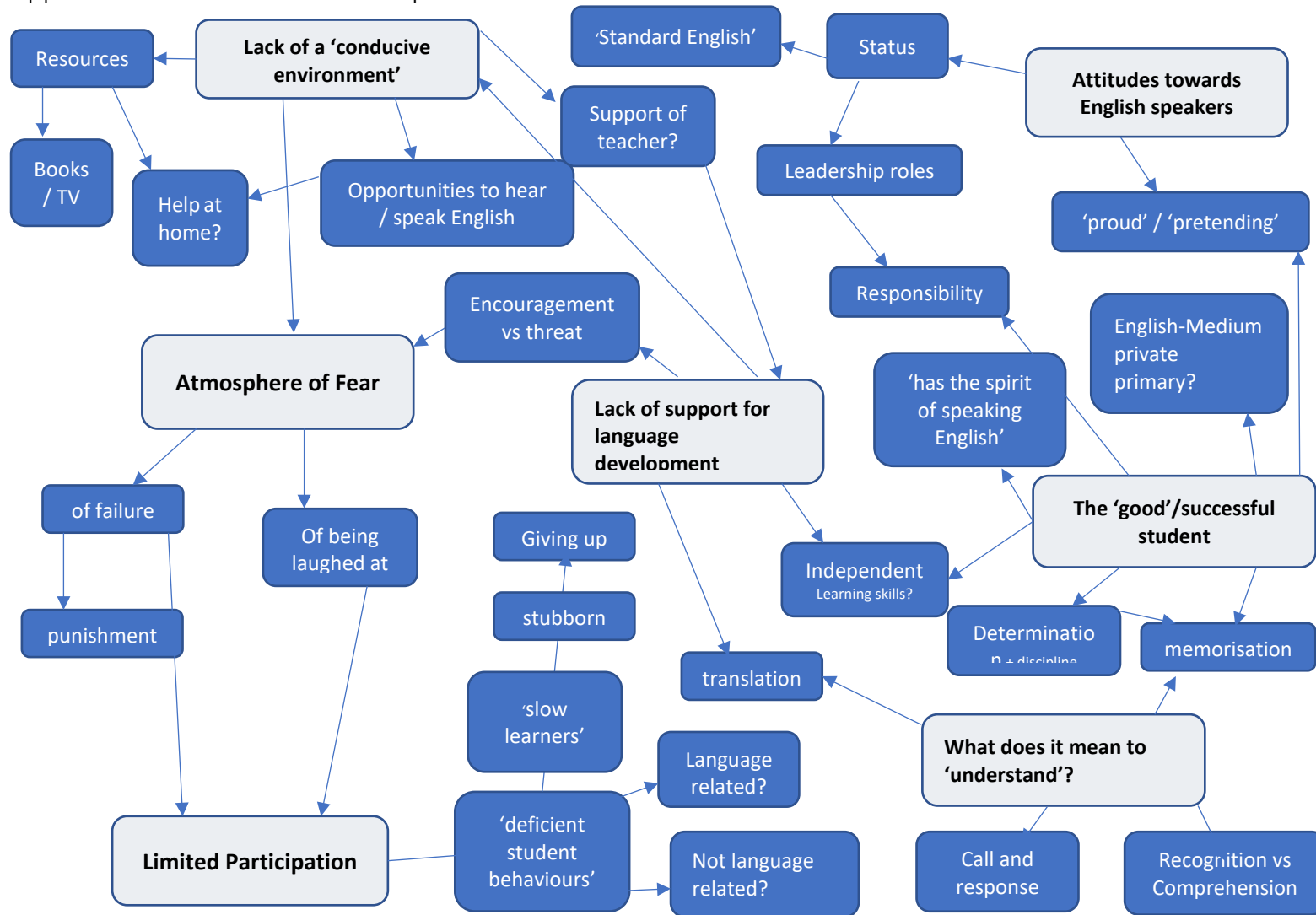
Appendix M: Final list of data codes

- Alternatives to school
- Desire for speaking English
- Exams and results
  - Failure
- Fear
  - Of being thought of as stupid
  - Of having to speak English
  - Of making mistakes
- Friendships or relationships
  - Help at home
  - Older students are role models
  - Reactions to the use of English
  - Student leaders
  - Student collaboration
  - With teachers
- Future jobs / aspirations
- Gender
- Identity
- Improvements they would make
- Lack of confidence
  - Confidence and status
- Lack of real opportunity
- Language
  - Codeswitching
  - Eg of researcher-participant language negotiation
  - English and success
  - English out of school
  - Importance or value of English
  - Kiswahili
  - Language struggle
  - Language development
  - Language foundation
  - Levels of knowing language
  - Translation
  - Trying to learn English
  - Types of literacy
  - Vernacular languages
  - Language solutions
- Laughing
- Learning
  - Low level disruption
- Other obstacles
  - Distance from school

- o Hunger
- Outside of school
  - o Family background
  - o Parents
- Participation
- Primary school
- Punishment
- Resources
- Rules and requirements
- Student study behaviour
  - o Asking questions
  - o Copying
  - o Giving up
  - o Mentality
  - o Messing around
  - o Other priorities than studying
  - o Proactive students, desire to learn
  - o Respect
  - o What 'kusoma' means
- Teachers
  - o Good teacher
  - o Lack of encouragement
  - o Teacher attitudes towards students
  - o Teacher behaviour
  - o Teacher language choice
  - o Teacher to student feedback
- Tuition
- Understanding
  - o Checking understanding
  - o How it feels not to understand
  - o Memorisation
- Why is education valuable?
- Will you succeed?

Appendix N: Introductory explanation of research

This note was posted, in both English and Kiswahili, on student and staff notice boards in both schools. It also formed the basis of my introductory speeches.

Students and Teachers of Morogoro Secondary School,

My name is Laela Adamson and I come from Scotland in the UK. I am a student at the university in London, England and I am studying for a PhD. This means that I am doing research and will write about this research for my university.

I have visited Tanzania a number of times and have made short visits to a lot of secondary schools. But this time I wanted to stay longer to try to better understand what it is like to be a Tanzanian student.

I am particularly interested in the fact that you know and use different languages. As you can see, I am trying to learn Swahili, so please excuse my mistakes! I hope that you will help me to learn. My first language is English and I will also be happy to help you.

I plan to spend some months in your school, at first observing lessons and maybe helping with clubs. Later I might ask if you would like to take part in interviews or activities. You do not have to take part – you can always say no. When I write my thesis for the university I will change all names so that everyone will be anonymous.

Please feel free to talk to me around school and to ask me more questions. I am honoured to be here and I am looking forward to getting to know you. Thank you very much.

Wanafunzi na Walimu wa Shule ya Sekondari Morogoro,

Ninaitwa Laela Adamson na ninatoka Scotland, UK. Mimi ni mwanafunzi wa chuo kikuu cha Landan, Uingereza na ninasomea PhD. Hii ina maana kwamba ninafanya utafiti na nitakiandikia chuo kikuu changu utafiti huu.

Nimekuwa nikitembelea Tanzania mara kwa mara na nimeshatembelea sekondari nyingi lakini kwa muda mfupi mfupi. Mara hii ninataka kukaa kwa muda mrefu zaidi ili nijaribu kuelewa uzoefu wa kuwa mwanafunzi wa Tanzania.

Ninavutiwa hasa kuhusu mnavyoweza kutumia lugha mbalimbali kila siku. Kama mwonavyo, ninajaribu kujifunza Kiswahili hivyo nisameheni katika makosa yangu! Ninatumaini kwamba mtanisaidia kujifunza. Lugha mama kwangu ni kiingereza na nitafurahi kuwasaidia pia.

Nina mpango kukaa miezi kadhaa shuleni kwenu. Kwanza nitaangalia masomo na labda nitavisaidia vikundi. Baadaye nitapenda kuwaomba kuuliza maswali na kufanya shughuli mbalimbali na mimi. Lakini sitawalazimisha kufanya hili. Unaweza kukataa ukitaka. Nitakapokiandikia chuo kikuu changu mahojiano hayo nitabadirisha kila jina la mtu ili lisijulikane.

Tafadhali mjisikie huru kuongea chochote na mimi katika maeneo ya shule, na mniulize maswali zaidi. Nimetunukiwa kuwa hapa na nitafurahi nikipata nafasi ya kuwajua. Asanteni sana.