



**TURUN  
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UNIVERSITY  
OF TURKU

# **NAMIBIAN PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES IN A MULTILINGUAL CONTEXT**

Language ideologies underlying the  
language education policy and its  
implementation

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*I dedicate this dissertation to my late father.*

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores Namibian primary school teachers' beliefs about schools' language policy and the medium of instruction, as well as their classroom practices in the multilingual context. It describes and interprets the language policy's development, the language ideologies underlying the policy, and teachers' beliefs. It combines a historical–structural analysis of official language policy documents with data consisting of a questionnaire, analysed mostly quantitatively and teacher interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations submitted to qualitative content analysis. The chosen mixed method approach allowed the triangulation of different parts of data to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the research object.

The study is based on five original publications (Articles I–V). Article I contains a historical–structural analysis of the official language policy documents interpreting the current policy from a historical perspective. Articles II–V are based on collected data. Articles II and V focus on teachers' beliefs, whereas Articles III and IV describe and analyse their classroom practices. Articles I and V also discuss the societal language ideologies underlying the policy and teachers' beliefs.

The results indicate controversial language ideologies affecting the language policy and teachers' beliefs. Teachers' experiences as students, their interpretation of the official policy, and practical constraints impact their beliefs, thus impacting their classroom practices. The results reveal differences in teachers' practices according to the school region's degree of linguistic diversity, the subject taught, and differences between their self-reported and enacted practices. Teachers' multilingual practices are rather unplanned and momentary and do not leverage multimodality.

The study's results demonstrate a need to include multilingual teaching methods in initial and in-service teacher education, combined with opportunities for teachers and student teachers to reflect on their beliefs and the language ideological constructs behind them. Intervention studies on these matters would benefit developing multilingual pedagogical approaches.

**KEYWORDS:** language policy, multilingual education, translanguaging pedagogy, teachers' beliefs, teachers' practices, language ideologies

## TURUN YLIOPISTO

Humanstinen tiedekunta

Kieli- ja käännöstieteiden laitos

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### TIIVISTELMÄ

Väitöstutkimukseni käsittelee namibialaisten alakoulun opettajien käsityksiä koulujen kielipolitiikasta ja opetuskielestä, sekä heidän opetuskäytänteitään monikielisessä ympäristössä. Se kuvaa ja tulkitsee maan kielipolitiikan kehitystä, sekä kielipolitiikkaan ja opettajien käsityksiin vaikuttavia kieli-ideologioita. Tutkimusaineisto koostuu kielipoliittisista dokumenteista, joita on analysoitu käyttäen historiallis-strukturaalista menetelmää. Aineisto koostuu lisäksi kyselystä, joka on analysoitu lähinnä määrällisesti, sekä opettajien haastatteluista, ryhmäkeskusteluista ja oppitunteja havainnoidessa tekemistäni muistiinpanoista, joiden osalta on käytetty laadullista sisällön analyysiä. Valittu monimenetelmällinen tutkimusote mahdollistaa aineiston eri osien triangulaation ja sitä kautta syvällisen ja monipuolisen tiedon saamisen tutkimuksen kohteesta.

Tutkimus koostuu viidestä alkuperäisjulkaisusta (Artikkelit I–V). Artikkelit I sisältää virallisten kielipoliittisten dokumenttien historiallis-strukturaalisen analyysin ja tulkitsee nykyistä kielipolitiikkaa historiallisesta perspektiivistä. Artikkelit II–V perustuvat etnografisesti koottuun aineistoon. Artikkelit II ja V keskittyvät opettajien käsityksiin, artikkelit III ja IV taas kuvaavat ja analysoivat heidän käytänteitään. Artikkelit I ja V käsittelevät myös kielipolitiikkaan ja opettajien uskomuksiin vaikuttavia yhteiskunnallisia kieli-ideologioita.

Tutkimustulosten perusteella keskenään ristiriitaiset kieli-ideologiat vaikuttavat kielipolitiikkaan ja opettajien käsityksiin. Opettajien omat oppimiskokemukset, heidän tulkintansa virallisesta kielipolitiikasta, sekä käytännön rajoitteet vaikuttavat heidän uskomuksiinsa ja sitä kautta heidän käytänteisiinsä. Tulokset paljastavat eroavaisuuksia opettajien käytänteissä sen mukaan, miten suuri kielellinen diversiteetti alueella vallitsee, sekä opettavan aineen mukaan. Eroja havaittiin myös heidän itse raportoimiensa käytänteiden ja tutkijan havainnoimien käytänteiden välillä. Opettajien monikieliset käytänteet olivat useimmiten suunnittelemattomia, hetkellisiä ja yksikanavaisia.

Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat tarpeen sisällyttää monikielisiä opetusmenetelmiä opettajien koulutukseen yhdistettynä tilaisuuteen reflektoida omia käsityksiä ja niiden takana olevia kieli-ideologisia konstruktioita. Aiheesta tehtävät interventiotutkimukset hyödyttäisivät monikielisen pedagogiikan kehittämistä.

ASIASANAT: kielipolitiikka, monikielinen opetus, kieltenlimmittäispedagogiikka, opettajien uskomukset, opettajien käytänteet, kieli-ideologia

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April 2023  
*Soili Norro*

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# List of Original Publications

This dissertation is based on the following original publications, which are referred to in the text as follows:

- Article I Norro, S. (2022a) Factors affecting language policy choices in the multilingual context of Namibia: English as the official language and medium of instruction. *Apples – Journal of Applied Language Studies* 16 (1), 1–20. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47862/apples.107212>
- Article II Norro, S. (2021) Namibian Teachers’ Beliefs about Medium of Instruction and Language Education Policy Implementation. *Language Matters* 52 (3), 45–71 DOI: 10.1080/10228195.2021.1951334
- Article III Norro, S. (2022c) Namibian teachers’ practices in a multilingual context. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 1–19. DOI: 10.1080/14790718.2022.2065280
- Article IV Norro, S. (2022b) Language practices in Namibian primary schools. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. DOI: 10.1080/01434632.2022.2121403
- Article V Norro, S. (2023) “You can be fluent in English but empty-headed” Language ideologies underlying Namibian primary school teachers’ beliefs. *Language and Education*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2022.2160645>

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# Abbreviations

BICS	Basic interpersonal communicative skills
CALP	Cognitive academic language proficiency
EMI	English medium instruction
EMIS	Education management information system
LEP	Language education policy
LOTE	Language(s) other than English
LP	Language policy
MEAC	Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
MoBESC	Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture
MoEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
MoI	Medium of instruction
NCBE	The National Curriculum for Basic Education
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organization
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WIDE	World Inequality Database for Education

# 1 Introduction

The United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development sets 17 goals to improve the quality of life and promote peace and prosperity globally. One of the most impactful goals is number 4: *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*. Basic literacy and numeracy skills must be acquired for educational attainment. Without basic skills, there is no quality education or any basis for lifelong learning. Remarkably, not all educational reports (e.g. Reinikka, Niemi and Tulivuori 2018; UNESCO 2014; Education Commission 2016) mention the language of instruction as one of the issues that must be addressed to ensure quality education for all. However, the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Policy Paper 24 states the following:

Quality education should be delivered in the language spoken at home. However, this minimum standard is not met for hundreds of millions, limiting their ability to develop foundations for learning (UNESCO 2016, 1).

The report emphasises that delivering education in a language the pupils speak at home is a minimum standard for educational quality and that educational policies should recognise the importance of instruction in languages pupils understand. The UNESCO World Inequality Database on Education (WIDE) statistics show learning inequalities between those who speak the school language at home and those who do not. Yet it has been estimated that about 40% of the world's population does not have access to education in a language they understand (Walter and Benson 2012). Although the language of instruction and assessment is not the only factor impacting learning achievements, it is certainly one of them and often intersects other factors such as ethnicity and poverty (UNESCO 2016, 3). Moreover, the same issues affect teaching and learning in high-income countries, due to the increasing number of children who do not speak the school language at home. Therefore, research on the impact of the language of teaching and learning in multilingual settings in the Global South and North may benefit education in several contexts.

Over the last few decades, schooling has rapidly expanded in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), but the quality of learning has not improved accordingly (Reinikka et al.

2018, 13). Despite attending school, many children in developing countries do not attain functional literacy or basic numeracy; this risk is particularly alarming in SSA (Ibekwe-Okafor and Wolf 2021, 1). For example, according to the UNESCO (2014) report, half of the adults in many developing countries who have completed five years of basic education, cannot read a whole sentence. In East Africa, according to UNESCO's Uwezo report from East Africa (Mugo and Eyakuze 2014), only two of ten pupils could read and perform basic math in the third year of primary school; when they reached their final year of primary school, 24% of them had still not acquired these skills. The learning crisis – a term coined in UNESCO's annual report (2014) – is most acute in the low-income countries. By 2030, if the current trend continues in low-income countries, 69% of school-aged children will not learn basic primary school skills; in middle-income countries, only half will learn minimum secondary school skills. According to the Education Commissions' report (2016, 13), this will jeopardise global economic growth and may have far-reaching economic, social, and political consequences.

Namibia is one of the youngest independent states in Africa. According to the World Bank (2022), it is an upper-middle-income country, but socio-economic inequalities inherited from its colonial past still make it one of the world's most unequal countries. Its relatively small population of about 2.5 million inhabitants is multi-ethnic and multilingual. Namibia's educational and language policies were formulated during the process that led to independence in 1990; little has changed since (see Section 5.1). The language education policy (LEP) tries to address the nation's multilingual reality despite choosing English as the only official language. The LEP endeavours to maintain and promote the national languages included in its policy as the languages of instruction during the first three years of primary education (MoEC 1993a; AfriLa 2003). However, this period is considered too short for the pupils to acquire basic literacy in their home language and proficiency in the school language (UNESCO 2016; McKinney 2016, 47). Namibia Vision 2030 is a document that sets the key development challenges and aims to be attained by 2030 to improve the Namibians' quality of life. One of its objectives is ensuring quality education for all and transforming Namibia into a knowledge-based, highly competitive nation (Office of the President 2004, 41). Language education policy and its implementation are crucial issues to achieve these goals, which this study addresses.

As the LEP is always interpreted, appropriated, and implemented at various levels (Johnson 2009), this study aimed first to investigate what the current LEP in Namibian basic education is and how it has developed throughout the years of independence, and then explore how it is implemented. Teachers being perhaps the most powerful agents in implementing grassroots policies, their beliefs about the LEP and the medium of instruction (MoI), as well as their classroom practices were

chosen as the scope of the study. As the societal language ideologies affect the formulation and the implementation of the LEP, as well as teachers' beliefs and practices, discovering the ideologies underlying the beliefs and practices observed in the data was an important aim and explicative framework for the study.

## 1.1 Background of the study

The question of the MoI has been central in the research and language planning in postcolonial countries from decolonisation's beginning. UNESCO has supported children's rights to mother tongue instruction and advocated maintaining linguistic and cultural diversity through language education policies since 1953. However, it was stated then that though linguistically, all the world's languages may be used as the MoI, social, political, economic, and practical factors may impede or hinder some languages' usage in education (UNESCO 1953, 6). This prognosis has proved true in many school systems. The UNESCO *World Conference on Education for All* held in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990 (UNESCO 1990) was followed by an expansion of vernacular languages in education in many countries. However, the value of mother tongue instruction has not been recognised in many school systems (Tollefson and Tsui 2018). Its implementation has been challenging in postcolonial African countries despite some opposite examples, such as Tanzania or Ethiopia. Consequently, UNESCO's current position regarding the language of instruction recognises the need for national language policies to balance using local languages in learning and providing their citizens access to global languages through education (UNESCO 2003). Similarly, powerful agencies such as the British Council, which are often consulted in language questions, have recently taken a mother tongue based multilingual position regarding the instruction medium in basic education (Heugh et al. 2019; Simpson 2019).

Several reasons exist for the slow adoption of mother tongue instruction policies in postcolonial settings. First, during colonialism, the rationale behind using of indigenous languages was to subjugate their speakers by offering an inferior and limited education, and separating the different linguistic groups from one another to exercise divide-and-rule politics (Tollefson and Tsui 2018). The inferior Bantu education was especially poignant in South Africa and Namibia (then South West Africa), affecting people's attitudes towards mother tongue instruction until recently (Alexander 2001, 16; Heugh 2013, 217). Second, the ex-colonial languages are often considered the only means of acquiring the linguistic capital needed to reach social and economic power and prosperity. Parents in postcolonial countries are often committed to the ex-colonial languages providing their children with upward social mobility (Lin and Martin 2005; Qorro 2005). Languages are always linked to larger conflicting interests in society, and education is a pivotal institution in determining

what is considered legitimate language use (cf. Bourdieu 1991) and in reproducing language practices. Heller and Martin-Jones (2001, 5–6) describe education as “a discursive space in which groups with different interests struggle over access to symbolic and material resources and over ways of organizing that access that privilege some and marginalize others”. Pedagogical reasoning has been unsuccessful in introducing mother tongue instruction in many contexts because of society’s conflicting interests and language ideologies.

In linguistics, languages were, for a long time, conceived as stable structural entities, bounded and separable from other named languages. This perspective on language has an inherent monolingual bias, considering a monolingual speaker as the norm (McKinney 2016). With the so-called “multilingual turn” (May 2013) in applied linguistics, the focus has subsequently been shifted to the hybrid language practices of multilingual speakers and their diverse linguistic repertoires, making multilingualism and multilingual speakers the new norm (May 2013, 1; McKinney 2016, 19). However, multilingualism and complex linguistic practices were the norms in many areas, not least in Africa before colonialism, as Makalela (2016) has shown.

With the multilingual turn, notions of “mother tongue” and “native speaker” have been challenged, and languages are considered social practices tied to ideologies (Heller 2007; Ebongue and Hurst 2017). Section 2.2 discusses language ideologies; Sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 address the relationship between mother tongue instruction and multilingualism. Multiple terms have been coined to describe heteroglossic language practices in sociolinguistics, including *polylinguaging* (Jørgensen 2008; Jørgensen et al. 2011), *metrolingualism* (Otsuji and Pennycook 2010; Pennycook and Otsuji 2014), *urban vernaculars* (Rampton 2011; Makoni et al. 2007), *translingual practices* (Canagarajah 2013) and *translinguaging* (García and Wei 2014). Translinguaging is the term mostly used in education; thus, it adopted as the framework in this study. Sections 3.2 and 3.3 discuss translinguaging in detail.

Despite the multilingual turn in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics, monolingual assumptions still dominate educational language policies, curricula, assessments, and teacher education (McKinney 2016, 74). This dominance also applies to the Namibian LEP. Article I (Norro 2022a) and Section 5.1 detail developing the LEP in independent Namibia; this section only describes the current policy. According to the Basic Education Bill (2018), the school boards have the right to determine the school’s language policy (LP) in concordance with the national policy. The national LP for schools stipulates the mother tongue, the learner’s home language, or a predominant local language if there are not enough speakers (at least 15) of a certain language to constitute a class as the medium of learning during junior primary: the pre-primary and Grades 1–3 (NCBE 2016, 29).

Grade 4 is a transitional year when the MoI changes to English. The national curriculum states the following:

It is therefore critical for learners to acquire literacy skills in English in Grades 1–3. In Grade 4, the mother tongue/home language should be used in a supportive role only, mostly to ensure that learners have understood new content or concepts when they seem to be having difficulty in understanding the English terminology. (NCBE 2016, 29).

All learners in Grades 1–9 take two languages as subjects, of which English must be one; the other is usually the learner’s mother tongue or a predominant local language. These language subjects are studied at the first or second language level. Other languages are offered as optional foreign languages in Grades 8–12 (NCBE 2016, 29–30). Fourteen languages may be used as the MoI (in junior primary), and studied as subjects at the first language level: Afrikaans, German, English, Ju’hoansi, Khoekhoegowab, Oshikwanyama, Oshindonga<sup>1</sup>, Otjiherero, Rukwangali, Rumanyo, Setswana, Silozi, Thimbukushu, and Namibian Sign Language.

## 1.2 Previous studies on Namibian language education policy

Most studies describing and evaluating the Namibian LEP, its implementation, and its outcomes date to the first two decades of independence. Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir (2001) reported a lack of esteem towards the Namibian languages that was observed amongst the speakers of these languages in 1995 and 2000. The researchers interpreted this as threatening the future of these languages, reinforced by the preponderance of English in public domains. Wolfaardt (2005) studied the national examination results and argued for a bilingual model with a gradual transition from mother tongue instruction to English medium instead of the early-exit subtractive model the current LEP stipulated. In her doctoral thesis, Diallo (2008) conducted an ethnographic study at the senior secondary level in three schools in Windhoek, concluding that severe inequalities existed in the value of Namibian languages versus English, and the resources of different schools.

<sup>1</sup> Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga are both Oshiwambo languages. As shown by Lusakalalu (2007), Namibian media tend to use the upper-level hyperglossonym Oshiwambo, whereas the lower-level glossonyms Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga are used in educational contexts. I use the name Oshiwambo unless the context requires precision.

Similarly, Töttemeyer (2010) argued that the school system underutilised Namibian languages, leading to poor results and high dropout rates. Harris (2011) found that despite English's high esteem amongst learners and their parents, using it as the MoI confused learners, as they could not understand the lessons. Ola-Busari (2014) noticed that between 2008 and 2012, only about a third of Grade 12 students gained a sufficiently high grade in English to enter tertiary education. These studies show the LEP has been unsuccessful in light of learning outcomes, and has not contributed to the equity of education or improved the status of the Namibian languages. This study contributes to research by re-evaluating the LEP from a historical perspective to understand the current situation and recent developments.

Past LEP research in postcolonial contexts has focused on mother tongue instruction versus instruction in an ex-colonial European language and advocated mother-tongue-based multilingual education (e.g. Benson 2004; Alidou et al. 2006; Ouane and Glanz 2010), an additive multilingual model in which the language the students know best is used as the MoI for at least six years before shifting to the foreign MoI and is maintained even after that. With the “multilingual turn” discussed above and the multilingual conception of language and linguistic repertoires, flexible multilingual approaches to teaching have been introduced. They build on all students' linguistic capacities, including non-standard varieties, and view linguistic diversity and multilingualism as the norm (Erling et al. 2017, 22–23). Flexible multilingual approaches recognise that translanguaging practices, meaning multilinguals' fluid deployment of their entire linguistic resources (Otheguy et al. 2015), are normal in multilingual situations and may be used as a pedagogical strategy in multilingual education.

Translanguaging in education has been mostly studied in North America (e.g. García and Wei 2014; Otheguy et al. 2015; García and Kleyn 2016) and Europe (e.g. Creese and Blackledge 2010; Hélot 2014; Cenoz and Santos 2020; Gorter and Arocena 2020). Studies have been conducted in informal contexts, e.g. in Tanzania (Shank Lauwo 2018), in higher education in Kenya (Crisfield et al. 2021), and Malawi (Reilly 2021). Research within the translanguaging framework has been especially abundant in South Africa, where Makalela (2016) has theorised it from an African perspective using the notion of *ubuntu* – the interdependence of people. He extends the notion to languages in that one language is incomplete without using other languages. Earlier studies in South Africa, preceding the widespread use of the term translanguaging concentrated on observing spontaneous multilingual classroom practices. Makoe and McKinney (2009) observed “hybrid discursive practices” in a Grade 1 class, focusing on one pupil mediating between English and her classmates' home languages. Probyn's (2015) research on pedagogical translanguaging was conducted in eight rural and township schools in

Grade 8 science lessons. The author reports that one of the observed science teachers distinguished himself from the other teachers by the pedagogical translanguaging practices he used systematically.

Planned translanguaging interventions have been conducted in South Africa. Makalela (2015) reports on an investigation where a translanguaging approach was introduced in a teacher preparation programme; the results showed the approach's cognitive and affective advantages and argued for developing a multilingual method based on translanguaging. Similarly, their research on multilingual high school students in Soweto, Nkademeng and Makalela (2015) argue that monolingual classroom language provides inadequate space for multilingual identity formation. Charamba and Zano (2019) conducted their mixed-method research in Grade 10 chemistry classes at a rural school. While there was no significant difference between the experimental and control groups in the pre-test, the intervention group's post-test score was 52%, and the control group's was 38%, showing the intervention's effect. Outside formal school contexts, Guzula et al. (2016) describe the affordances of multimodal translanguaging practices for learning in an after-school literacy club and a mathematics holiday camp. McKinney and Tyler (2019) observed an after-school science study group where the learners valued their home language for exploratory talk only, English being the only legitimate language for them to present scientific statements. One author then created a translanguaging space to normalise students' translanguaging practices and engage all their linguistic repertoires for learning.

Research studies on teachers' practices within a multilingual or translanguaging framework are scarce in Namibia. Mensah (2015) studied the language practices in Windhoek International School, observing monolingual practices prevailing in classrooms whereas multilingual practices were used outside classroom encounters. Van Der Walt (2015) investigated learners' English language proficiency and the possibilities of using translanguaging in a rural primary school in the Kavango region, recommending preview-view-review strategies and translation to build up learners' English vocabulary.

Two recent doctoral theses have made interesting contributions to the field: Ashikuti (2019) and Set (2020). In her data, Ashikuti found that teachers use translanguaging practices such as translating the lessons into learners' home languages or asking learners to translate part of the lessons into their mother tongues. She interpreted the translanguaging practices used as scaffolding and coping strategies due to teachers' and learners' limited English proficiencies. She noted that translanguaging was mostly used one-on-one, not to address the overall class; it was used to better enable learners to engage with the teaching-learning process and included explaining, restating, and reinforcing instructions, as well as clarifying lessons. Switching to mother tongues often occurred when the teacher

noticed the learners had not understood the lesson in English. In her discussion, although she acknowledged the advantages of translanguaging practices in the classroom, she argued that the practices she had observed were unplanned, teacher-initiated, unimodal (cf. Norro 2022c) and questioned learners' reliability as translators. Therefore, she recommended multimodality, planning, and authenticity to achieve more effective and strategic use of translanguaging practices in schools.

In her ethnographic case study, Set (2020) explored the discourse between a science teacher and his Grade 4 learners in a Namibian bilingual classroom, arguing that multilingual and multimodal meaning-making should be promoted to value learners' linguistic resources and enable effective teaching and learning. Her dissertation described (p. 187–196) a lesson where the teacher used his agency in an officially monolingual classroom and successfully switched between learners' home language (Oshiwambo) and English and between informal and scientific registers multimodally, e.g. using gestures. This approach allowed his learners to engage in exploratory talk and have an active role in constructing knowledge.

Other studies about teachers' practices combining multilingualism and language ideologies include those of Simasiku et al. (2015) and Iiping and Banda (2020), who studied teachers' code-switching strategies in Namibian secondary schools. This study regards code-switching and translation as instances of translanguaging, despite the theoretical difference between code-switching and translanguaging approaches for the reasons discussed in Section 3.2.

### 1.3 Aims and outline of the research

This study explores Namibian teachers' practices in the multilingual context they work in, to be able to depict the affordances they may offer multilingual education. As the literature review above shows, most studies concerning Namibian teachers' practices have been conducted in secondary education (e.g. Simasiku et al. 2015; Iiping and Banda 2020), in junior primary (Ashikuti 2019) or been restricted to one subject only as Set (2020). This study focuses on Grade 4 – the transitional year from mother-tongue instruction to the English medium – and explores and compares the practices of the teachers of all the core subjects. The data was gathered in two regions, allowing comparisons between teachers' practices in the highly diverse Khomas and the less diverse Oshana regions, revealing the relationship between the number of learners' home languages to teachers' language practices. As teachers' beliefs about LEP issues influence their practices and how they implement the policy, I study them and try to set them into a wider perspective of the societal language ideologies that continue affecting the Namibian LEP. This study aims to explore the following:

- 1) what factors and language ideologies affected the Namibian LEP
- 2) what beliefs Namibian teachers have about LEP implementation and the MoI
- 3) what language ideologies underlie teachers' beliefs
- 4) what classroom practices teachers have

Table 1 shows how each article corresponds to the research aims.

**Table 1.** Individual articles and research aims.

Research aims	Article I	Article II	Article III	Article IV	Article V
1) What factors and language ideologies have affected the Namibian LEP?	X				
2) What beliefs do Namibian teachers have about LEP implementation and the MoI?		X			X
3) What language ideologies underlie teachers' beliefs?	X			X	X
4) What classroom practices do teachers have?			X	X	

Article I explores the LP's formulation process based on the discussion documents published during the decade preceding independence, focusing on the factors and ideologies that have affected the LP. It also explores the formulation and development of the schools' LP and evaluates it against statistical information about the learning outcomes. Section 4.3 presents the documents constituting the data for the analysis.

Articles II–V are based on data that include a questionnaire addressed to teachers in eight primary schools in Khomas and Oshana regions, teacher interviews and focus group discussions. Moreover, classroom observations are used as data in Articles III and IV. Section 4 details the data collection procedures, with ethical considerations.

Articles II and V relate to teachers' beliefs based on a questionnaire, interviews, and focus group discussions with teachers. They explore teachers' preferences for a certain MoI, English or the home language, and their beliefs about the LEP's implementation, the MoI's implications for learning, and pupils' linguistic rights. In Article V, besides describing teachers' beliefs, I especially discuss the societal language ideologies underlying them.

Articles III and IV treat teachers' classroom practices and are based on the questionnaire, the interviews, and classroom observation data. Article III is based on a smaller dataset; the results of the analysis are presented thematically, whereas the larger dataset Article IV used allowed for a factor analysis of the practices to be conducted, resulting in a distinction between monolingual and multilingual practices.

In Articles II–V, a mixed method approach was adopted for the analysis to allow triangulation of different parts of data (questionnaire responses, interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations). The questionnaire data was mainly analysed quantitatively whereas qualitative content analysis was applied to interview and observation data. Despite the study's limitations (see the discussion in Section 6.4), it contributes to the research by exploring and comparing teachers' beliefs and practices in two regions, Khomas and Oshana, which differ regarding linguistic diversity and school subjects.

Sections 2 and 3 discuss this research's theoretical framework, followed by the description of the data and methods in Section 4. Section 5 presents the results; Section 6 discusses these results with recommendations and directions for future research.

## 2 Critical language policy research

The LEP constitutes an integral part of the general LP and is closely connected to and influenced by the prevalent language ideologies and discourses in a given society. The MoI is a central issue in the LEP. Beliefs, attitudes, and language practices at societal, institutional, and grassroots levels are intertwined and influence one another. Therefore, a macro-level analysis of the official policy and its implementation at meso- and micro-levels are necessary to understand their interplay. This study used critical LP research through historical–structural analysis and interpretive qualitative methods to obtain a multi-layer picture of the Namibian LEP and its implementation.

This section first discusses critical sociolinguistic ethnography combining critical LP with ethnographic methods, offering a theoretical framework for the methodological approach adopted in this study (Section 2.1). Then I discuss the central concepts of LP theory, such as language ideologies, beliefs, and practices (Section 2.2). As teachers' beliefs and practices is the scope of my study, I discuss their central role as LP implementers and teacher cognition research, relating the present study to previous research findings and theories (Section 2.3). Section 3.1 focuses on the importance of MoI for learning and learners' multilingual identity construction. Sections 3.2 and 3.3 discuss multilingual education and translanguaging as part of it as a useful approach in developing language education policies and practice in African multilingual settings.

### 2.1 Critical sociolinguistic ethnography approach

As Ricento and Hornberger (1996) write in their seminal article, LP has multiple layers, for which they use the onion metaphor. Therefore, LP research must cut through the layers from the macro-level official policy documents to the meso-level local or institutional policies down to the micro-level policy implementation. The same applies to educational language policies, which are “created, interpreted, and appropriated within and across multiple levels and institutional contexts” (Johnson and Johnson 2015, 223). The perspective in my research study is holistic, including the official LP documents, teachers' beliefs about LP implementation and MoI policies, and teachers' classroom practices. *Critical sociolinguistic ethnography*

offers a framework combining critical LP approaches, such as *historical–structural analysis* and *interpretive qualitative methods*, which this study uses. The former is used especially in Article I to analyse the LEP and its development through the official documents and the covert policy through the educational outcomes. The latter is used in Articles II–V to explore LP implementation and the factors affecting it through teachers’ beliefs and their classroom practices.

*Critical language policy* emerged as a new LP research paradigm to critique the earlier so-called neo-classical approaches in the 1990s (Tollefson 1991). It focuses on the influence of language ideologies and discourses in LP processes (Johnson 2018, 6). Questions of social justice and power relations are central in critical LP (Tollefson 2006). The notion of *legitimate language* covers issues about what language practices are valued and considered normal or appropriate in prevailing ideological orientations related to social, economic, and political interests. In most contexts, the official or standardised language varieties and practices are considered legitimate for public domains. Education is a key site for defining legitimate language, and is an institution of social and cultural production and reproduction in which competing groups struggle for symbolic and material resources (Heller and Martin-Jones 2001). Thus, analysing the official policy and its implementation at various levels through a critical lens is essential to understand how societal discourses and language ideologies shape the policy and affect its implementation.

Critical LP has been criticised for being too deterministic and not capturing the LP processes (Ricento and Hornberger 1996; Davis 1999). However, combined with an ethnographic approach, it offers “an important balance between structure and agency” (Johnson 2013; Johnson and Ricento 2015). Critical sociolinguistic ethnography allows research into the interplay between local language practices and the larger historical, socio-economic, and political discourses and ideologies (Pérez-Milans 2015, 103). This approach allows us to explore how local appropriation can open up or close down implementational and ideological spaces for multilingual education (Johnson 2009, 143). Ethnographic research links LP processes and language ideologies to language practices at the micro-level, allowing us to see how a society’s ideological discourses and orientations shape teachers’ beliefs and how they leverage the implementational spaces accorded to them or close them down by aligning them to the prescribed policies. MoI policies are central to educational LP and are often related to larger social struggles and competing public discourses. Tollefson and Tsui (2018) remind us MoI is best understood combining classroom and school analysis with a historical–structural analysis. This framework relates the everyday language practices in schools with broader social, political, and economic forces.

Teachers are central LP implementers; thus, their beliefs and practices is the scope of this research. Official policies are implemented in diverse sociolinguistic

and sociocultural contexts, creating opportunities for human agency (Hornberger and Johnson 2007; Menken 2008; Johnson and Johnson 2015). Johnson and Johnson (2015, 225) define *language policy arbiters* as agents wielding “a disproportionate amount of power” – compared to other individuals in the same context and level – in the LP creation, interpretation, and appropriation process. These agents are typically teachers, educational authorities, and other policy makers. Menken (2008, 5) names teachers as the *final arbiters* as teachers eventually decide how LP is appropriated in classrooms. Martin-Jones and da Costa Cabral (2018, 77) remind us that the institutional order is interactionally constructed, meaning LEP in schools is mainly implemented through interaction, which is why there is always space for exercising agency and even contesting or modifying the institutional and social order (Heller 2007). However, social constraints limit these practices in schools. The analysis of the data in this study revealed discrepancies between teachers’ beliefs and practices and their self-reported and observed practices. The social constraints of the teaching context and the attitudes and discourses in the wider society explain at least partially these discrepancies.

According to Spolsky (2007; 2019), LP research concerns language beliefs, practices, and management. The following section discusses how language beliefs, practices, and ideologies construct the social frame in which language policies are created, interpreted, and appropriated.

## 2.2 Language practices, beliefs, and ideologies

Language beliefs, practices, and ideologies are central concepts in LP theory and research. Spolsky (2007; 2019) argues that an LP theory must account for regular choices the speakers of a given speech community make based on established patterns in the community. His theory involves the language *practices* of a speech community, their *beliefs* about language use, and *management*, which means modifying someone’s language practices (Spolsky 2007, 1). He later revised his model by adding *advocates* to the management component; advocates are individuals or groups who want to change a policy but lack the authority of managers. Another modification was adding *self-management*: the efforts of speakers to modify their own linguistic proficiency and repertoire (Spolsky 2019, 326). This study adopts the two concepts, language beliefs and practices, as the research focus. Language beliefs, especially teachers’ beliefs about the LEP and the MoI’s relevancy for learning, as well as teachers’ practices in the multilingual context they work in, are central concepts for this study, which this section discusses, along with societal language ideologies.

This study examines Namibian teachers’ beliefs about MoI and LEP implementation and their classroom practices, connecting them to the society’s

language ideologies. *Language practices* include conventions and rules concerning the appropriateness of different varieties or named languages in different situations (Spolsky 2004, 9). *The beliefs* derive from language practices and influence them. A set of beliefs about appropriate language practices, shared by the members of a speech community, form a language *ideology*. Language ideologies determine the value the community applies to each of the language varieties or named languages. These ideologies link micro-level language use and the structures and power relations within a society, as these ideologies inform the micro-level language practices, which, in turn, influence the language ideologies (Makoe and McKinney 2014, 659). Although a state usually has several language ideologies, one often dominates. In postcolonial contexts, dominant language ideologies often relate to the position of an ex-colonial language, which is considered the only legitimate language for public domains and formal contexts, including education.

Language ideology research has been developed within linguistic anthropology (e.g. Silverstein 1979; Irvine 1989; Irvine and Gal 2000; Kroskrity 2000; 2004; Woolard 1998) and sociolinguistics (e.g. Blommaert 1999; Jaworski et al. 2004; Johnson and Milani 2010; Makoni and Pennycook 2006). Silverstein (1979, 193) defines language ideologies as “sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use”. Irvine (1989, 225) defines language ideologies as a “cultural (or subcultural) system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests”. According to Blommaert and Verschueren (1998, 25), language ideologies are “any constellation of fundamental or commonsensical, and often normative, ideas and attitudes related to some aspect(s) of social “reality””. Moreover, Makoe and McKinney (2014, 2) state they “include the values, practices and beliefs associated with language use by speakers, and the discourse which constructs values and beliefs at state, institutional, and global levels”.

Common to these definitions is that language ideologies are characterised as sets of beliefs or ideas about language and its use in social contexts, which can be normative and are intended to serve the interests of the individuals or groups holding them. Following Blackledge and Pavlenko (2002) and Makoe and McKinney (2014), I include the language ideological discourse in defining the concept, as it is the discourse constructing the values and beliefs underlying the language ideologies, and reproducing and circulating them within a society. Indexical relationships construct language ideologies, and language ideologies maintain indexical relationships (Mäntynen et al. 2012, 327). Thus, language ideologies are powerful constructs maintaining hierarchical perceptions of the value and appropriateness of different language varieties and named languages. As these ideologies relate to beliefs about language use, which are reflected in practice, I intend to understand which language

ideologies are prevalent and influence the LEP and its implementation in the Namibian educational context by exploring teachers' beliefs and practices.

Weber and Horner (2012) distinguish five types of common language ideologies: 1) language hierarchy, 2) the one nation–one language ideology 3) the standard language ideology, 4) linguistic purism, and 5) the mother-tongue ideology. *Language hierarchy ideology* is prevalent in situations where one or some language(s) dominate and other languages follow in decreasing order of importance. The dominant language(s) are often given the status of official or national languages. Iiping and Banda (2020, 18) state that the hierarchy ideology is relevant to the Namibian situation, as the LP stipulates English as the only official language and the sole MoI from Grade 4. Another ideology shaping the postcolonial language policies, including Namibia's, is the *one nation–one language ideology*, which relates one language to national territory and unity (Iiping and Banda 2020, 18). When the national LP was formulated for independent Namibia, English was considered a neutral and unifying language that would open the country to broader communication worldwide; thus, English was considered the best choice for an official language. However, as Iiping and Banda (2020) argue, instead of dividing people along linguistic boundaries, English may have and has erased other boundaries coinciding social class lines between those proficient in English and those who are not.

*The standard language ideology* considers standardised language varieties the only language forms that may be used in formal contexts, excluding the vernacular or hybrid language forms. This ideology closely relates to *linguistic purism* concerned with what is acceptable or “good” language and sees variation and language change threatening a language's “purity”. The third language ideology specifically concerning multilingual postcolonial contexts is *the mother tongue ideology*, which section 3.1.2 discusses related to the MoI and learners' identity construction. Although it has positively influenced the language policies in postcolonial school systems within the linguistic rights paradigm, it is still based on the concept of languages as separate entities, as Makoe and McKinney (2014, 660) highlighted, thus incorporating standard language ideological characteristics.

Centralised language management at the state level must overcome beliefs, practices, and sometimes even management at lower regional and institutional levels. External factors from “below” (parents, the surrounding communities) and “above” (levels of government) likely influence the school domain (Spolsky 2007, 11). A multilevel analysis is necessary to understand what forces affect LP choices at different levels and what the challenges of a policy's implementation are (Spolsky 2007, 5). Potent external forces are socio-political practices of a given historical period, such as colonialism (Spolsky 2019). The colonial policies aimed to change

the language situation, often using divide-and-rule politics. Even after becoming independent, the new states were left with social, economic, political, and linguistic problems and non-linguistic forces that continued preventing the implementation of efficient language policies (Spolsky 2019, 329–30). Namibia is no exception, and its postcolonial and post-apartheid situation is still reflected in educational language policies and the prevailing language ideologies.

Kamwangamalu states that controversial ideologies affect LP choices in postcolonial societies. He distinguishes between two opposing language ideologies. First, the *decolonisation* ideology entails using local indigenous languages as the MoI, whereas the *internationalisation* ideology entails retaining the ex-colonial language in education and other public domains. The latter is associated with economic development and has been enforced by *globalisation* (Kamwangamalu 2013). Decolonisation ideologies include underlining the importance of promoting and developing African languages and cultures and using African languages in education to decolonise African thinking (cf. Prah 2016; van Pinxteren 2021). They also emphasise the pedagogical benefits of mother tongue instruction, such as easier comprehension, memorisation of the subject, self-expression, a more profound understanding of the instruction, and the transfer of skills and knowledge to other languages (cf. Benson, 2019).

Regarding language planning and education, two competing ideological framings of linguistic diversity in education have affected them throughout different contexts. The first relates to the one language–one nation ideology, which has aimed to promote effective communication and national unity by adopting monolingual language education policies. In the second, educational equity and success are central values, and mother–tongue instruction is considered the key to achieving these objectives (Liddicoat and Taylor-Leech 2015, 1–2). The Namibian LEP reflects these ideologies and the opposing forces they represent. Although local languages must be promoted according to the official policy (MoEC 1993; AfriLa 2003; NCBE 2016), English occupies a central role as the only official language and the MoI from Grade 4 onwards. Local languages are used as the MoI in junior primary, but extending instruction in local languages to upper grades is a politically difficult decision. For instance, in March 2014, the then Minister of Education David Namwandi, introduced a draft for a new LP for schools, which would have extended mother tongue instruction up to Grade 5 and phased English out as the MoI until Grade 6 (Haidula 2014). However, there were legislative elections later that year, and the draft never entered the legislation.

In Namibia, schools tend to offer English medium instruction from the beginning. The parents often demand English medium instruction (EMIS 2019), as it is considered the language of upward social mobility. Having English as the MoI from pre-school is mainly based on the presumption that early exposure to

language leads to faster and better acquisition, which Phillipson (1992, 199–209) and Skutnabb-Kangas (2000, 575–76) have called *the early exposure fallacy*, who state it may be beneficial in so-called additive bilingual programmes, but in subtractive programmes like in Namibia (Wolfaardt 2005), it is usually deleterious for learning.

Spolsky (2008) suggests four basic questions one must ask when investigating the LP of a given society: 1) What is the policy? 2) Why this policy? 3) How is the policy implemented? And 4) Can the policy be improved? In my research, I treat all four. The simplest way is to look at official documents to discover what the policy is, which is why I included the analysis of the official LEP documents. In Namibia, the LP has been explicitly formulated and documented in a series of documents while becoming independent and after independence in 1990. “Why this policy?” is an intriguing but complex question as the answer can rarely be found directly in the documents. That is why I use the historical–structural analysis of the documents in my data (Tollefson 2006; 2015). The critical analysis reveals (language) ideological tensions and hidden agendas that have affected the LP processes.

An LEP derives from an often vague understanding of a society’s language practices and proficiencies and the beliefs and ideologies about what constitutes an ideal situation (Spolsky 2008, 30). Investigating language beliefs and attitudes is helpful for uncovering conflicts in values and attitudes between different stakeholder groups (Spolsky 2008, 31). Sometimes the policy–makers’ intentions are made explicit, as in the Namibian LEP documents in which the policy’s aims (making the citizens proficient in the official language, and preserving and promoting the national languages) are stated explicitly. However, overt (*de jure*) and covert (*de facto*) LP (cf. Schiffman 2006, 113) usually differ. Ethnographic methods allow for revealing these discrepancies.

The policy’s implementation may be investigated by exploring the teachers’ linguistic proficiency. One crucial question is whether enough qualified teachers can teach in the language of instruction. Another crucial question is whether written materials are available in the languages of instruction. The implementation can be evaluated by examining inconsistencies between the policy’s goals and outcomes (Spolsky 2008, 31–32). This study’s findings suggest that although work has been done to increase the number of learning materials in Namibian languages and train teachers qualified to teach in them, the lack of materials and teachers still prevent the LEP’s successful implementation. The policy’s outcomes are also far from aligning with its objectives.

Next, I discuss the role and agency of teachers as LEP implementers. Teachers’ beliefs influence how they make decisions, and their practices eventually determine how they implement the policies at the classroom level, which is scope of this research.

## 2.3 Teachers' beliefs and practices

As discussed, teachers are powerful LP implementers (Johnson and Johnson 2015; Menken 2008; Menken and García 2010). As Pajares (1992, 325) stated in his much-cited article, beliefs strongly influence how knowledge is interpreted and which cognitive tools are selected to plan and make decisions concerning tasks. Hence, beliefs influence teachers' perceptions about teaching and learning, affecting their decision-making and classroom practices (Barcelos 2003). However, beliefs and practices have a reciprocal influence, and the context may alter both (Borg 2006). I first summarise some of the research literature to reach a sufficiently clear definition of beliefs as part of teacher cognition and then discuss the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices. The nature of beliefs and the relationship between beliefs and practices are crucial in establishing the usefulness of trying to change beliefs or practices to promote multilingual teaching practices.

There is no consensus on defining beliefs, but some core features are attributed to these beliefs in research literature. First, beliefs are mental constructs individuals consider true. Second, beliefs have cognitive and affective aspects. Third, beliefs are generally considered temporally and contextually stable, likely to change only due to substantial and personally meaningful experiences. Fourth, beliefs are supposed to influence teachers' interpretations and engagement with problems of practice significantly (Skott 2014, 18–19). Distinguishing between teachers' beliefs and related concepts, such as knowledge, is not always easy or even relevant (Borg 2006, 33). However, several attempts have been made, and the general conception is that knowledge refers to factual propositions, whereas beliefs refer to personal ideologies, values and attitudes (Meijer et al. 2001, 446). Practical and pedagogical content knowledge constitute teachers' knowledge (Bruzzano 2018, 64). Borg (2011, 370–71) defines beliefs as “propositions individuals consider to be true and which are often tacit, have a strong evaluative and affective component, provide a basis for action, and are resistant to change”. The definition that was adopted in Article II included in this study was that beliefs “refer to a teacher's personal, socially constructed values, attitudes and ideologies that affect their perceptions, interpretations and behaviour and are hard but not impossible to change” (Norro 2021, 51). Thus, beliefs are considered to strongly affect teachers' perceptions, values, and attitudes, thus influencing their (language) practices and how they implement educational language policies. Therefore, studying teachers' beliefs may be useful in understanding their practices.

Beliefs tend to influence teachers' classroom practices more than teacher education, although they are not always reflected in practice. Borg summarises that teachers' previous experiences as learners strongly influence their beliefs, which are usually well established already when student teachers enter professional education. Therefore, beliefs are a filter through which student teachers interpret new

knowledge and experiences and influence how teachers react to educational changes (Borg 2018, 75). Given the often tacit nature of beliefs (Borg 2011, 370–71) and their resistance to change, it seems that only consciously reflecting on their beliefs may raise awareness of their existence (Borg 2018, 85) making changing them possible.

As noted, the relationship between beliefs and practices is far from being linear or one-directional; rather, this relationship is dialectic and particularly relevant when considering professional development initiatives. Borg (2018, 78) highlights that if there is a discrepancy between teachers' stated beliefs or good practice as defined in the literature and their own practices, revealing this discrepancy may create cognitive dissonance and lead to reflection and change. Thus, a change in beliefs may generate a change in practice. Due to their dialectic relationship, changes in practice leading to changes in beliefs are possible. Thus, change may occur when teachers first change their practices and are convinced of the benefits when they see the results (Borg 2018, 80). Teachers may also adopt new practices without any change in their beliefs, or their beliefs may change, but their practices remain unchanged (Borg 2006, 277). One explanation for inconsistencies between beliefs and practices is the external, contextual constraints preventing or encouraging certain practices.

Basturkmen (2012) reviewed some research into teachers' stated beliefs and their practices. The overall conclusion was that there is limited correspondence between them, and the correspondences reported mainly related to planned aspects of teaching. Situational constraints often prevent teachers from putting their beliefs into practice. Internal factors (biography, awareness, experience, and motivation) and external factors (curricula, time, institutional policy, and gaps in pedagogical or subject matter knowledge) may explain variations in the relationship between stated beliefs and teachers' practices. A teacher's practice may reflect one belief at one time and another belief at another, which is incompatible with the previous belief. Beliefs belonging to different belief systems may also conflict (Basturkmen 2012, 284). If different beliefs are somehow contradictory, the core beliefs are the most persistent (Skott 2014, 77). One may conclude that to change teachers' beliefs, and thus their practices, making them explicit and allowing teachers to reconsider them is important, as well as combining the theoretical reflection (Borg 2006, 277) with opportunities to try them in classroom practice.

This study's findings revealed inconsistencies between teachers' stated beliefs and their enacted beliefs. Most believed, e.g. that instruction in a learner's home language is their linguistic right. However, teachers were reluctant to extend home language instruction to upper grades and conformed their teaching practices to the national curriculum's policy and their school's institutional policy (Norro 2021; Norro 2023).

Methodological issues should be considered when discussing teachers' beliefs and practices. Questionnaires and other self-reporting instruments will likely elicit "acceptable" beliefs, whereas interviews and observations tend to reveal actual beliefs (Borg 2006, 141; 2018, 84; Bruzzano 2018, 63). The researcher and the teacher might also understand terminology differently (Bruzzano 2018, 63). This study combined a self-reporting instrument (a questionnaire) and less formal interviews with classroom observations to obtain holistic data and to allow triangulation of different parts of data.

Namibian learners and teachers work in a more or less multilingual environment, depending on the region and whether the school is urban or rural. The question of mother tongue versus English instruction has been central in LEP discourse from the beginning of Namibian's independence, and even before it. Multilingual options have been suggested but not officially implemented. The next section discusses the issue of the MoI and its implications for learning and the identity construction of multilingual learners.

### 3 Multilingual learners' language practices and identity construction

This section first discusses the question of the MoI and its benefits for learning, then the issues of multilingual learners' identity construction and its connection with the schools' LP. Multilingual education and translanguaging practices as part of it are then discussed as a feasible option in promoting multilingual learners' identity construction and learning of both subject content and the school languages.

#### 3.1 Medium of instruction and identity construction

Before discussing mother tongue instruction, some terminology must be defined. As noted, terms like *mother tongue* or *first language (L1)* do not account for the complex languaging practices in many African contexts (Nkadimeng and Makalela 2015; Makalela 2016). However, as the *mother tongue* is widely used in literature and the Namibian LP documents (e.g. Chamberlain et al. 1981; MBESC 2003; NCBE 2016), I use it to designate the local languages spoken in homes and communities unlike English – the official language and the MoI from Grade 4 onwards. *Home language* is used interchangeably with *mother tongue* when discussing the MoI (NCBE 2016), although a household might in reality speak several languages.

##### 3.1.1 Mother tongue instruction

There is convincing research evidence of the benefits of mother tongue instruction for both learning and development (Cummins 2000; Kosonen 2005; Erling and Seargeant 2013). Teaching in a language the learners and the surrounding community understand and speak well leads to better achievement (Rubagumya 1986; Alidou and Brock-Utne 2011; Smith 2011; Trudell 2016) and family and community engagement with school (Trudell 2016). Classroom interaction is perhaps the most crucial aspect of quality teaching (Alexander 2015). Motivating rich and learner-centred classroom interaction enhancing higher-order thinking and argumentation skills cannot happen if the classroom's language is foreign to learners and often to teachers alike (Brock-Utne and Alidou 2011; Babaci-Wilhite 2015). Using international languages as the MoI limits

students' abilities to develop a good foundation for learning (Babaci-Wilhite 2015). Despite research evidence, creating and implementing language policies that would extend to using local languages in the upper grades has proved to be a politically difficult task to perform in most African countries.

The real problem in postcolonial school systems is not the presence of European languages as such, but how learners' home languages and cultures –together with the knowledge and values they represent – are discarded and devalued in the formal school system (Trudell 2016, 281). Linguistic relations of power have been theorised within the framework of *coloniality of language* (wa Thiongo 1986; Veronelli 2015; McKinney 2022), theorising the relationship between race and language to explain the devaluation of indigenous languages as an extension of colonisation and offering a useful concept in analysing and understanding the language ideologies affecting the LEP in postcolonial contexts.

One of the most important aims of formal schooling throughout the world is to provide learners with the appropriate knowledge and skills to holistically support their growth and identity construction. *The National Curriculum for Basic Education* underlines the importance of building a solid identity and positive values:

Knowledge encompasses indigenous knowledge, local and national culture, and international and global culture. Only with a strong cultural and individual identity and positive values is it possible to influence globalisation and not be overwhelmed by it (NCBE 2016, 5).

Notably, indigenous knowledge and local culture are mentioned as knowledge components that are indispensable for identity construction, aligning with Bokamba (2007), who argues the only way of elevating African languages and the self-esteem of those who speak them is to introduce multilingual policies, including using African languages in public domains, in education and the society in general. As language, culture, and identity are deeply interconnected (Lucas and Villegas 2011, 102), one must ask how this aim can be achieved in a system that discards the local languages as the MoI at an early stage.

### 3.1.2 Multilingual education and learners' multilingual identities

However, it would be erroneous to claim a connection between only one language, culture, and identity of one who grew up in a diverse, multilingual environment as those in which African learners typically live. Weber and Horner refer to the belief that speakers have only one mother tongue as *mother tongue ideology* and discuss how the term, despite its usefulness in fighting for the linguistic rights of minoritised groups,

may even be misused for nationalistic purposes (2012, 23–25). The idea that everyone has a special and close relationship to one and single language learned early on results from a monolingual ideology regarding a monolingual person and student as the norm (McKinney and Tyler 2019, 144). Researchers such as Lüpke (2010; 2016; 2017), Makalela (2013; 2015; 2016), McKinney and Tyler (2019), and Ndhlovu and Makalela (2021), amongst others, have drawn attention to the fluid language practices in rural and urban African societies and settings. Instead of associating African languages with ethnicity and making monolingual assumptions about one heritage language per isolated tribal group, they remind us of the multilingual language ecologies persisting from pre-colonial times. Diverse language ecologies manifest today in the fluid language practices of urban citizens and youth who express their identities using hybrid varieties such as Kasi-taal (South Africa), Nouchi (Ivory Coast), Camfranglais (Cameroon) or Sheng (Kenya), amongst others. Moreover, students may be more proficient in English or another ex-colonial language than the standard variety of their mother tongue used in schools, as they speak a *street variety* instead of the standard one (Cook 2009; see also McKinney and Tyler 2019). In rural settings, several neighbouring languages are mixed in conversation, and languages of wider communication are used in broader communication networks (Lüpke 2017) in small-scale multilingual communities.

### 3.1.3 Linguistically and culturally responsive teaching

Regarding formal education and its aims, the question is about supporting learners' *multilingual identities*. Fisher et al. (2020, 449) define a multilingual identity as “an ‘umbrella’ identity, where one explicitly identifies as multilingual precisely because of an awareness of the linguistic repertoire one has”. Lucas et al. (2008) state that linguistically and culturally responsive teaching requires teachers' sociolinguistic awareness. They must understand the connections between language, culture and identity, value linguistic diversity, and be inclined to advocate for multilingual pedagogies on different levels regarding material production, teaching practices, and LP. While supporting learners' multilingual identity construction, linguistically responsive teaching has a cognitive dimension, as it scaffolds understanding and acquiring the subject's content.

Linguistically and culturally responsive teaching is grounded in Vygotsky's (1978) theory of learning through social interaction, a central concept of which is the zone of proximal development, meaning the space between a learner's current competence and what they can achieve assisted by an adult or a more capable peer. Learning and development occur within this space (Gibbons 2015). Learners must be scaffolded, usually by the teacher who plans and directs learning activities, to operate successfully in their zone of proximal development. Scaffolding means

temporary support that helps learners reach beyond their present competence (Kniffka 2019). Meaningful social interaction scaffolds learners, allowing them to negotiate meaning and extend their abilities (Lucas et al. 2008). In a multilingual classroom where learners are often emergent speakers of the language of instruction and therefore operating in their bi-/multilingual zone of proximal development (Moll 2014, 56), rich scaffolding provided by the teacher, peers and materials is especially important.

Formal schooling should value and leverage learners' entire linguistic repertoire and, by doing so, help them become aware of it to support their multilingual identity construction. Weber and Horner propose *literacy bridges* from students' linguistic repertoires to the school language by considering their actual spoken language forms, finding common linguistic denominators between multilingual students from different linguistic backgrounds and offering a reasonable number of varying MoI options (2012, 167). *Flexible multilingual education* is based on a multilingual mindset and builds on students' existing linguistic resources, including the non-standard varieties. It recognises that *translanguaging* is a common strategy in multilingual settings and leverages it as a pedagogical strategy (Erling et al. 2017, 22–23). Translanguaging and pedagogy based on translanguaging practices offers a means of valuing learners' multilingual identities, understanding and legitimising multilingual language practices and scaffolding learning in linguistically diverse school settings. Translanguaging is discussed in the next section.

## 3.2 Translanguaging

Increased mobility of populations has multiplied contacts between languages and cultures, resulting in complex multilingual language practices and super-diversity (Blommaert 2010), especially in metropolises, although as has been stated, pre-colonial multilingualism was the norm in Africa (Ndhlovu and Makalela 2021). Nevertheless, with the critique of colonial *one nation – one language* ideologies, this development has led to new conceptualisations of language. In applied linguistics, language has begun to be conceptualised as social practices embedded in social and cognitive relations (García and Wei 2014). Sociolinguistics has seen languages as mobile resources (Blommaert 2010) and an activity rather than a structure (Pennycook 2010). Based on these notions, the term *linguaging* was coined to account for the fluidity of real-life language practices. *Translanguaging* further emphasises the multifaceted resources that multilinguals draw on (Jonsson 2017, 23). When translanguaging, multilingual individuals deploy their whole linguistic repertoire, which is considered one integrated system (Canagarajah 2011; Jonsson 2017; Otheguy et al. 2015). The concept of *translanguaging* can be considered an ideological statement as it emphasises the fluidity of multilingual practices and

contests monolingual language ideologies (Jonsson 2017; McKinney and Tyler 2019). Translanguaging has transformative potential as it recognises the fluid use of different linguistic repertoires (Jonsson 2017, 26), including various registers and modalities.

An ideological difference underlies the concepts of code-switching and translanguaging. The latter can be understood as “an encompassing term for a variety of multilingual practices, traditionally termed as code-switching, code-mixing, borrowing and crossing, which are commonplace amongst multilingual language users” (Wei 2015, 177), including translation (Hélot 2014), calques, coinages and borrowings (Makalela 2013). Translanguaging is oriented toward language as discursive practices, not as separate linguistic systems as in code-switching studies (Nikula and Moore 2019, 239). In the translanguaging approach, the linguistic repertoire of a multilingual person is considered one integrated entity on which the speaker draws to communicate. According to many translanguaging theorists (e.g. Otheguy et al. 2015; Jonsson 2017), the multilingual speaker separates the languages only when s/he must communicate with someone who does not share the same linguistic repertoire. However, Nikula and Moore (2019, 238) acknowledge that analysing instances of multilinguals deploying their linguistic repertoires without resorting to codification is difficult, meaning using terms such as L1, L2, and so forth, in describing the process. Moreover, Cummins (2021) has problematised the non-existence of any distinct languages or boundaries between them in the brain of a multilingual speaker. He distinguishes between what he calls *unitary translanguaging theory (UTT)* and *crosslinguistic translanguaging theory (CTT)*. Unlike the UTT, the CTT affirms the existential reality of different languages in a multilingual’s linguistic and cognitive system and their dynamic interaction. Despite these different orientations towards the legitimacy of the construct of language, he argues that both theories reject rigid instructional separation of languages, endorse dynamic conceptions of multilingual cognitive functioning and transformative pedagogies in educating multilingual students. Both theories view translanguaging pedagogies that draw on learners’ entire linguistic repertoire as a central component of equitable education.

Makalela (2016) has theorised translanguaging from an African perspective, using the notion of *ubuntu*, an African value system based on the relations of mutual dependence between people and, by extension, languages. According to him, multiple ethnic groups and languages cohabited in pre-colonial Africa, and the confluence of different languages constituted the region’s flexible multilingualism. Complex multilingual language practices have persisted until postcolonial times despite the *one nation–one language* and *one classroom–one language* ideologies promoted by colonial and postcolonial policies. Recently, increased mobility has created new sociolinguistic realities and increased the fluidity of linguistic

encounters in Africa (Makalela 2016, 189). Regarding formal schooling, multilingual practices and fluidity characterise classroom interactions, where vertical (teacher using different languages within a lesson) and horizontal (different teachers using different languages) translanguaging practices are typical (Nkadameng and Makalela 2015, 19–20). Nkadameng and Makalela’s study naturally reflects a multilingual urban setting. However, fluid multilingual language practices have also been observed in small-scale rural communities (Lüpke 2017). Thus, translanguaging offers a conceptual framework based on African cultural competence, which can inform language education policies toward more epistemic access and identity affirmation for the learners (Makalela 2016, 194). The pedagogical applications of translanguaging are discussed in the next section.

### 3.3 Translanguaging pedagogies

As a pedagogical practice, translanguaging refers to how teachers and learners “engage in complex and fluent discursive practices” to communicate, enhance understanding of the content, appropriate it, and develop academic language practices (García 2014, 112). In translanguaging pedagogy, the learners’ complete repertoire is leveraged. Simultaneously, they are taught where, when, with whom and why certain features of their repertoire are appropriate while others are not, enabling them to learn how to perform according to the social norms (García and Kleyn 2016, 15). A Welsh scholar Cen Williams and his colleague Dafydd Whittal coined the term *trawsiethu* (translanguaging) in the 1990s, which Baker (2011) translated into English. In the original Welsh version, the input was often meant to be in one language, and the output was primarily in the other (Baker 2011, 288). Since then, several researchers, including García and Wei (2014), Otheguy et al. (2015) and García et al. (2017) have developed the theory and practice of translanguaging pedagogy. In the African context, it has been researched especially in South Africa (Makalela 2015; Probyn 2015; Guzula et al. 2016; McKinney and Tyler 2019; Charamba and Zano 2019).

Translanguaging pedagogy includes using all the languages in a classroom in group work and discussions, using vocabularies and digital translation, creating word and cognate walls, using peer assistance, and leveraging the learners’ language communities as linguistic and cultural resources (García et al. 2017). Even in officially monolingual classes, teachers can draw on the different linguistic repertoires of all learners and differentiate the teaching to every individual. Translanguaging can give students appropriate linguistic input and perform linguistic output in meaningful, collaborative ways.

Translanguaging enables students to work in their bi-/multilingual zone of proximal development, which is truncated in the foreign language without assistance

(Moll 2014, 56). Students need opportunities to use all the resources – the mediation of teachers, peers, and materials (dictionaries, multilingual texts, images, videos, etc.) – to perform in the bi-/multilingual zone of proximal development. This study concentrates on the scaffolding aspect of teachers' classroom practices and the translanguaging practices in the observed lessons.

Translanguaging pedagogy also has implications for assessment. As Prinsloo and Krause (2019, 161) write, “Standardised language regimes in schooling set a monolingual register of a national or international language as the formal code for writing and testing in school”. That is, only standardised languages on the top of the language hierarchy pyramid may be used in assessment. Thus, constraints based on both beliefs about language acquisition and assessment policies often prevent a meaningful implementation of multilingual practices. Ex-colonial languages are used because of the misconception that maximum exposure to language leads to faster and better acquisition (Cummins and Swain 2014), and assessment policy has been shown to affect pedagogical practices through a washback effect (Cleghorn and Rollnick 2002; Shohamy 2006). In many postcolonial contexts, teachers feel obliged to minimise using local languages to prepare their pupils for exams as assessment is done in the ex-colonial language only. This phenomenon emerged in several interviews in this study's data (Norro 2022b).

Adopting a multilingual approach, even in assessment, could contribute to obtaining a more precise and just understanding of learners' real content knowledge without it being altered by their possible lack of proficiency in the MoI, as shown e.g. in Prinsloo and Krause's study (2019). Multilingual students could be evaluated performing independently or with moderate assistance when operating in the bi-/multilingual zone. Multilingual students' (especially emerging bilinguals') assessment should include using all their inter- and intrapersonal and material resources, be based on authentic tasks, and distinguish between general linguistic and language-specific performances (García et al. 2017, 82). There are two aspects to consider about assessment. First, are the students performing using all the features of their language repertoires or a language-specific feature? Second, are they performing independently, with moderate assistance, or is the performance emergent (García et al. 2017, 86)?

Translanguaging can transform monolingual, bilingual and language learning classes by legitimising teachers' and students' various multilingual practices. Menken and Sánchez (2019) have documented changes that adopting translanguaging pedagogies and multilingual approaches in classrooms made in the language ideologies and school language policies in the schools that participated in their research study. These changes indicated what they call a *translanguaging stance*: a multilingual pedagogical mindset (García et al. 2017; Menken and Sánchez 2019). However, the transformative power of translanguaging cannot be taken for granted, as it works differently in different contexts and has limits set by the demands

of monolingual and academic language use in society (Jaspers 2018). Zavala (2019, 175) reminds us that “the relationship between language practices and power depends on the language ideologies that exist in particular cultural contexts.” Teachers are not faced with two unrelated ideologies (monolingualism and translanguaging) but must often improvise to include contrary aims (Jaspers 2018, 6). As McKinney and Tyler rightly highlight:

No communicative practice is by definition transformative (or constraining). Translanguaging, rather, has the potential to liberate multilinguals from the tyranny of monoglossic and monomodal conceptions of communicative practice as the norm. But in order for translanguaging to be transformative and to be productive for learning, translanguaging as pedagogy must be deliberately designed (McKinney and Tyler 2019, 146).

Contextual factors at all levels must be considered when implementing translanguaging pedagogies, including beliefs, practices and policies, learners’ background, aims of the programmes, and the prevailing language ideologies and attitudes (Paulsrud et al. 2021, xxiv). Therefore, considering the context and planning translanguaging pedagogies accordingly is essential.

Translanguaging pedagogy may offer a way out from the impasse created by the reluctance of policy-makers to extend mother tongue instruction to upper grades, as well as a more productive approach to typical African language practices and how to include and leverage them in formal schooling. According to Shank Lauwo (2021, 218), the difference in how advocates of mother tongue instruction understand *language* separates them from those favouring translanguaging pedagogy, although both aim at increasing equity and epistemic access in education. The latter usually do not enter discussions about one single language as the MoI but argue that “debating a single language as the official language of instruction distracts from a more productive discussion focussing on using language and broader semiotic resources effectively for learning” (McKinney and Tyler 2019, 143). For many, the *mother tongue* is a construct embedded in monolingual normativity (Shank Lauwo 2021, 218). However, the context must always be considered. In many contexts, especially rural ones, validating the community’s translanguaging practices while simultaneously empowering the local predominant language by official recognition is necessary (Shank Lauwo 2021, 218–19). A situated analysis must be done and the contextual social issues considered when planning and implementing educational language policies. Nevertheless, translanguaging pedagogy seemingly corresponds to the complex multilingual language practices and identities of African learners, offering a lens through which to examine the MoI policies in postcolonial societies and a practical means of supporting learning and multilingual identity construction in formal schooling.

## 4 Data and methods

This section discusses the data and methods, describing the chosen methods and their connections to the theory and research questions in Section 4.1. Section 4.2 describes the data collection procedures, followed by the presentation of the LP documents and material collected during the fieldwork forming the research data in Section 4.3. Sections 4.4.1–4.4.5 discuss the analysis methods each article uses.

### 4.1 The mixed method approach

Mixed methods were chosen as an approach to data collection and analysis. As Section 2 discussed, a multi-layered analysis, combining macro-level analysis of the official LEP and meso- and micro-level implementation, is necessary to analyse and interpret them. Critical sociolinguistic ethnography allows research of the local language practices set in the context of the larger historical, socio-economic, and political discourses and ideologies (Pérez-Milans 2015, 103). My research used the historical–structural method (Tollefson 2006, 2015) in Article I; data collection methods included a questionnaire, interviews, and classroom observations to collect, analyse, and interpret the data in Articles II–V. This was considered appropriate as the research questions concerned the official policies, their development throughout the years of independence, and teachers’ beliefs and practices affecting how the policies were implemented.

Quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (interviews and focus group discussions, classroom observations, and open-ended questions in the questionnaire) data were collected simultaneously and given equal weight in the analysis. The questionnaire allowed a broader perspective with a relatively large sample ( $N=140$ ) and comparisons between different background variables, whereas the interviews provided rich and deep data. Classroom observations completed the self-reported data and allowed comparison between the self-reported and observed practices. Therefore, the mixed method adopted was the convergence model – the traditional mixed method triangulation design (Creswell and Plano Clark 2007, 62, 64). Quantitative and qualitative data were collected separately, and then the results were converged by comparing and contrasting them.

Although the triangulation design has challenges such as converging sets of different data and being able to interpret them (Creswell and Plano Clark 2007, 66–67), it has advantages. It is efficient in that both data types are collected simultaneously; it also allows each data type to be analysed separately (Creswell and Plano Clark 2007, 66) and then compared and contrasted to interpret the phenomena from various angles and with multiple levels of depth. Although the mixed methods approach has been criticised for trying to combine incompatible paradigms or worldviews (Creswell and Plano Clark 2007, 15), I would argue that for the present study, a triangulation design made obtaining complementary data possible and allowed a wider perspective and deeper understanding and interpretation of the phenomena studied.

## 4.2 Data

The research data consist of LP documents and collected data: questionnaire responses, interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations. Table 2 shows what parts of the data are used in different articles. In Articles II (Norro 2021) and III (Norro 2022c), the smaller data collected in 2020 was used, whereas the entire data collected in 2020 and 2021 was available and used in Articles IV (Norro 2022b) and V (Norro 2023).

**Table 2.** Data in the articles.

	Language policy documents	Questionnaire	Interviews & Focus group discussions	Classroom observations
Article I	X			
Article II		X	X	
Article III		X	X	X
Article IV		X	X	X
Article V		X	X	

Table 3 presents the language policy documents forming Article I's data (Norro 2022a).

**Table 3.** The language policy documents Article I used.**1. Pre-independence (1981–1989)**

Year	Title	Publisher
1981	<i>Toward a Language Policy for Namibia. English as the Official Language: Perspectives and Strategies</i>	United Nations Institute for Namibia (Lusaka: UNIN)
1984	<i>Education policy for independent Namibia</i>	United Nations Institute for Namibia (Lusaka: UNIN)

**2. Independence (1990–2018)**

1993	<i>The Language Policy for Schools 1992-1996 and Beyond</i>	Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC)
2003	<i>The Language Policy for Schools in Namibia. Discussion Document</i>	Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (MoBESC)
2010	<i>The National Curriculum for Basic Education</i>	Ministry of Education (MoE)
2016	<i>The National Curriculum for Basic Education</i>	Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC)

The data in Table 3 (Norro 2022a) is divided into two groups: those published before the independence and those published after 1990. The two documents from the 1980s are included – because it was then that the liberation movement SWAPO (South West Africa People’s Organization), with the UNIN (United Nations Institute for Namibia) laid the foundations of the present LP. UNIN was an educational body established in Lusaka, Zambia, in 1976 by the UN Council for Namibia to prepare the country for independence. My discussion of the choice of the official language in Article I is based primarily on the booklet *Toward a Language Policy for Namibia* based on the work of R. Chamberlain, A. Diallo and E.L. John and published by UNIN in 1981. During the 1980s, the government departments in Windhoek published several LEP documents for the future independent Namibia, resulting in little implementation (Harlech-Jones 1990, 94–95) and are, therefore, not included in my data. The documents from the years of independence contained in the data and presented in Table 3 are official and provisional policy statements, discussion papers, and national curricula.

### 4.3 Data collection

Data collection methods were applied to collect data about teachers’ beliefs and practices. The instruments included a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations. As the research involved human participants, following ethical guidelines was important. A preliminary ethical review was obtained from the Ethics Committee for Human Sciences at the

University of Turku, Humanities and Social Sciences Division (5/2019). Namibian authorities considered the preliminary ethical review obtained from the University of Turku sufficient for granting research permits in Namibia as long as anonymity and confidentiality were observed. The executive director of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture of Namibia and the National Commission on Research, Science and Technology (NCRST) in Namibia granted a research permit. The regional directors in Khomas and Oshana also gave their permission to conduct research in their respective regions. The school principals were then contacted to obtain their consent for the research. The sampling in the schools was based on the teachers' availability and voluntary participation. The principals and the teachers involved were provided information letters about the objectives of the research, the protection of their anonymity, and the secure storage of the data, giving their written consent to participate. Appendices 1 and 2 include the information and consent letters.

Data collection was conducted in eight government (public) schools: four in Khomas and four in Oshana. These regions were chosen because of their different linguistic profiles; Khomas in the capital area is more linguistically diverse than Oshana in the north, where Oshiwambo languages are widely spoken. In Khomas, the schools were proposed by the University of Namibia (UNAM) based on previous contacts with the schools and the schools' different language streams. In Oshana, the regional director appointed the schools. Table 4 presents the schools' language streams.

**Table 4.** Language streams in schools.

	<b>Medium of instruction in junior primary (Grades 1–3)</b>	<b>Languages offered as subjects</b>
School 1	English	Afrikaans, English
School 2	Khoekoegowab, Oshindonga, Otjiherero	English, Khoekhoegowab, Oshindonga, Otjiherero
School 3	Afrikaans, English	Afrikaans, English
School 4	Oshikwanyama, Oshindonga	English, Oshikwanyama, Oshindonga
School 5	Oshindonga	English, Oshindonga
School 6	English	Afrikaans, English, Oshindonga
School 7	English	English, Oshikwanyama
School 8	English	English, Oshikwanyama

Data collection started in January 2020 and was conducted in two schools in Khomas before the Covid-19 outbreak interrupted it; the collection continued from September to November 2021. Therefore, Articles II and III are written based on the analysis of the data collected in 2020; Articles IV and V are based on the entire data.

### 4.3.1 Questionnaire and interviews

The questionnaire was distributed to all the teachers in all eight schools. It contained questions about their background (age, teaching experience, mother tongue, pupils' linguistic backgrounds, etc.), beliefs about LEP and its implementation, teaching practices, and experiences and wishes for in-service trainings based on research literature (Ruíz 1984; García and Kleyn 2016; García et al. 2017; Benson 2021). The questionnaire was built using the RedCAP platform, available online and in hard copy. School principals or teachers appointed heads of department helped distribute and collect the printed questionnaires. In the first data collection, the response rate was 44.6% ( $N=37$ ); for the entire collection, it was 51% ( $N=140$ ). Five teachers completed the online version. Appendix 3 includes a copy of the questionnaire.

Table 5 shows the number of participants in focus group discussions and the time the focus group discussions and the individual interviews lasted.

**Table 5.** The interviews and focus group discussions.

Region	School	Number of participants in focus group discussion	Time in minutes	Individual interviews	Time in minutes
Khomas	1	3	24:32	1	24:47
	2	4	11:13	3	11:14; 12:00; 12:10
	3	3	36:04	3	13:05; 8:10; 9:20
	4	4	23:05	3	11:41; 8:41; 11:13
Oshana	1	4	23:19	3	15:54; 10:25; 5:50
	2	6	36:10	1	20:16
	3	4	23:50	3	11:50; 9:09; 7:08
	4	3	32:03	2	12:19; 16:31
<b>Total</b>		31		19	

Table 5 shows that 19 individual semi-structured interviews with teachers were conducted, all in English, lasting between 5.50 and 24.47 minutes. One focus group discussion was conducted in each school with three to six participants, lasting between 11.13 and 36.10 minutes. The participants were mostly senior primary

teachers and represented practically all the subjects taught in primary school. Altogether, 50 teachers were involved in the interviews or focus group discussions (see Table 5). They were of all age groups between 24 and 56, and their teaching experience varied from 5 months to 29 years. Appendix 4 includes the questions forming the outline of the interviews and focus group discussions, although loosely followed and elaborated as the conversations unfolded. All interviews and focus group discussions were audio-recorded.

### 4.3.2 Classroom observations

Qualitative non-participant classroom observation (Wragg 2012) was conducted in 149 lessons: 76 in Khomas and 73 in Oshana. Grade 4 – the transitional year between mother tongue and English instruction – was selected as the focus of the observations. The researcher would greet the class and then sit at the back or in front of the classroom, observing the lesson as it unfolded. Occasionally, the teacher could come and comment on a detail of the lesson, or the researcher could ask a question concerning it. She would walk around the classroom to see pupils' work and take photographs of the posters and other materials on the walls.

Thirty lessons observed in Khomas in 2020 were used in the analysis in Article III (Norro 2022c) and 47 in Khomas and Oshana in 2020–2021 in the analysis in Article IV (Norro 2022b). The original research plan included video recordings of lessons. Unfortunately, consent for video recordings was not obtained from the pupils and their parents in any of the schools; thus, recordings could not be made. This was due mainly to the short period of time (approximately one week) spent in each school. Although this allowed for visiting several schools and obtaining a wider perspective to different schools and regions, it did not allow enough time for the parents to answer the consent letters. As classroom observations were conducted in regular situations and did not involve any special arrangements concerning the pupils, the preliminary ethical review obtained for the research considered the principals' and teachers' permits to suffice without parental consent. The observation data of this research consist of observation notes made during the lessons, using an observation frame in Appendix 5. The researcher completed the observation frame while observing the lessons and note any events related to the research questions. The event numbers (on the left column) were only written after the observations when reviewing the notes afterwards. Many of the teachers whose lessons were observed were interviewed and could comment on the lessons and their teaching methods.

In 2020, classroom observations were conducted in 49 lessons altogether, and 13 were excluded because lessons were unsuitable for observation (e.g. only distribution of material occurred during the lesson) or because they were conducted

in other grades. Six lessons of one and the same teacher with parallel groups and the same content were excluded. This sampling resulted in 30 Grade 4 lessons forming the data that Article III analysed. Twelve different teachers' lessons were included, and the number of lessons per teacher varied from one to five. The subjects included in the observation data were Afrikaans as a Second Language, art, English as a Second Language, information and communications technology, mathematics, natural science and health education, religious and moral education, and social studies. This sample was obtained at the beginning of the school year, so the lessons were new to the pupils, who had just transitioned from junior primary to senior primary.

For Article IV, the sampling was done based on certain criteria because of the considerable size of the observation data as a whole (149 lessons). First, only teachers who had been interviewed were sampled, and only if at least four of their lessons had been observed. Second, observed lessons were included in the analysis if they belonged to one of the subject groups that had been compared in the analysis of the questionnaire data, excluding the class teachers, as the observations were done primarily in Grade 4 lessons. Moreover, English lessons were the only language classes in the sample because of the limited number of other language lessons available. The lessons' length varied from the basic 40 minutes to double lessons, although the prescribed lesson times were not always respected. Four to five lessons per teacher were included, covering one or two topic sequences. These observations were conducted at the beginning or during the school years' last term, and the lessons contained new topics or revisions for the year's final exams.

## 4.4 Data analysis

The print questionnaire responses were typed manually to RedCAP and then exported from the RedCAP platform to a statistics programme (JMP Pro 16) used to prepare the data for the analyses in Articles II–V. Questions about teachers' LP beliefs were presented as statements that the respondents could agree or disagree with on a five-point Likert scale. For the analysis, the "I strongly agree" and "I agree" responses were combined, as well as the "I strongly disagree" and "I disagree" responses. The questions treating teachers' practices were also presented as statements, and the respondents chose often/sometimes/never, according to how often they used the practice in question.

The interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed manually using orthographic transcription. Orthographic transcription is considered to be accurate enough for thematic analysis, which was used in this study (Braun and Clarke 2006, 8). Individual interviews and focus group discussions are called 'interviews' and are analysed as one dataset. To preserve the interviewees' anonymity, they were given

a running code using the region's initial, the school's number and the interview number, e.g. K, S1, 1 (Khomas, school 1, interview 1). For the focus groups, the participants were given a code according to the order in which they were initiated into the conversation, e.g. O, FGD1, P4 (Oshana, focus group discussion 1, participant 4). Teachers whose lessons were observed and analysed for Article IV were given pseudonyms.

The analysis procedures followed in each article somewhat differed; thus each procedure is discussed in its own section (4.4.1–4.4.5).

#### 4.4.1 Article I

In Article I (Norro 2022a), the LP documents in Section 4.3 (see Table 5) were analysed using a historical–structural method. This critical LP approach seeks to understand how external forces affect and control LP processes, and emphasises the influence of social and historical factors on these policies (Tollefson 2006, 48). Historical factors affect the LP processes in a given historical situation, e.g. colonialism is an explicative historical factor in postcolonial settings. Structural factors include mechanisms maintaining social, political, and economic inequalities (Tollefson 2015).

The historical–structural method may be applied at multiple LP planning and implementation levels to analyse status, corpus, and acquisition planning processes (Tollefson 2015, 145–46). Article I applied this method to analyse the status planning process at the macro-level as it is documented in the policy documents. The official LEP was also analysed at the macro-level, as it appears in the LEP documents. The LEP's implementation, or the covert policy, was analysed at meso- and micro-levels through curriculum contents and educational statistics.

Critical LP research and ethnographic studies combined “offer an important balance between structure and agency” (Johnson 2013; Johnson and Ricento 2015). The historical–structural analysis in Article I forms the basis for the qualitative fieldwork in the other articles.

#### 4.4.2 Article II

Article II (Norro 2021) focuses on teachers' beliefs. Eliciting these beliefs through questionnaires and less formal interviews may yield somewhat different results (Borg 2006, 141). The more formal the elicitation technique, the more the answers reflect their perceptions about how things “should be”. Decontextualised statements and short interviews have shortcomings (Borg 2018, 88–89), which this study intended to compensate for by combining the methods.

First, a descriptive analysis of the questionnaire data was made, calculating the frequencies in absolute figures and percentages. Then, comparisons were made between variables such as work experience, qualification to teach in the mother tongue, and the grades taught, and the probabilities were tested using Fisher's exact test (Hess and Hess 2017, 878–79; Norro 2021). When the responses to two questions were compared, Bowker's test was used to calculate the symmetry of disagreement between them (Norro 2021).

The interview data were analysed thematically (Braun and Clarke 2006), starting with an initial open coding. Then, themes linked with teachers' perceptions about the LEP were identified and analysed to construct the meaning they give to them and reveal the underlying beliefs (Warren and Karner 2005, 191–93; Taylor et al. 2016, 172).

The results of the two datasets were triangulated to validate and interpret the data (Creswell and Plano Clark 2007, 135) find inconsistencies and similarities between them (Huberman and Miles 1994, 438), and compare them with the research literature.

#### 4.4.3 Article III

In Article III (Norro 2022c), qualitative content analysis was conducted to analyse and interpret the interview and classroom observation data, which is considered an appropriate method for analysing rich data requiring interpretation (Schreier 2012). The coding frame was built deductively to allow triangulation with the questionnaire responses, using the questionnaire statements as theory-driven categories. The coding frame was then completed by adding categories emerging from the interviews and observations as data-driven categories (Schreier 2012). All occurrences or mentions of multilingual practices in the observation notes or interview transcriptions were coded in a pre-existing category or added as a data-driven new category or sub-category (Norro 2022c). The main coding was done twice, with a time lapse of ten days between codings, to assess its consistency (Schreier 2012), with the percentage of agreement between the two rounds being 92% (Norro 2022c). The differing coding units were then revised to attain the final coding.

The frequencies of the questionnaire responses were tabulated using absolute figures and percentages to triangulate them with the interview and observation data (Norro 2022c), to increase the validity of the research and to compare and contrast the results (Creswell and Plano Clark 2007). The open ended-question (2.r) was analysed qualitatively. As the sample size was too small ( $N=37$ ), a factor analysis could not be made (Tabachnick and Fidell 1983, 379), and the different practices were grouped thematically, based on the qualitative analysis.

#### 4.4.4 Article IV

Article IV (Norro 2022b) also used mixed methods. The questionnaire responses were analysed quantitatively, except for open-ended questions (Norro 2022b). The response options *often/sometimes/never* to the 17 statements about teaching practices (see Appendix 3, Part II, question 2.a-q) were given the values of 1 (never), 2 (sometimes) and 3 (often), and mean scores and standard deviations were calculated for each statement (Norro 2022b). The closer the mean score was to 1, the less the respondents used the practice. If the mean score was between 2 and 3, they used it sometimes or often.

As the sample size ( $N=140$ ) was large enough (cf. Tabachnick and Fidell 1983, 379), a factor analysis was conducted to group the practices. The estimation method used for the factor analysis was maximum likelihood; the rotation method was the oblimin method. If rotated factor loading was above 0.4 and the final communality was above 0.25 the items were taken into the final phase (Norro 2022b). Comparisons between different background factors and language practices were made to discover which variables were related. Fisher's exact test (Hess and Hess 2017, 878–79) evaluated the association between two categorical variables. The association was assumed to be statistically significant if  $p<0.05$ . When several variables were compared simultaneously, the Bonferroni correction (Tasdan and Yeniay 2018, 256) was used to overcome the multiple comparison problem (Norro 2022b).

Qualitative content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon 2005; Elo and Kyngäs 2008; Schreier 2012) was used to analyse the interviews (individual interviews and focus group discussions). The research questions guided the selection of relevant parts of the data (Schreier 2012, 81). Then, a thematic criterion was used to determine the units of coding (Schreier 2012, 136), meaning a passage about a certain topic was considered a unit of coding. The coding frame was built mainly inductively (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). Categories were formed after an initial open coding (Elo and Kyngäs 2008, 109–10). The categories were then grouped to form a coding frame. The main coding was done using the coding frame after being adjusted to fit all the data (Norro 2022b). A second round of coding was made after ten days to evaluate the reliability and stability of the analysis, and the percentage of agreement (90%) (Norro 2022b) was calculated between the two rounds of coding (Schreier 2012, 203–4). Some subcategories were still adjusted to attain the final coding.

The classroom observation field notes were submitted to qualitative content analysis to triangulate the data. The categories found in the factor analysis of the questionnaire data were used as a theory-driven coding frame, which was completed by data-driven subcategories. The coding was again done twice, with a time lapse of ten days to assess the coding's consistency and reliability. The percentage of agreement between the two rounds of coding was 93%, and the final coding was

made after adjustments (Norro 2022b). The content analysis's results were then tabulated to compare the observed practices in the two regions and between different subjects and then triangulate them with the analysis of the questionnaire and interview data.

#### 4.4.5 Article V

Article V (Norro 2023) used similar analysis methods as described above. Article V treated teachers' LP beliefs and the underlying societal language ideologies. Therefore, questionnaire and interview data were analysed to discover their beliefs (Borg 2006; 2018, cf. Section 4.3.2). The questionnaire responses were analysed quantitatively, except for the open-ended question about the reasons for preferring a certain MoI, which was analysed qualitatively. Teachers' LP beliefs were compared to their own MoI preferences; the associations were evaluated using Fisher's exact test (Hess and Hess 2017, 878–79).

The individual interviews and focus group discussions were again analysed as one dataset, using qualitative content analysis (Elo and Kyngäs 2008; Hsieh and Shannon 2005; Schreier 2012). After an initial inductive coding (Hsieh and Shannon 2005; Elo and Kyngäs 2008), categories were formed and developed into a coding frame. After ten days, the researcher conducted a second round of coding (the percentage of agreement being 90%) to evaluate the coding's stability and reliability (Schreier 2012, 203–4); some adjustments were made before the final coding. The ideologies (see discussion in Section 2) that were found to underlie teachers' beliefs were categorised according to whether they represented monolingual and hierarchical ideologies (emphasising the importance of one uniting ex-colonial language for internationalisation and wider communication) or whether they aligned more to the notion of decolonisation. The latter included a preference for mother tongue instruction, including assessment policies, and cultural and linguistic heritage preservation.

Section 5 presents the results. Tables present the results of the quantitative analyses, although some cases (especially Article III) were combined with the results of the qualitative analyses. The results of the qualitative analyses are mostly presented in continuous text.

# 5 Results

This section presents the main results of the original publications. The research aims (see Section 1.2) were to explore the following:

- 1) what factors and language ideologies have affected the Namibian LEP
- 2) what beliefs Namibian teachers have about LEP implementation and the MoI
- 3) what language ideologies underlie teachers' beliefs
- 4) what classroom practices teachers have.

**Table 6.** Foci of the articles.

	Development of the LP	Language ideologies	Teachers' beliefs	Teachers' practices
Article I	X	X		
Article II			X	
Article III				X
Article IV		X		X
Article V		X	X	

Table 6 shows each article's focus. Sections 5.1–5.5 present the results. The presentation follows the themes compiled in Table 6, and Section 5.6 summarises the results.

## 5.1 Results of Article I

*Article I: Factors affecting language policy choices in the multilingual context of Namibia: English as the official language and medium of instruction*

Article I (Norro 2022a) explores the factors that led to choosing English as the only official language and its implications for LEP. The historical–structural analysis

shows that historical factors such as the existence of an English-speaking elite when preparing for independence and the desire to reject Afrikaans from its power position explain why a formerly unknown language was chosen. Opposing ideologies affect the LP and planning processes, and they also affect teachers' beliefs and practices.

As Section 2 discussed, two conflicting ideologies have affected LP and planning in most postcolonial African countries. Decolonisation ideology has induced using indigenous languages in education and other public domains, whereas internationalisation has led to keeping the ex-colonial language(s) as an official language(s), main MoI and virtually the only legitimate language in public domains (Kamwangamalu 2013), placing it on top of the language hierarchy pyramid (Weber and Horner 2012). The latter has been rationalised to promote access to international collaboration and commerce and, consequently, foster economic development and wealth.

One of the most powerful historical factors that affected language planning for an independent Namibia was SWAPO officials collaborating with the UN and other international stakeholders, acquainting them with English as a working language and investing English with the character of a language of liberation. This led to reversing the language hierarchy pyramid and removing Afrikaans, a language closely associated with the colonial apartheid policy, from its former top position. As an English-speaking elite had already been formed, this language change was a structural factor favouring legitimating English as the only official language, thus establishing a new language-based means of controlling access to political and economic power. Regarding language planning, especially the choice of Namibia's official language, historical and structural factors have arguably stemmed mainly from the internationalisation ideology.

Choosing the official language directly and simultaneously affected the acquisition planning (cf. Tollefson and Tsui 2018) and LEP formulation. The policy makers' intention to make future Namibians proficient in the new official language that was not formerly spoken in the country mainly influenced the choice of the MoI. However, the official education policy includes promoting and preserving of indigenous languages and cultures (MoEC 1993; AfriLa 2003; NCBE 2016). Therefore, the two opposing ideologies that have framed linguistic diversity in education (Liddicoat and Taylor-Leech 2015) have influenced Namibia's educational and LP processes. Officially, the ideology of inclusion by offering equal access to education has been considered Namibia's dominant ideology in education since the country's independence (MoEC 1993b). However, the LEP has not fully supported its aims, for by stipulating English as the main MoI, it has reduced epistemic access to most of the pupils.

Framing linguistic diversity and multilingualism within the inclusive education paradigm would require instruction in languages the pupils understand (Liddicoat

and Taylor-Leech 2015, 1–2); attempts at this direction have been made in Namibia by formulating an LEP stipulating mother tongue instruction in junior primary (MoEC 1993; AfriLa 2003). However, restricting mother tongue instruction to the early years of schooling has however been shown to be insufficient for pupils to acquire academic language proficiency (Cummins 2013). The Namibian LEP can be characterised as a subtractive, early-exit transitional model (Wolfaardt 2005). Arguably, the early transition does not allow pupils to acquire sufficient proficiency in English, nor does it support the pupils’ multilingual identities. Also, practically 25% of the pupils in Grades 1–3 study in schools offering only English as the MoI even in junior primary (EMIS 2019), mostly due to parents’ demand for English medium instruction for their children.

Article I (Norro 2022a) discusses the current policy’s educational outcomes, referring to Harris (2011), who states that learners in Grades 4–7 in her sample had difficulties making whole sentences in English, and many had repeated grades. Similarly, Ola-Busari (2014, 229–30) highlights that between 2008 and 2014, only 33% of the students met the requirements for tertiary education. Education Statistics (2019) also show that the *Namibian Senior Secondary Certificate Ordinary (NSSCO)* examination results at the end of Grade 11 were higher for first languages that are assessed in the subject language than for subjects assessed in English (see Table 7).

**Table 7.** NSSCO results in 2019 (based on EMIS 2019).

<b>1st language subjects</b>	<b>Average score</b>	<b>Subjects assessed in English</b>	<b>Average score</b>
Afrikaans	81.2%	Biology	34.2%
English	92.5%	Geography	28.4%
Khoekhoegowab	69.8%	Physical science	38.5%
Oshikwanyama	82%	History	23.1%
Oshindonga	56.2%	Mathematics	41%
Otjiherero	82.4%		
Rumanyo	92.7%		
Thimbukushu	89.1%		

The timeline of the LEP’s development in independent Namibia in Article I (Norro 2022a) shows it has remained unchanged. Some attempts at modifying it have been made, e.g. in 2003, when studying at least two languages was made obligatory and the schools were obliged to offer the pupils the possibility of studying their mother tongue up to Grade 12 (AfriLa 2003). Minister Namwandi’s proposition of

extending mother tongue instruction until Grade 5 in 2014 was another attempt at reinforcing the role of local languages in education (Haidula 2014), but the law was never passed.

To summarise, despite its twofold objective of promoting the indigenous languages and providing the citizens with proficiency in English, the LEP in Namibia is oriented more towards English as the only official MoI from Grade 4 onwards. As assessment occurs in English only, except for the language subjects, such has become a major obstacle to academic achievement for many (cf. Clegg and Simpson 2016). Although providing all citizens access to education has been stated as the prevailing educational ideology, the LP has been more oriented towards making them proficient in the official language than ensuring epistemic access to all regardless of their linguistic repertoires. Historical and structural factors that affected the choice of the official language and, consequently, the LEP, were favourable for English-oriented policies, and changing it has proved very difficult.

Language education policies are implemented at various levels, and teachers may be considered the grassroots implementers who eventually decide what languages are used in classrooms. The next section discusses their beliefs about LP implementation and the MoI's impact.

## 5.2 Teachers' beliefs in Articles II and V

*Article II: Namibian Teachers' Beliefs about Medium of Instruction and Language Education Policy Implementation*

*Article V: "You can be fluent in English but empty-headed." Language ideologies underlying Namibian primary school teachers' beliefs*

Teachers' beliefs about the LEP, its implementation and the MoI were explored in Articles II (Norro 2021) and V (Norro 2023); this section presents these results. Section 4.3 explained that data collection was interrupted in 2020 and continued in 2021. Therefore, Article III's results are based on the data collected in 2020 in Khomas, whereas Article V is based on the entire data. The data Article V used was collected in Khomas and Oshana, allowing comparisons between them. Article V also discusses the societal language ideologies behind teachers' beliefs, which Section 5.5 discusses.

The questionnaire used in data collection, contained statements about LEP issues and about the MoI's impact. Table 8 presents teachers' responses (based on Norro 2021 and Norro 2023).

**Table 8.** Questionnaire responses about the LEP.

Statement (Questionnaire)	I AGREE		I DISAGREE		I DON'T KNOW	
	Article II	Article V	Article II	Article V	Article II	Article V
1.a) Learners learn best when they are taught in their home language.	81%	74%	14%	18%	6%	7%
1.b) English should be the medium of instruction from Grade 1.	46%	61%	40%	31%	14%	7%
1.c) Instruction in the home language should be extended beyond Grade 3.	47%	46%	36%	40%	17%	14%
1.d) Both English and the home languages should be used as medium of instruction throughout the primary cycle (Grades 1–7).	57%	63%	32%	26%	11%	11%
1.e) The learning outcomes do not depend on the language of instruction. Other factors are more decisive.	35%	45%	29%	30%	38%	25%
1.f) My learners have difficulties in understanding when they are taught in English.	30%	31%	55%	56%	14%	14%
1.g) The existence of many languages in Namibia is a problem.	43%	40%	49%	44%	9%	16%
1.h) Every child has the right to be educated in his/her own language.	67%	68%	19%	17%	14%	15%
1.i) The many different languages of Namibia are a resource in education.	40%	56%	26%	21%	34%	23%

The figures in Table 8 show that teachers' beliefs in the smaller data (Article II) are consistent with the larger data (Article V). The only exception is the proportion of those who believe English should be the MoI from the beginning. In the smaller data, 46% of the respondents agreed with the statement; in the larger data, well over half (61%) did. No clear factor could explain the difference except the difference in sample size. Therefore, if otherwise unmentioned, both articles' results are discussed.

The questionnaire data suggest a preference for English as the MoI (cf. Iipinge and Banda 2020). This may be seen in teachers' personal preferences and reservations regarding extending mother tongue instruction to senior primary. Only about half (47/46%) believed mother tongue instruction should be extended beyond Grade 3. When asked about their personal preferences for a MoI, 70/69% responded they prefer teaching in English versus 30/25% who prefer the home language (6% of the respondents in Article V preferred both).

In Article V, teachers' MoI preferences were compared to their LP beliefs. The analysis showed that 94% of those who preferred teaching in home language believed pupils learn best in the home language. However, 65% of those who prefer teaching in English believe learning is more efficient in the home language. Nevertheless, most (70%) thought English should be the MoI from the beginning, whereas only 36% of those who prefer teaching in the home language did ( $p=0,003$ ). Those preferring to teach in the home language do so in junior primary or as subject teachers and are qualified for it, which may partially explain the differences in their beliefs.

Reasons for preferring English as the MoI that were responses to the open-ended questions seemed to align with the official policy and reflect the monolingual language ideology stressing English's role as a unifying language in the multilingual society. These reasons included practical concerns such as the difficulties of using languages other than English (LOTE) in multilingual groups and the amount of material in English compared to local languages. However, the most common reason was English's status as the country's official language and the LP's stipulating English as the MoI. Teachers seemed to align with the hierarchical language ideology that gives English legitimacy over other languages in Namibia.

Moreover, one of the most important reasons for preferring English was that the respondents had themselves been taught in it, corroborating the results of previous research about teachers' experiences as students strongly affecting their beliefs and practices (Phipps and Borg 2009; Borg 2018). Those who preferred teaching in the home language thought it easier to explain and give examples in the home language, aligning with Afitska et al. (2013), who argue that teachers explain concepts more clearly in their home language. According to these teachers, pupils understand instruction better in their home language. However, about half of the respondents believed their pupils did not have difficulties understanding the instruction in English, and about a third considered other factors more important than the language issue. This deviates from e.g. Kinyaduka and Kiwara's (2013) results from Kenya, according to which 80% of the teachers in their sample thought learning in English negatively affected their students' outcomes. The difference might be partly due to a misinterpretation of pupils' academic language proficiency (Cummins 2013) by the teachers in my study. Pupils may seem fluent in casual communication, but struggle to understand a more conceptual language. Kinyaduka and Kiwara's study was conducted in secondary schools, which may cause the differences in the results. At the time, instruction in primary schools in Kenya was made exclusively in Kiswahili, with English taught as a subject from Grade 3. Suddenly switching to the English medium occurred in secondary school (Akinyi Obondo 2008) when the students' English proficiency did not allow them to understand the instruction.

Interestingly, although most (81/74%) of the respondents believed pupils learn best in their own language, and 67/68% believed receiving instruction in the mother tongue is a linguistic right, only about half thought mother tongue instruction should be extended to senior primary. Their pedagogical knowledge about the benefits of mother tongue instruction did not transpire in their opinions about the LEP. The English-oriented teaching context may affect teachers' beliefs. Although they know of the pedagogical advantages of mother tongue instruction, they are reluctant to extend it because of society's attitudes. They might also think they are powerless to change the policy and align with it instead. However, over half the respondents believed a multilingual option would be beneficial.

There was a difference between the questionnaire responses that better aligned with the official policy and the interviews that better reflected the society's attitudes. The interviews in Article II suggested the current system causes challenges during the transition, and pupils struggle with reading and writing despite their relatively good oral English proficiency.

**Ex. 1** Some learners have difficulties in writing and reading, there is a problem. ... They can speak the language very well ... The problem is with reading and writing ... But I cannot say they're ... the same like they're participating in their mother tongue. (K, S2, 2)

In Excerpt 1 (Norro 2021), the teacher said the pupils speak English fluently, although they do not participate in the lessons quite as easily in English as in their mother tongue; however, they experience problems with reading and writing, seemingly revealing that pupils' academic language proficiency is not on a level comparable to their basic communication skills (cf. Cummins 2013).

The interviews mentioned some other issues concerning the LP implementation.

**Ex. 2** It's multicultural, so English is actually the only effective language we can cater for, for example I have almost eight different tribes of kids in my class. (K, FGD 1, P2)

**Ex. 3** We can't just choose one language that needs to be taught here, then the other (students) will also need to go, to be taught that language. (K, FGD 1, P1)

**Ex. 4** Personally, I think ... we still maybe need many years to ... get there. Because first of all, we don't even have the teachers. The capacity is not there, the it's ... just, teaching materials are not there. (K, FGD 1, P3)

Excerpts 2, 3 and 4 show (Norro 2021) that LEP implementation, especially regarding mother tongue instruction, was considered challenging because of multilingual groups, pupils who must take the predominant local language that is not their mother tongue and the lack of material and human resources.

Thus, teachers' experiences as students, the availability of materials and other practical constraints, and the official language policies may affect teachers' beliefs more than their pedagogical knowledge of the benefits of mother tongue instruction.

## 5.3 Results of Article III

### Article III: *Namibian teachers' practices in a multilingual context*

Article III (Norro 2022c) explored teachers' classroom practices through their reports in the questionnaire, interviews, and classroom observations. Multilingual teaching practices from different bi- and multilingual pedagogies were used for designing the questionnaire for data collection and the coding frame for the analysis, as Section 4 explained. The analysis divided teachers' practices into four categories: language choice, material scaffolds, social strategies and linguistic scaffolds. *Language choice* encompasses using LOTE as a pedagogical strategy and spontaneous code-switching. *Material scaffolding* is meant using textual and visual support material. *Social strategies* include affective strategies, such as greetings or other basic phrases in pupils' home languages to make them feel comfortable or make their home languages visible in class in, e.g. posters. Translation strategies are also included. *Linguistic scaffolds* include helping pupils reformulate their utterances and practising pronunciation, with teachers facilitating explicit vocabulary teaching and using and accepting non-standard or simple language.

### 5.3.1 Teachers' self-reported practices

The results of the analysis are presented for each category in Tables 9–12 (Norro 2022c), combining the questionnaire responses and the strategies' occurrences in the interviews, which are illustrated by excerpts from the interviews. The classroom observation data analysis follows the questionnaire and interviews. The occurrences of the *Language choice* strategies are first presented in Table 9 (Norro 2022c).

**Table 9.** Language choice.

Strategies	INTERVIEWS	QUESTIONNAIRE			
	References	Often	Sometimes	Never	N
<b>I Language choice</b>					
<b>1. Pedagogical use of LOTE</b>					
1.1. Introducing a new topic in the home language	0	4% (1)	4% (1)	92% (22)	24
1.2. Explaining core terms in the home language	4	12% (3)	27% (7)	62% (16)	26
1.3. Allowing the use of home languages in group work	0	4% (1)	33% (9)	63% (17)	27
1.4. Accepting the use of other languages or mixing codes in class	1	12% (3)	27% (7)	62% (16)	26
1.5. Accepting the use of other languages in assessments	0	0	20% (5)	80% (20)	25
<b>2. Code-switching</b>					
2.1. Relative to content teaching	5	15% (4)	48% (13)	37% (19)	27
2.2. Relative to classroom management	0				
2.3. Outside the classroom	5				
2.4. Not accepting the use of LOTE	9				

According to the questionnaire and interviews, relatively little pedagogical use of LOTE occurred in class, as Table 9 shows. Most of the questionnaire respondents (62%) did not accept using LOTE in class, group work (63%), or assessments (80%), and did not explain in LOTE (62%). However, according to the interviews, home languages were used to explain concepts.

**Ex. 5** You can find them in a class maybe Otjherero and English, in Otjherero and Oshindonga or Kkg and Oshindonga, so you can hardly use your mother tongue ... Or divert ... So if I have an Oshindonga and then they do not understand then I can speak Oshindonga, then I can ... explain in Oshindonga ... But like for (other) cases it's quite difficult ... So we stick to English. (K, FGD 2, P2)

Some teachers said they explain in different languages present in the classroom. However, others felt that using their home language in a multilingual classroom was problematic, as Excerpt 5 shows. The reasons were the equal treatment of pupils from different language backgrounds and that using LOTE considered impossible in

a multilingual environment if the teacher did not know the pupils' languages. Not accepting using of LOTE arose nine times in the interviews and twice in the open-ended questions. Unlike the pedagogical use of LOTE, spontaneous code-switching occurred in class; LOTE were used outside the classroom amongst pupils, between school staff and pupils, in support sessions, and parents' meetings.

Material scaffolding included all use of textual or visual material to scaffold learning. Table 10 presents the distribution of material scaffolding strategies (Norro 2022c).

**Table 10.** Material scaffolding.

Strategies	INTERVIEWS	QUESTIONNAIRE			
	References	Often	Sometimes	Never	N
<b>II Material scaffolding</b>					
<b>1. Textual support</b>					
1.1. Text editing	0	27% (7)	38% (10)	35% (9)	26
1.2. Handouts with some language learners will need	0	25% (6)	29% (7)	46% (11)	24
1.3. Use of vocabularies and other multilingual material	1	63% (15)	21% (5)	17% (4)	24
<b>2. Visual support</b>					
2.1. Relative to content teaching	10	73% (19)	23% (6)	4% (1)	26
2.2. Instructions, model, correction	0				

Regarding material scaffolding, textual support was little used, whereas visual support was the most frequently used scaffolding strategy. Textual strategies such as editing English texts, providing handouts with language help, and using vocabularies and other multilingual material were unmentioned in the interviews. However, half the questionnaire respondents said they used them. However, as many as a third of the respondents reported never editing texts. Moreover, almost half never provided handouts with language help. On the contrary, virtually all questionnaire respondents used visual support at least sometimes, and several interviewees mentioned using them. A similar tendency was observed in Ugandan classrooms by Altinyelken (2010); Mahan et al. (2018) noted the differences between textual and visual support in CLIL classes in Norway.

Social strategies included affective and translation strategies. Table 11 shows their distribution (Norro 2022c).

**Table 11.** Social strategies.

Strategies	INTERVIEWS	QUESTIONNAIRE			
	References	Often	Sometimes	Never	N
<b>III Social strategies</b>					
<b>1. Affective strategies</b>					
1.1. Making learners home languages visible in class	0	8% (2)	8% (2)	85% (22)	26
1.2. Using greetings, etc., in learners' home languages	0	11% (3)	33% (9)	56% (15)	27
<b>2. Translation strategies</b>					
2.1. Peer assistance (peer translation, special role assignment)	7	25% (6)	63% (15)	13% (3)	24
2.1. Translation (using a third party to translate)	6				

Affective strategies – making pupils' home languages visible in class or using greetings and other formulaic phrases in pupils' home languages to make them feel comfortable – were little used. Conversely, translation strategies were used frequently. Teachers reported asking some pupils to translate or explain the lesson to their less proficient peers, or call a colleague, or send a pupil to get a translation of a difficult passage or concept.

**Ex. 6** Then you can try to call in your colleagues so they can er translate and then you understand that translation. (K, S2, 3)

**Ex. 7** You can give an example, a learner that you think, this one understand better, so they will talk in their language to explain for others on the chalkboard. (K, S2, 3)

**Ex. 8** Communication was a problem so most of the times I would ask a learner to translate in the mother tongue what I just said and towards the end of the year the learner opened up and she was much more vocal and could express herself. (K, FGD2, P1)

Teachers reported leveraging multilingualism amongst the school staff and pupils, as Excerpt 6 shows. Peer assistance was used regularly, as in Excerpt 7, and in cases when a new pupil from a rural school without any knowledge of English was enrolled. A common strategy was placing the newcomer with someone from the same language group who would then translate and help the new pupil understand the lesson's instructions and contents, as Excerpt 8 described (Norro 2022c).

Altinyelken (2010) reported a similar strategy for Ugandan classrooms, which proved effective, the new pupils acquired basic English communication skills by the end of the school year.

Linguistic scaffolds included helping pupils reformulate their utterances in English, practicing pronunciation, incorporating explicit vocabulary teaching, and accepting and using non-standard or simplified language. Table 12 presents their distribution (Norro 2022c).

**Table 12.** Linguistic scaffolds.

Strategies	INTERVIEWS	QUESTIONNAIRE			
	References	Often	Sometimes	Never	N
<b>IV Linguistic scaffolds</b>					
1. Teacher helps learners correct their utterances by providing prompts	0	65% (17)	35% (9)	0	26
2. Teacher reformulates learners' utterances	0	54% (14)	31% (8)	15% (4)	26
3. Practicing pronunciation	0				
4. Vocabulary teaching	1				
5. Accepting non-standard language	0				
6. Using simple language	1				

According to the questionnaire, most of the teachers used linguistic scaffolds, especially when reformulating pupils' utterances or helping learners correct them by providing prompts. The interviews mentioned teaching difficult words in isolation by, e.g. using flash cards and simple language.

Regarding teachers' self-reported practices, it may be concluded that relatively little pre-planned pedagogical use of LOTE was done, although several teachers mention explaining concepts in pupils' home languages in class. The pedagogical use of LOTE seemed rather spontaneous and reactive. Translation strategies were leveraged more efficiently, as well as visual support that could be made more multilingual by introducing, e.g. word walls in different languages.

There was some discrepancy between teachers' self-reported practices described above, and their observed practices. Many respondents mentioned learner-centred pedagogies and group work in the open-ended question about their best practices. However, group work was observed little, although repetition was used extensively. Section 5.3.2 discusses teachers' observed practices.

### 5.3.2 Teachers' observed practices

The pedagogical use of LOTE was very little observed, which aligned with the self-reported practices, although teachers said in the interviews that they frequently explained concepts in the home language. However, the observer's presence may have affected their using LOTE in the classroom. Spontaneous code-switching occurred more, relative to teaching the content (10 events) or to classroom management (14). As most of the spontaneous code-switching occurrences were observed in Afrikaans lessons, it seemed occur more naturally in language lessons or relative to classroom management (cf. Bunyi 2005). Teachers easily switched to another language when pupils entered the classroom sent by another teacher on an errand. Three instances when the teacher denied using LOTE were observed.

Employing textual support was observed only in ESL lessons where the teacher gave pupils vocabularies to prepare and support listening comprehension tasks. Instead, visual support was frequently observed, corroborating its frequent use, which the teachers reported in the questionnaire and interviews. Pupils' home languages were not made visible except in classrooms where these languages were taught as subjects.

Peer translation was observed only once when the teacher asked pupils to translate her instructions for another pupil in their home language. Teachers providing prompts for pupils to correct their utterances and rehearsing pronunciation were observed only in Afrikaans SL lessons; explicit vocabulary teaching was mostly in ESL lessons. However, subject-specific terminology was taught in mathematics, social studies and arts.

In sum, some discrepancies between teachers' self-reported and observed practices were evident. The frequency of spontaneous code-switching and the abundance of visual support was however an exception, as they were reported by the teachers and observed in lessons.

Article IV also explored teachers' classroom practices, which Section 5.4 discusses.

## 5.4 Results of Article IV

*Article IV: Language practices in Namibian primary schools*

Article IV explored classroom practices (Norro 2022b), regarding the societal language ideologies shaping them. The language practices this section discusses include teachers' preferences for a certain MoI. Section 5.2 already discussed these practices related to teachers' beliefs. This section discusses them from a practice perspective, comparing them to factors such as teachers' qualifications for mother

tongue instruction, the subject they teach and the region's degree of linguistic diversity. This article's data comes from two regions – Khomas and Oshana – making comparing them possible.

#### 5.4.1 Teachers' medium of instruction preferences

Various factors related to teachers' MoI preferences, such as their professional qualifications, the subject they teach, and the degree of linguistic diversity in the groups. Regarding their professional qualifications, over half the questionnaire respondents (60%) were qualified to teach in the home language. However, 75% of all respondents preferred teaching in English (Norro 2022b). When the qualified and non-qualified were compared, almost all (98%) of those unqualified to teach in the home language preferred teaching in English. Half (49%) in the other group preferred teaching in English, almost half (41%) in the home language, and 10% in both (Norro 2022b). Being qualified to teach in the home language can be inferred to increase the preference for teaching in it, although not automatically, as half still preferred English.

There were also differences amongst teachers of various subjects. Class teachers and language teachers (L1 and L2 included) preferred teaching in the home languages the most, which is understandable, as many teach in the home language.

**Ex. 9** I teach math and science, yeah I find it difficult sometimes when I'm teaching a topic and the learners don't understand it, and I I as a teacher don't have the right words in my mother tongue to ex-/ to tell the learners so that they can understand what I'm trying to teach them, so I'm just forced to teach in English. (O, FGD1, P1)

Mathematics and natural science teachers constituted the group that preferred the most teaching in English (94%). For them, one important issue impeding using LOTE in lessons was the lack of subject-specific terminology in the indigenous languages, as the interviews mentioned (see Excerpt 9; Norro 2022b). Kaphesi (2003, 277) reported the same problem regarding Malawian teachers who struggled to find the corresponding terminology between Chichewa and English. However, it diverts somewhat from Ashikuti (2019), where 65.5% of the respondents believed mathematics and environmental studies could be taught in indigenous languages.

Table 13 shows an interesting tendency was observed regarding the degree of linguistic variety and teachers' MoI preferences.

**Table 13.** Number of pupils' home languages related to teachers' language preferences.

Number of home languages	BOTH	ENGLISH	HOME LANGUAGE	TOTAL
<b>1</b>	2% (1)	60% (28)	38% (18)	47
<b>2 or 3</b>	8% (4)	65% (32)	27% (13)	49
<b>More than 3</b>	8% (3)	85% (34)	8% (3)	40
<b>Total</b>	6% (8)	69% (94)	25% (34)	<i>N</i> = 136
<b>Fisher's exact test</b> $p = 0.007$				

Table 13 (Norro 2022b) shows that the more the diversity of pupils' home languages increased, the more teachers preferred teaching in English. When there was only one major language, 60% preferred English. When the number of languages was two or three, 65% preferred English, when there were more than three languages, 85% preferred teaching in English ( $p=0.007$ ) (Norro 2022b), aligning with Ipinge and Banda (2020) and my interview data that show teachers' reluctance to use LOTE in multilingual groups.

Regarding teachers' MoI preferences related to practice, being qualified for teaching in the home language may explain the increased preference for teaching in them. Conversely, factors related to higher preferences for English included the lack of appropriate vocabulary in the home languages, especially in mathematics and natural sciences, and a high degree of linguistic diversity in class.

## 5.4.2 Teachers' self-reported classroom practices

Teachers' classroom practices were explored with the same questions in the questionnaire as in Article III. For the analysis in Article IV, a factor analysis was conducted to interpret the questionnaire data within a language ideological framework (see Table 14; Norro 2022b). As the questionnaire data in Article III was rather limited ( $N=37$ ), a factor analysis could not be made, and the grouping of the items was based on thematic criteria. Moreover, the analysis in Article III combined the questionnaire, interview, and observation data, thus containing some items the questionnaire did not ask. However, the two factors found in the analysis in Article IV correspond to a large part of the categories in Article III in that factor 1 contains items from categories I (language choice) and III (social strategies), and factor 2 from categories II (material scaffolding meaning visual support) and IV (linguistic scaffolds). Some items were excluded because of their too low final communality estimation ( $<0.25$ ). Amongst them was peer translation, discussed later in this section because of its frequent occurrence in the questionnaire responses and interview data.

**Table 14.** Teachers' classroom practices (Norro 2022b).

<b>Factor 1 Multilingual practices</b>	MEAN SCORE	STANDARD DEVIATION	FACTOR LOADING	COMMUNALITY
I introduce a new topic in home language.	1.4	0.7	0.85	0.69
I let the learners use their home languages when doing group work.	1.6	0.7	0.74	0.54
I explain the core terms and concepts in the learners' home language.	1.9	0.8	0.69	0.46
I use some words, e.g. greetings, in the learners' home languages in class to make them feel comfortable.	1.9	0.8	0.68	0.49
I accept that learners use languages other than English in assessments.	1.4	0.6	0.55	0.29
I accept that learners use their home languages or mix codes in class.	1.9	0.7	0.53	0.33
I make the learners' home languages visible in class (e.g. posters / word walls / drawings).	1.8	0.9	0.48	0.25
I switch the language if I notice that the learners do not understand.	2.1	0.6	0.46	0.32
<b>Factor 2 Monolingual practices</b>				
I help learners correct their oral utterances by asking them to repeat and by providing clues to the correct form.	2.7	0.5	0.65	0.48
I use charts, pictures, drawings, and other visual support.	2.7	0.5	0.55	0.29
I reformulate learners' erroneous utterances in correct form.	2.6	0.6	0.52	0.32
I split new content into smaller chunks.	2.4	0.6	0.51	0.27

The two factors in the factor analysis were named multilingual (factor 1) and monolingual (factor 2). Multilingual practices are based on using LOTE to scaffold learning (cf. category I in Article III) or make learners feel more comfortable by making their home languages visible or hearable in class (cf. category III). Monolingual practices include helping learners correct their English utterances by prompts or reformulating them (cf. category IV), providing visual support (cf. category II) and splitting the content into smaller chunks.

Monolingual practices were used more (mean scores between 2.4 and 2.7) than multilingual practices (mean scores between 1.4 and 2.1), probably because they are common scaffolding strategies in any context. However, the multilingual strategies' lower frequency may indicate the teachers' reluctance to use them because the

official LEP does not stipulate them, except for allowing code-switching when the pupils must understand the central concepts.

Switching language, explaining in the home languages and making learners' home languages visible were used more in Oshana than Khomas (see Table 15; Norro 2022b).

**Table 15.** Language practices in class according to region.

2 a) I switch the language if I notice that the learners do not understand.

Region	Often	Sometimes	Never	Total
Khomas	26% (18)	49% (34)	25% (17)	69
Oshana	20% (14)	76% (53)	4% (3)	70
<b>Total</b>				<i>N</i> = 139
<b>Fisher's exact test</b>				0.0005

2 d) I explain the core terms and concepts in the learners' home language.

Region	Often	Sometimes	Never	Total
Khomas	22% (15)	34% (23)	43% (29)	67
Oshana	22% (15)	62% (43)	16% (11)	69
<b>Total</b>				<i>N</i> = 136
<b>Fisher's exact test</b>				0.0007

2 h) I make the learners' home languages visible in class (e.g. posters / word walls / drawings)

Region	Often	Sometimes	Never	Total
Khomas	19% (13)	9% (6)	72% (48)	67
Oshana	41% (28)	22% (15)	37% (25)	68
<b>Total</b>				<i>N</i> = 135
<b>Fisher's exact test</b>				0.0002

This is probably due to the smaller diversity of languages in Oshana, as teachers feel uncomfortable using LOTE in highly multilingual groups. However, negotiation of meanings in different languages or explanations in a predominant local language taught in the school may occur, as Excerpt 10 shows (Norro 2022b).

**Ex. 10** Like in the Afrikaans class now ... so when you're teaching it you need to go back. Okay, what do you call, you translate now, what do you call it in English? What do you call this type of thing in English? If they know, there are learners that maybe know in English, you go back to English, and if they don't know it in English, then you go to their mother tongue. What do you call

it in your mother tongue ... just to bring the idea to the learner, for the learner to get the picture ... then you go to Afrikaans, so you first go to their mother tongue, to English, and then to Afrikaans. (K, FGD1, P1)

Even in multilingual groups, negotiating the meaning may be done by leveraging the different linguistic repertoires to finally reach an understanding of the concept. As Excerpt 10 shows, learners are actively involved in this process.

Teachers in Oshana made learners' home languages visible in class more often than in Khomas ( $p=0.0002$ , see Table 16). This practice is considered more appropriate in a context with less linguistic diversity. There was also a difference in using LOTE between senior primary and junior primary where they were used more often.

**Ex. 11** In junior primary, we use it most of the time. Especially the first three to four months ... like in my class I try to use most languages that I can speak. (K, FGD1, P2)

In junior primary, where the learners' proficiency in English is usually lower than later on, LOTE were used more than in senior primary, even if the school's LP stipulated English as the MoI like in Excerpt 11 (Norro 2022b). Although using the home languages in Grade 4 is still allowed "in a supportive role" (NCBE 2016, 29), teachers often felt restrained using them because of the pressure the assessment sets, which occur in English only (cf. Cleghorn and Rollnick 2002; Shohamy 2006).

**Ex. 12** But I have to go back to English ... because the questions papers and the tests and everything ... and the assessment is set in English ... so, the mother tongue is just there for them to make them aware of what's going on, but later on we have to switch back. (O, FGD1, P4)

As Excerpt 12 shows (Norro 2022b), teachers only switched languages when the pupils had to understand the lesson, but they felt the need to switch back as soon as possible to prepare the pupils for the assessment in English.

Interestingly, teachers with less teaching experience used more greetings and other common words in pupils' home languages to make them feel more comfortable than their more experienced colleagues.

**Ex. 13** I did not meet er linguistic training ... But I had met that one when I did the other course ... sociology ... Like how to fit in different communities that speak different languages and have different cultural backgrounds. (K, FGD 4, P1)

One reason might be that some modules preparing teachers to work in multicultural environments have been introduced in the teacher training, as Excerpt 13 indicated (Norro 2022b). However, as is often the case in teacher training in SSA (Clegg and Afitska 2011), multilingual teaching methods are still lacking in teacher education.

The factor analysis did not include peer translation because of its low final communality estimation (0.14). However, it was mentioned in several interviews and 80% of the questionnaire respondents reported using it often or sometimes. This strategy was especially used when a new pupil came from a rural school, as Section 5.3.1 described (Excerpt 8).

To conclude, monolingual practices, such as reformulating pupils' English utterances or helping pupils auto-correct them, and providing visual support were used more often than multilingual practices. Moreover, multilingual practices, such as switching the language, explaining in the home languages, or making them visible in class, were used more often in Oshana, probably because of the lower linguistic diversity. However, pupils' different linguistic repertoires could be leveraged in multilingual groups when negotiating for meanings. Assessment in English only was an important impeding factor related to teachers' needing to revert to English without delay in order to ensure that their pupils memorise the subject's contents in English for the exams.

LOTE were used more frequently in junior than senior primary. Teachers with less teaching experience used expressions in pupils' home languages more readily than their more experienced colleagues, probably because elements of cultural sensitivity education have been introduced in the current teacher training programmes. Peer translation was a common practice to assist newcomers with limited English proficiency.

### 5.4.3 Teachers' observed classroom practices

The observed lessons included in the data (see sampling criteria in Section 4.2.2) were analysed to compare the observed practices to teachers' self-reported practices described above. The analysis shows they corroborate the self-reported practices and differ from them.

For starters, the observed practices corroborated the self-reported practices regarding multilingual practices, such as explaining the core concepts in LOTE and code-switching. These practices were frequently used in Oshana, but were little used in Khomas (cf. Table 15 for the self-reported practices in the questionnaire responses). In Oshana, all the teachers, regardless of subject, explained concepts in the learners' home language. Moreover, code-switching occurred more frequently in Oshana, related to both content teaching and performing so called class management

tasks (cf. Bunyi 2005), e.g. disciplining or giving instructions. In Khomas, only one of the teachers in the analysis switched the code, and only for classroom management or with individual pupils.

There was an interesting deviation from the self-reported practices concerning mathematics and natural science teachers. In the interviews, the teachers expressed challenges in using LOTE when teaching these subjects because of the lack of terminology in local languages. However, the observation data showed mathematics and natural science teachers in Oshana using the local language even more than in other subjects. They were observed giving key terms in Oshiwambo or eliciting them from the pupils and using Oshiwambo in discussions and explanations (Norro 2022b), which aligns with Ashikuti's (2019, 118) findings, as 65.5% of the teachers in her sample believed teaching mathematics and environmental studies in Namibian languages was possible.

However, the data analysis showed differences amongst individual teachers. Whereas two of the natural science teachers in Oshana whose lessons were included in the data used code-switching and explaining core concepts in the learners' home language extensively, the third did not use them at all (Norro 2022b). Her observed English-only policy corroborated what she said in the interview (Excerpt 14).

**Ex. 14** Teacher: Er when I'm teaching I use English yeah I use to try by all means to explain it to them, yeah, to make it easy for them to understand.

Interviewer: And what what languages do you use then? So is it is it only English that you that you use to explain?

Teacher: Oh yeah. (O, S3, Int.3)

In Excerpt 14 (Norro 2022b), the teacher expresses a strict monolingual stance regarding the MoI. Unlike some of her colleagues, she has seemingly adopted the school's monolingual English medium policy in the strictest sense, showing the crucial role teachers' beliefs have in guiding their classroom language practices.

The observation data showed an interesting case where the teacher used code-switching from English to Oshiwambo during a written assessment. As the exam paper was in English, per the official policy, the teacher translated some of the terms in the exam questions and answered pupils' questions about them in Oshiwambo to help them understand what they were expected to do (Norro 2022b). This practice resembled the one that Prinsloo and Krause (2019) described, where the teacher used a similar strategy.

Regarding monolingual practices, the observation data corroborates the frequent use of visual aids such as flash-cards, posters, chalkboard, demonstrations, and even videos expressed in the questionnaire and interviews (Norro 2022b).

The language ecology that the language practices in schools create is typical for postcolonial contexts. It reflects a hierarchical language ideology, giving English official language status and the MoI's supremacy over the local languages. Teachers' multilingual practices modify the language ecology towards a somewhat more multilingual ecology, but the societal language ideologies and monolingual assessment policies constrain them (Norro 2022b). Although switching languages is allowed to some extent, it is still considered a deviance from monolingual practices, and monolingual assessment restricts the possibility of creating a disrupted multilingual ecology.

## 5.5 Language ideologies in Article V

*Article V: "You can be fluent in English but empty-headed" Language ideologies underlying Namibian primary school teachers' beliefs*

Article V discussed teachers' LP beliefs and their rationale for them (Norro 2023) based on the interview data. The societal language ideologies underlying the beliefs were found to contain conflictual elements from monolingual (stressing the importance of a unifying, international language) and multilingual (decolonising) ideologies. Moreover, teachers often expressed arguments for home language and English medium instruction and many could not decide which was better.

### 5.5.1 Monolingual ideologies

Ideologies that may be categorised as monolingual underline English's importance as a language of international communication (Kamwangamalu 2013) and upward social mobility that are indispensable for pupils to function in Namibian society, as in Excerpt 15 (Norro 2023).

**Ex. 15** Our official language is English ... we should prepare our learners to fit in the same society, which will send them back ... So actually, there is no use of training learners at school in their mother tongue, but in the office and the in the society, they will be asked to speak English. (K, FGD4, P1)

These beliefs show teachers aligning to the monolingual ideology in Namibia deeming English only the official language. Teachers combine it with a practical view that in public domains, English is the only legitimate language (c.f. Bourdieu

1991). Teachers also emphasise the need for English as the MoI from the beginning to lay a solid foundation, support pupils' confidence as English speakers, and not deprive them of being exposed to English as early as possible. The belief in the benefit of early exposure to a foreign language has been called the "early exposure fallacy" by Phillipson (1992, 199–209) and Skutnabb-Kangas (2000, 575–76). According to them, early exposure may be beneficial in additive bilingual education models, but not in a subtractive model like Namibia's.

**Ex. 16** You can still speak ... your mother tongue at home with your family, with your friends. But when it comes to the academic, the schoolwork ... let English take priority there. (K, FGD3, P2)

**Ex. 17** We try to combine all this diversity and ... unite them so through English so you can't really rely on mother tongue ... to be there (K, S2, 3)

**Ex. 18** We have to teach them so that they can communicate in future, maybe some, they are going abroad, studying abroad, in that case they are going to communicate in English. (K, S4, 1)

The diglossic view of English versus the local languages and alignment to the hierarchical language ideology was seen in the comments where teachers explicitly restricted using the home languages for domestic purposes only, as in Excerpt 16 (Norro 2023). Some expressed the argument in Excerpt 17 (Norro 2023), which has been largely used to rationalise choosing a European language as the official language in postcolonial countries – that in a linguistically diverse society, English is the only possible unifying language (Pütz 1995, 2–3). English's international status was an argument expressed in favour of it being the MoI, like in Excerpt 18 (Norro 2023). To conclude, the beliefs reflecting a hierarchical and monolingual ideology included considering English the only legitimate language in public domains, restricting the other languages to the private domain, and emphasising English's status as the language of upward social mobility and international communication.

## 5.5.2 Decolonising ideologies

The ideologies that may be characterised as belonging to the decolonising category include those underlining the importance of local languages as the MoI for cultural preservation (cf. van Pinxteren 2021) and learning (cf. Benson 2021). Several teachers mentioned assessment as a constraining factor hindering LOTE's usage in education.

**Ex. 19** Learners should learn ... the vernacular language in order for them to communicate with ... elders in the village. (K, FGD4, P3)

**Ex. 20** I believe kids tend to understand more better in their mother tongue than in English. And ... it's even easy for them to give their views ... in their mother tongue, unlike in English ... Because some kids cannot even express themselves in English that fully. (O, S4, 2)

Beliefs reflecting decolonising ideologies included views that children must learn their heritage language to communicate with their elder relatives and acquire their cultural heritage from them, as in Excerpt 19 (Norro 2023). Other comments related to the ease of understanding the subject contents at school and expressing themselves in their mother tongue (see Excerpt 20; Norro 2023). Assessment policies affect the LEP's implementation (cf. Cleghorn and Rollnick 2002; Shohamy 2006), which several teachers mentioned, as in Excerpt 21 (Norro 2023).

**Ex. 21** I have a problem with now the government policy of now denigrating or penalising learner who cannot express themselves in the English language ... But knowing English does not measure one's intelligence. So you can be fluent in English but empty-headed. (O, FGD3, P2)

The assessment policy gives more weight to English than other subjects when applying for tertiary education, which many teachers believed should be changed.

To conclude, Namibian teachers seem caught between the two prevailing language ideologies: mother tongue instruction and the monolingual hierarchical ideology. The former underlines the importance of the local languages for preserving cultural heritage and facilitating educational purposes; the latter emphasises English's importance as an international language and the one for upward social mobility. The arguments expressed in the interviews, often by the same interviewee, represented both ideologies.

## 5.6 Summary of the results

In sum, the historical and structural factors that have affected the choice of the official language, and, consequently, the LEP, have stemmed mainly from the internationalisation ideology. Officially, the LEP includes promoting of the indigenous languages, and offering all equal access to education, which has been stated as Namibia's dominant educational ideology. However, stipulating only English as the main MoI and the only language of assessment has reduced most

pupils' epistemic access and constructed a major obstacle to academic achievement. Changing the policy has proved very difficult, and it has remained basically the same over Namibia's years of independence.

Regarding teachers' beliefs about the LP implementation and the MoI, the questionnaire data suggest a preference for English as the MoI. About 70% of the respondents preferred it. Although most believed pupils learned best in their own language, and well over half believed home language instruction is a linguistic right, only about half thought mother tongue instruction should be extended to senior primary.

Reasons for preferring English as the MoI seemed to align with the official policy and idea of English as a unifying language in the multilingual society. Practical concerns such as the difficulties of using LOTE in multilingual groups and the amount of material in English compared to local languages were also mentioned. Moreover, the lack of subject-specific vocabulary in local languages and a high degree of linguistic diversity increased the preference for English as the MoI. One of the most important reasons for preferring English was that the respondents had been taught in it. However, being qualified to teach in the home language increased the preference for teaching in it.

The current system seems to cause challenges in transitioning from mother-tongue instruction to an English medium, including reading and writing difficulties, despite pupils' relatively good oral proficiency in English. LEP implementation, especially regarding mother tongue instruction, was considered challenging because of multilingual groups, and pupils who must take the predominant local language that is not their mother tongue were seen in a disadvantaged position. The lack of material and human resources was also considered an impediment for successful implementation.

Monolingual practices in the classroom, such as reformulating pupils' English utterances, helping them auto-correct them, and providing visual support were used more often than multilingual practices. Multilingual practices, such as switching the language, explaining in the home languages, or making them visible in class, were used more often in Oshana, probably because of the lower degree of linguistic diversity. According to teachers' self-reports, translation strategies, especially asking pupils to translate or assist newcomers, were used frequently.

Some intriguing differences existed between teachers' self-reported and observed practices. Although in the interviews, teachers expressed using LOTE to teach mathematics and natural sciences to be challenging because of the lack of subject-specific terminology in local languages, they used these other languages extensively in their observed lessons, especially in Oshana. Assessment that occurs in English only was an important factor relating to teachers' needing to revert to English as soon as possible to prepare their pupils for the exams. However, one

example in the observation data showed the teacher mediating in the local language during a written exam to help her pupils understand what was required of them.

The analysis of the language ideologies underlying teachers' beliefs showed that they seemed to be caught between Namibian society's two prevailing language ideologies: mother tongue instruction underlines the importance of the local languages for preserving the cultural heritage and facilitating educational purposes while the monolingual hierarchical ideology emphasises English's importance as an international language and the one for upward social mobility. The arguments expressed in the interviews, often by the same interviewee, represented both ideologies.

## 6 Discussion

This section discusses the present study's results, which relate to previous studies (6.1), followed by the implications the results have for multilingual education in Namibia (6.2). Some recommendations based on this study's results are suggested in Section 6.3 for developing the educational LP. Section 6.4 discusses the limitations of this study and directions for future research.

### 6.1 The language education policy and its implementation

This study aims to evaluate the current LEP in Namibian basic education and explore the factors and societal language ideologies affecting its development and implementation. Teachers' beliefs and understanding of the LP influence their practices and, thus, how they implement the policy. The implications of their beliefs and practices are discussed in light of this study's results, regarding previous studies and the underlying societal language ideologies.

#### 6.1.1 The language education policy

The historical–structural analysis of the LP Article I discussed (Norro 2022a) showed that the LP's formulation at the dawn of independence was politically motivated, and the decolonisation aspirations decisively impacted the process. Previous studies have stated the political character of the choices made in the process (Töttemeyer 2010; Frydman 2011). The policy makers' desire to remove Afrikaans, considered the language of colonial oppression and apartheid politics, from its position at the top of the language hierarchy, resulted in its replacement with English. However, instead of decolonising the LP, choosing English as the only official language led to the rise of a new elite class of English-proficient Namibians (cf. Iipinge and Banda 2020). Internationalisation ideology may thus be said to have overcome the decolonisation ideology (cf. Kamwangamalu 2013) in this respect.

Formulating the LEP concentrated almost exclusively on choosing the instruction medium. Although a bilingual model where English and a local language would be used as the MoI throughout basic education was suggested and

recommended as the best option, a subtractive early-exit transitional model (cf. Wolfaardt 2005) was chosen. This model followed the ‘default’ model (Benson 2019, 32) for multilingual education in postcolonial countries based on the UNESCO conference’s recommendations in Bamako in 1951 (Wolff 2016, 14), the outcomes of which have been unsatisfying (Tötemeyer 2010; Harris 2011; Olufunmilyo Olabusari 2014). Instead of limiting the discussion concerning multilingual education to the choice of the MoI, more flexible models have been suggested in research (e.g. Erling et al. 2017; McKinney and Tyler 2019), the assets of which in Namibia’s case will be discussed further in Section 6.3.

The LEP, as the official documents define it, contains elements from competing ideologies framing linguistic diversity in educational language policies. As Section 2.2 discussed, Liddicoat and Taylor-Leech (2015) state that linguistic diversity in LP discourses in different contexts has been framed from a national unity perspective, as in European nation-states, or based on the inclusion ideology. The former considers effective communication and monolingual practices indispensable for social cohesion and multilingualism a threat to national unity, whereas the latter emphasises educational and epistemic access and promotes using indigenous languages in education. The simultaneous existence of these competing ideological positions in educational discourses often results in language planning that tries to promote linguistic diversity but is constrained by a desire to limit it (Liddicoat and Curnow 2014; Liddicoat and Taylor-Leech 2015). In Namibia, the tension between these ideological positions has resulted in a subtractive early-exit model that recognises the need for instruction in pupils’ home languages while limiting it to junior primary only. Even if the national languages are included in the official LEP, they occupy a subordinate position vis-à-vis English placed at the top at the language hierarchy, not to mention the minority languages without the national language status.

The hierarchical language ideology may be seen in parents’ attitudes towards instruction in local languages. As stated, almost 25% of the pupils are enrolled in English medium schools (EMIS 2019). Parents seemingly perceive English as the only language of upward social mobility, reflecting the society’s hierarchical language ideology (cf. e.g. Qorro 2009). Thus, gearing the current policy towards including the indigenous languages in a less hierarchical manner may necessitate raising awareness in parents of the importance of recognising and leveraging all pupils’ linguistic repertoire for learning and identity construction, as well as changes in language ideology discourses in the society in general. Bokamba (2007) argues for multilingual language policies to elevate African languages to be used in public domains, allocating them value in the linguistic market (cf. Bourdieu 1991). Appropriating such multilingual policies would instil African languages with linguistic capital and increase the appreciation of education delivered in indigenous

languages. However, such changes in the LP require political will not evident in postcolonial societies.

Teachers are central in implementing the LP in schools. Their beliefs about LEP issues discovered in the analysis are discussed next, followed by the language ideologies underlying them.

### 6.1.2 Teachers' beliefs related to implementing the language education policy

Teachers' beliefs concerning the MoI and implementing the LEP observed in the data raised interesting questions, which I treated in this section.

First, when asked in which language they prefer teaching, 70% of the questionnaire respondents said English (Articles II and V), corroborating Ipinge and Banda's (2020, 18) statement that most Namibian teachers prefer teaching in English.

When teachers' MoI preferences were compared to their LP beliefs in Article V, some differences between those preferring English and those preferring the home language were observed, as Table 16 shows. Notably, however, the number of respondents in each group differed, as 92 preferred English while only 33 preferred the home language.

**Table 16.** Teachers' medium of instruction preferences and language policy beliefs (Norro 2023).

Statement 1. a) Learners learn best if they are taught in their home language.

Medium of instruction preference	I agree	I disagree	I don't know	Total
English	65% (60)	25% (23)	10 (9)	92
Home language	94% (31)	3% (1)	3% (1)	33
<b>Total</b>	73% (91)	19% (24)	8% (19)	<i>N</i> = 125
<b>Fisher's exact test</b>				0.003

Statement 1. b) English should be the medium of instruction from Grade 1.

Medium of instruction preference	I agree	I disagree	I don't know	Total
English	70% (63)	24% (22)	6% (5)	90
Home language	36% (12)	52% (17)	12% (4)	33
<b>Total</b>	61% (75)	32% (39)	7% (9)	<i>N</i> = 123
<b>Fisher's exact test</b>				0.003

Teachers' beliefs about the effectiveness of the home language for learning and English medium instruction in junior primary seemed related to their MoI

preferences. Almost all, (94%) of those who preferred teaching in the home language believed pupils learn best when instructed in their home language (Norro 2023). However, well over half (65%) of those who preferred teaching in English believed pupils learn best in their home language, but their proportion was not so overwhelmingly significant as in the other group.

Most (70%) of those who preferred teaching in English thought it should be the MoI from the beginning, whereas only 36% of those who preferred the home language thought alike (Norro 2023). Many of those who preferred teaching in the home language may actually do so, possibly affecting these results. However, it seems a relationship exists between teachers' MoI preferences and their beliefs about the MoI's effects in that those who prefer the home languages in teaching recognise their importance for learning, hence the importance of home language instruction, at least in junior primary. Being qualified to teach in the home language may influence these beliefs, as this section will discuss.

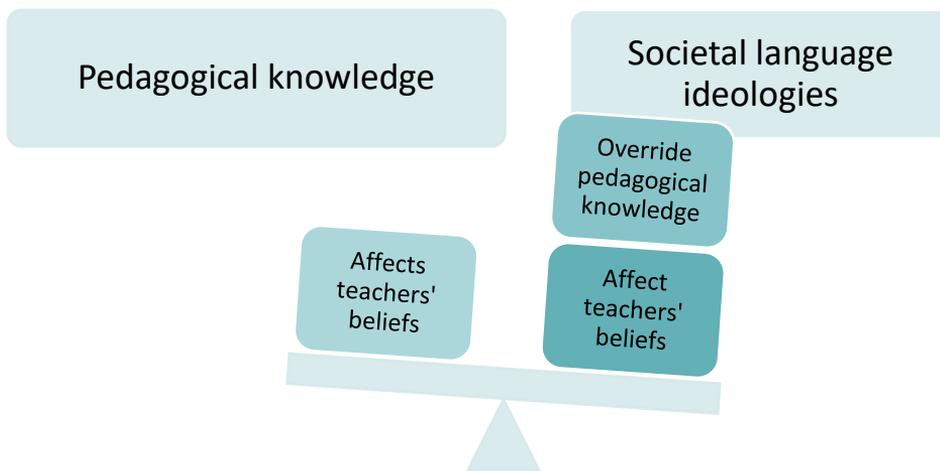
Teachers gave reasons for their MoI preferences in the open-ended question in the questionnaire (Articles II and V). One of the most common reasons for preferring English was it being the country's official language and the official MoI stipulated by the LEP, showing these teachers' alignment to the *de jure* LEP, which they seemingly do not question. Practical reasons were also mentioned, including multilingual groups where using one local language is difficult without discriminating against pupils who do not speak it as their home language. Lack of teaching and learning materials in indigenous languages was also mentioned. A third common reason was that teachers preferred English as the MoI because they had been instructed in it (cf. Borg 2006; 2018).

These reasons stem from a monolingual mindset that has probably been influenced by the monolingual ideology present in the societal discourse about education. These teachers seem to have internalised it directly as agents of the education system and through the socialisation process they experienced in their schooling. As Heller and Martin-Jones (2001, 3) highlighted, education may be considered "an institution of social and cultural production and reproduction" reproducing dominant language ideologies and practices. The availability of learning materials in English more than in local languages may be considered a result of language policies giving preponderance to English at the cost of other languages.

Teachers preferred home language instruction because it was easier to explain and give examples; the pupils also understood it better, corresponding to Afitska et al.'s (2013) observations, who argue that teachers explain concepts more clearly in the home language. These teachers' arguments underline the pedagogical advantages and epistemic access when the language of instruction is one that teachers and learners are familiar with.

Interestingly, most (74%) respondents believed pupils learn best when taught in their home language. Moreover, 68% believed instruction in the home language is a linguistic right (Norro 2023). However, only about half thought instruction in the home language should be extended to senior primary. These beliefs seem contradictory and merit thorough reflection.

First, as mentioned, practical challenges exist in implementing home language instruction. Using LOTE in multilingual groups is considered difficult as teachers fear they will treat learners unequally if they use only one indigenous language. Learners who live in surroundings without instruction in their home language and must study in the predominant local language were mentioned in the interviews several times as a disadvantaged group. Lack of material and human resources is another practical challenge. However, these challenges could be overcome with careful planning, pedagogies adapted to multilingual groups, material development, and teacher training. Societal language ideologies seemingly have a powerful impact on teachers' beliefs and the LEP's implementation (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Impact of the societal language ideologies on teachers' beliefs.

Most teachers are aware of the pedagogical advantages of instruction in the home language and consider it a linguistic right. However, the society's monolingual and hierarchical ideology giving legitimacy to English only in public domains, including academic contexts, seems to override their pedagogical knowledge as half do not think home language instruction should be extended. Teachers may also align with the current policy without deeper reflection as they may feel powerless over it or that the practical constraints of the context are too overwhelming (cf. Borg 2018). Notably, the question of the MoI in Namibia is mostly considered an either-or option,

reflecting a view of multilingualism as parallel monolingualisms (Heugh 2013), whereas more flexible multilingual models would correspond better to the sociolinguistic realities and be more easily accepted and applied.

The results also show being qualified to teach in the home language impacted how home language instruction was seen and increased the readiness to teach in local languages. Moreover, the interviews showed that language teachers, regardless of the language they taught, were more aware of the importance of the MoI for learning and more willing to extend mother tongue instruction to upper grades (Article V). Perhaps these issues should be reflected upon in initial teacher training, by introducing multilingual methods, making influencing teachers' beliefs and practices possible.

### 6.1.3 Language ideologies underlying teachers' beliefs

According to, e.g. Blackledge and Pavlenko's (2002, 123) and Makoe and McKinney's (2014) definition, language ideologies include the discourse about language use. In Namibia, the discourse has been twofold from the beginning – even before independence, when the current LP was formulated. The monolingual ideology stressing English's importance for national unity, economic development, and international relations has been balanced by the decolonising ideology underlining preserving the heritage of the Namibian cultures and languages, meaning local languages compete with English on some levels of society, but English is considered the top of the language hierarchy pyramid and the only legitimate language in most public domains. Arguably, this is a manifestation of *coloniality of language*, as Section 3.1.1 discussed. Regarding education, the monolingual assessment policies maintain and reinforce English's status as the only language for upward social mobility.

Decolonisation and monolingual ideologies were expressed in the interviews, often by the same teacher (Article V). Arguably, the decolonisation component should be reinforced to value the local languages, support pupils' multilingual identities, increase educational equity, and facilitate learning (cf. Liddicoat and Taylor-Leech 2015, 1–2). However, despite its decolonising ideological stance, applying mother tongue instruction in today's postcolonial contexts raises questions. Especially in urban contexts, pupils' identities are no longer necessarily tied to their heritage language as much as to the hybrid language practices typical for multilingual urban communities. Therefore, the non-standard language forms and fluid multilingual language practices should be legitimated in educational contexts to ensure epistemic access to all pupils and support their multilingual identities. Rather than seeing the question about the MoI as an either-or option necessitating the choice between two or several languages, multilingual education could be

considered a model leveraging all the languages in a classroom, using pedagogical methods enabling their flexible and efficient use.

#### 6.1.4 Teachers' practices related to implementing the language education policy

This section discusses teachers' classroom practices, especially those related to Ashikuti's (2019) study, beginning with discussing the factors associated with teachers' preference for a certain MoI, followed by their self-reported and observed practices.

My data shows three factors related to teachers' preferences for a certain MoI. First, being qualified to teach in the home language increased the preference for using it. Second, there were differences among the teachers of different subjects. Third, the degree of linguistic diversity in the class was related to which MoI the teachers preferred (Norro 2022b).

Almost all, (98%) of the teachers unqualified to teach in the home language preferred teaching in English, whereas only about half (49%) of the qualified did, with 41% preferring the home language, and 10% preferring both (Norro 2022b). Some of the qualified teachers may teach in the home language, which may partly explain the results. However, Spolsky (2008) argues that the availability of qualified teachers to teach in different languages is one of the crucial criteria when evaluating a LP. Moreover, teachers in Ashikuti's (2019) study expressed their concern about the lack of qualified teachers for home language instruction and mentioned the Ministry of Education's budget statements from 2014 to 2017 that reported the shortage of qualified language teachers (p. 153). The Education Statistics (EMIS 2019, 25) mentioned this same problem, which was aroused in my interview data.

There was a remarkable difference between language teachers and mathematics and natural science teachers regarding preference for English or the home language as the MoI, with most (94%) of the latter preferring English. Moreover, some teachers mentioned the difficulty of using LOTE when teaching mathematics and natural sciences because of the lack of terminology in local languages (Norro 2022b). This aligns with previous research into language beliefs in SSA, according to which it is generally believed these subjects cannot be taught in indigenous languages because they lack the required vocabulary and grammatical complexity (Batibo 2005; Mchombo 2014; Barongo-Muweke 2016; Kamwangamalu 2016). These beliefs may be characterised as representing a 'colonial' mindset (cf. Veronelli 2015; McKinney 2022), which has hindered corpus planning in indigenous languages to make them suitable for teaching these subjects.

However, Ashikuti's (2019) results were contradictory, as 65.5% of her respondents believed teaching these subjects in Namibian languages is possible. Her

respondents were all junior primary teachers, which may explain the difference, at least partially. However, my observation data had examples of mathematics and natural science teachers in Oshana, who used LOTE extensively (Norro 2022b), thus corroborating her findings. The degree of linguistic diversity related to teachers' preference for a certain MoI in that the more pupils' home languages in a class increased, the more the teachers preferred English.

Ashikuti's (2019) and my results (Norro 2022b, 2022c) concerning translanguaging practices corroborate in at least three aspects. Notably, both define translanguaging practices as including, e.g. code-switching and translation (see my discussion on translanguaging's definition in Section 3). First, according to the interviews, translation and peer assistance (peer translation) were used frequently. Second, according to both studies, translanguaging practices were used spontaneously, without pedagogical pre-planning, as a reaction to learners' perceived incomprehension of the lesson. Third, although visual aid was used extensively, written materials were monolingual, so the translanguaging practices were not extended to the written form.

In my data, according to teachers' self-reports and observed practices, multilingual practices such as code-switching or explaining concepts in the home language were used more in Oshana than in Khomas. In Khomas, code-switching occurred mostly to perform so-called classroom management tasks (cf. Bunyi 2005): to discipline or give instructions, to individual pupils rather than addressing the whole group, aligning with Ashikuti's (2019) findings. As Ashikuti (2019) argued, translanguaging practices were used spontaneously as scaffolding or coping strategies, triggered by the learners' incomprehension to clarify the content and ensure the learners understand it.

According to Ashikuti's (2019) and my interview data, peer translation was used extensively. Ashikuti (p. 218) questions the reliability of pupils' translations. However, in my interviews, teachers expressed this strategy's utility in regular classroom situations, and especially when a new pupil without prior proficiency in English came to the class. Arguably, although not all the responsibility of mediating between the MoI and learners' home languages can be placed on learners, peer translation may be an efficient scaffolding strategy in multilingual classes. Group work, which was little used in the observation data, would offer a natural setting for peer learning, using learners' linguistic repertoires to a full extent.

The unplanned and unimodal natures of translanguaging practices used in classrooms related. If translanguaging practices were used as a pre-planned pedagogical strategy, multilingual materials could be prepared in advance and used purposefully. As visual support is used extensively, this practice could be completed by written multilingual elements in posters, flash-cards, picture captions, vocabularies and word walls. Allotting teachers time to prepare the material in

collaboration with teachers from different language groups could be an efficient way of enhancing multilingual material production in linguistically diverse regions.

The typical features of translanguaging practices observed in the data reveal interesting relationships between teachers' practices and the societal language ideologies affecting the LEP. Over half the questionnaire respondents say they never explain core terms in the home languages and do not accept using LOTE in class. However, in the interviews they mention using home languages frequently, and spontaneous code-switching occurs frequently according to the questionnaire and interviews. Teachers may believe using LOTE purposefully would be against the LEP, but they admit doing it occasionally as the LEP permits doing so, even in senior primary. Arguably, teachers' translanguaging practices are reactive and unplanned because multilingual practices are illegitimate in senior primary, except for short instances of code-switching (NCBE 2016). Moreover, multilingual practices were used more in Oshana where teachers and pupils share a common language more often (Norro 2022b). The teachers reported that the most common reasons for not using LOTE were not sharing the same home language with the pupils or the difficulty of finding a suitable language in a multilingual group. Teachers' perceptions concerning bi- or multilingual education seem based on monolingual assumptions that separate named languages. Using more than one language simultaneously or allowing the use of languages they are unfamiliar with are not practiced.

The importance of teachers' beliefs concerning the MoI and multilingual education is seen in the differences between individual teachers regarding using LOTE when teaching mathematics and natural sciences. Previous research and some of my interviewed teachers mentioned the lack of appropriate vocabulary for using LOTE when teaching these subjects. However, the observation data showed some teachers using LOTE extensively when teaching them, whereas others taught categorically in English only (Norro 2023), showing the crucial role teachers' beliefs and their interpretation of the LEP have in implementing the LP. Similarly, one of the teachers was observed mediating between a written test, the questions of which were in English, and her pupils' home language (Norro 2022b), like the teacher in Prinsloo and Krause (2019). However, most of the questionnaire respondents said they do not accept using LOTE in assessments. One must ask whether this practice depends on the teacher's interpretation of the LEP or whether it could be leveraged more generally to modify assessment towards more multilingual practices.

Teachers' flexible strategies reflect society's multilingual reality and demonstrate their ability to act purposefully in different communicative situations. Although multilingual strategies are used spontaneously rather than as pedagogically planned strategies, they form a resource for developing multilingual teaching strategies. A wide use of translation strategies was reported, offering a solid basis for more pedagogically systematic use and preparing multilingual materials in

collaboration with teachers from different language backgrounds. Explicit vocabulary/terminology teaching and providing mainstream teachers the knowledge of basic principles of second language teaching could help them fulfil the curriculum expectations requiring all subject teachers to teach the MoI and their subject's special terminology.

To conclude, the multilingual practices teachers spontaneously use offer a good starting point for developing multilingual education. These practices could be used more strategically if they were pedagogically planned in advance.

## 6.2 Theoretical considerations for multilingual education

This section discusses the study's results, relating them to aspects of sociolinguistic and LP theories. I compare teachers' beliefs and practices in the data, their self-reported and observed practices, and the factors affecting them. I also evaluate the practices observed in the data from the perspective of translanguaging pedagogy and linguistically responsive teaching.

As argued by Spolsky (2008, 30) and discussed in Section 2, LEP often derives from a vague understanding of a society's language practices and proficiencies. The beliefs and ideologies about an ideal situation affect how the LEP is formulated. As Section 3 discussed, in the present research, language, or, more precisely, language use is considered as mobile resources (Blommaert 2010) – an activity rather than a structure (Pennycook 2010) and as social practices embedded in social relations (García and Wei 2014). In multilingual societies, language practices are hybrid and fluid, and strictly separating named languages in multilinguals' languaging is impossible. However, the analysis shows that the LEP, as Namibia's official documents defines it, looks at languages from a perspective that separates languages and places English above other languages in education. The official policies and societal language ideologies shape the language practices in class, which are constrained by the practical affordances, and thus divert from the natural, multilingual language practices towards more monolingual practices based on the separation of languages.

This study used data collection methods including a questionnaire, teacher interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations to obtain a holistic picture of the official LP and its implementation and of the relationship between the overt and covert policy (cf. Schiffman 2006), although the limited data offers an incomplete view. However, the results show that teachers have different beliefs about LP matters, and their beliefs affect how they implement the LEP. The differences among teachers' practices imply they have interpreted the LEP differently; these practices may vary even within the same school, regardless of the

school's LP. The results show that practical constraints such as the availability of materials or the degree of linguistic diversity in the school influence how the LEP is implemented. The results also showed that teachers' own experiences largely affect, e.g. in which language they prefer teaching. Although teachers' beliefs are difficult to change (Borg 2018), changing them is possible if teachers can reflect on them against the best practices suggested in research and try new practices. Teacher education, initial and in-service training, should offer possibilities to challenge existing beliefs and practices.

Teachers' self-reported beliefs expressed in the data differed somewhat from their practices; there were also discrepancies among their beliefs – a common observation made in previous research (Basturkmen 2012; Borg 2006, 2018). For example, whereas most teachers believed pupils learn best in their home language and that learning in a language pupils understand is a linguistic right, only half believed that instruction in the home language should be extended to senior primary. As Section 6.1.2 discussed, societal language ideologies override teachers' pedagogical knowledge in this respect.

Section 2 discussed the relatedness of language ideologies and beliefs. It was stated that the hegemonic language ideologies in a society are naturalised and invisible to the extent they pass unnoticed and constitute a hidden LP agenda (Leeman 2012). The analysis this research made has shown that the monolingual and hierarchical ideology considering English as the only legitimate language to be used in public domains is Namibia's dominant language ideology despite the decolonisation aspirations expressed in the official discourse. Arguably, the societal language ideologies largely constrain the LP and its implementation in schools.

The factor analysis in Article IV showed that according to teachers' self-reports, monolingual practices were used more than multilingual practices. The common nature of the monolingual practices (visual support, dividing the content into smaller chunks and reformulating pupils' utterances) may affect the results, as teachers use these practices in any context. However, it may be asked whether multilingual practices are less used because teachers do not consider them legitimated by the official LEP, which accords legitimacy to using LOTE only occasionally (NCBE 2016) after junior primary.

The translanguaging practices discovered in the data may be analysed from various perspectives. First, they may have different functions, such as scaffolding learning, coping in a language that is foreign to learners and teachers alike, creating a translanguaging space or having a translanguaging stance (cf. García and Kleyn 2016; García et al. 2017). As Section 3.1.3 discussed, multilingual learners must be scaffolded appropriately to function in their multilingual zone of proximal development (cf. Lucas et al. 2008; Moll 2014; Gibbons 2015). Translanguaging pedagogy is based on leveraging all learners' linguistic repertoires in a teaching and

learning situation (García et al. 2017). Arguably, the translanguaging practices the teachers used in my data do not fulfill every function mentioned above. Constrained by the official LEP, as described above, teachers did not leverage translanguaging practices to their full potential, but used translanguaging to cope in a linguistically diverse and perplexing context where they need to teach in a language in which their pupils have different proficiency levels. They also used it to scaffold their learners' understanding of the concepts, helping them operate in their zone of proximal development. Arguably, however, this could be done more efficiently if translanguaging was used in a more pedagogical, pre-planned manner. The translanguaging spaces they create in the present situation are ephemeral, as they feel the pressure of using the official MoI as much as possible.

According to the present study, teachers are willing to support their learners and use multilingual practices to scaffold learning. However, constrained by the official LEP, they do not value their learners' whole linguistic repertoires nor the construction of their multilingual identities fully. Translanguaging practices are used from a deficit perspective, only when teachers see their learners do not understand the lesson delivered in English, instead of using them from a multilingual perspective, as part of normal, pre-planned teaching practices.

### 6.3 Recommendations for educational language policy development

In Section 2, I cited Spolsky's (2008) four criteria or questions that may be asked to evaluate an LP. They were 1) What is the policy? 2) Why this policy? 3) How is the policy implemented? 4) Can the policy be improved? I have answered three of these questions based on this study's results in the discussion above. The present section endeavours to answer the fourth by suggesting some recommendations as they emerge from this study's analysis. As the challenges in education are similar in other postcolonial contexts, the same suggestions are applicable and provide some insights into how to resolve the learning crisis the Introduction discussed, as far as the language issues are concerned.

The sociolinguistic perceptions of language as social practices (García and Wei 2014) and the multilingual, fluid language practices prevalent in a linguistically diverse society have implications for LEP and curriculum development, teaching practices and assessment, and initial and in-service teacher education. This section discusses these implications, beginning with the LEP development.

As discussed, the Namibian LEP is based on a transitional model separating the different named languages, usually English and a local indigenous language. The question of the MoI has been approached as an either-or option reflecting a view of multilingualism as parallel monolingualisms (cf. Heugh 2013). Also

discussed was that although the home language instruction promoted by the Namibian LEP during the junior primary stems from a decolonising ideology and benefits learning, it is based on the concept of languages as separate, bound entities, as Makoe and McKinney (2014, 660) highlighted. The present study's results show that teachers in Oshana, where they usually shared a common home language with most of their pupils, used multilingual strategies such as code-switching and explaining in learners' home language more than their colleagues in Khomas, where the linguistic diversity within a class is usually higher (Norro 2022b). Teachers' interpretation of bi- or multilingual education seemingly corresponds to how it is generally understood in Namibia, as described above. According to this interpretation, a common shared language may be used occasionally in the classroom, but if no such language is available, only English is considered legitimate. Regarding the LEP, the crucial question is how to introduce a model including the home language and English medium instruction in different linguistic contexts throughout basic education without separating the languages strictly, based on a heteroglossic understanding of multilinguals' language practices.

Teachers in the present study expressed opinions about transitioning from the home language instruction to English medium instruction in Grade 4 as very challenging for the pupils (Norro 2021), which aligns with research, showing attaining academic language proficiency takes, under well-resourced conditions, at least five to seven years with extensive exposure to the language (e.g. Cummins 2013; Heugh et al. 2019). Three years of exposure to English a few hours a week is insufficient for most Namibian learners to acquire sufficient proficiency to study in that language from Grade 4 onwards, nor does it suffice for concept formation in the home language to have a positive transfer into English. The transition should occur later or gradually to attain these objectives, as, e.g. Wolfaardt (2005) suggested. Extending home language instruction to senior primary would give learners ample time to learn English and acquire learning skills and subject-specific concepts that would be transferred to English medium learning.

As discussed, extending home language instruction is a politically difficult decision, and its implementation is problematic in linguistically highly diverse areas. Not all home languages can be offered as the MoI, and some pupils must learn in the predominant local language that is not their mother tongue. A more feasible alternative would be introducing a heteroglossic approach to multilingual education with specific practices derived from, e.g. translanguaging pedagogy. They include, e.g. simultaneously using several languages in discussions and group work, translation, vocabularies and other multilingual written materials, and word walls (see e.g. García et al. 2017). A translanguaging approach would allow learners to develop all their linguistic proficiencies and construct their linguistic

and cultural identities. Implementing this approach would probably be easier in linguistically diverse contexts than extending home language instruction for the above reasons.

The present study's results revealed that multilingual practices were used more in Oshana, where the linguistic diversity is not as high as in Khomas, and where teachers and learners usually shared a common indigenous language (Norro 2022b), seemingly indicating that in less diverse areas, implementing bilingual education by extending home language instruction could be easier than in more diverse areas. This suggests the possibility of creating local language policies. Shank Lauwo (2021, 218-219) reminds us that the context must always be considered. In many, especially rural contexts, validating the community's translanguaging practices while empowering the local predominant language by official recognition is necessary. However, the idea of local language policies would possibly meet opposition, as it could be considered unequal. Recognising the existing language practices in different contexts and legitimising multilingual practices in normative documents such as curricula are the most crucial ways of developing the LEP towards a more inclusive model.

As discussed, societal language ideologies affect the LP processes, and the attitudes and beliefs of different stakeholders, such as policy-makers, teachers, and parents. Legitimising multilingual practices in schools would require changing the societal language ideologies and developing materials and terminology in local languages. Developing mathematical and scientific terminology would be fundamental, as the lack of terminology in these subjects was mentioned as a reason for preferring English as the instruction medium or being incapable of assisting the learners in their home language (Norro 2022b). Translanguaging pedagogy and other multilingual methods would allow leveraging all learners' languages and creating a multilingual language ecology in schools that would benefit the multilingual learners' learning and identity construction. Systematically introducing these methods necessitates including them in initial and in-service teacher education.

As the Education Statistics reports (EMIS 2019, 25) mentioned, parents often opt for English medium instruction for their children; almost 25% of pupils in Grades 1–3 are enrolled in EMI schools, which the report considers a deviation from the LP. Changing the language ideologies and attitudes stemming from them is not easy. However, Heugh (2002; 2013) discovered that in South Africa, if the parents were given an either-or option between home language and English instruction, they chose English. If they were convinced a bilingual option choice would invest their children with proficiency in both languages, they opted for it instead. Thus, successful examples of multilingual educational practices may increase confidence towards them.

The factor analysis in Article IV showed that, according to the questionnaire, monolingual practices were used more than multilingual. However, multilingual practices would scaffold learning, increase motivation by promoting epistemic access and meaningful participation and communication, support learners' multilingual identity construction, and value the local languages. As discussed, teachers' existing multilingual practices form a good foundation for developing local multilingual pedagogies (Article III). Implementing a multilingual policy seems challenging because of the lack of materials and human resources, so emphasis could be placed on training teachers in multilingual teaching methods. An approach that would leverage all learners' linguistic repertoires could be introduced in teacher training. Teacher education should inform teachers of their existing beliefs concerning the MoI and LEP implementation and challenge them if a change is desired.

Producing multilingual teaching materials could be made more efficient by training teachers and providing possibilities for them to collaborate in material production. As visual aids are used extensively, modifying them to include written multilingual content could support multilingual education and make existing translanguaging practices multimodal.

Peer assistance was also used frequently and could be leveraged even more efficiently if group work was used more. In group discussions, the responsibility of mediating between English and the home language would be shared among several learners, resulting in more accurate translations. One of the most important benefits would be the increased use of exploratory talk in a language the learners understand well and in which they express themselves effortlessly.

One crucial issue when developing curricula and teaching practices is assessment. No matter how efficiently multilingual methods are implemented in schools, if the assessment remains monolingual, it may assess learners' English proficiency rather than their subject content knowledge. As Section 3 discussed, the assessment has a washback effect on teaching (cf. Cleghorn and Rollnick 2002). This was also seen in this study's data, as the teachers said in the interviews that they had to switch back to English as soon as possible to deliver the lesson in the assessment language (Article IV). Making assessments multilingual would naturally be easier in regions where learners generally speak and understand one local language, as exam questions could simply be written bilingually. The situation is more complex in more diverse areas, at least legitimising the practice that Section 5 described: the teacher mediating and explaining the questions to the learners in their home language, like in Prinsloo and Krause's (2019) example, would benefit the learners, as well as accepting LOTE in their answers. García et al. (2017) suggest different strategies for multilingual learners' assessment that consider their emergent language proficiencies. These learners may be assessed performing independently or with

assistance, as in the examples above. Their assessment could include using all their inter- and intrapersonal and material resources (p. 82), including multimodality.

Teacher training is central to increasing teachers' readiness for multilingual instruction. The present study showed that teachers qualified to teach in the home language preferred it more than those who were not (Norro 2022b). Moreover, including elements of cultural and linguistic sensitivity in initial teacher training seems related to teachers' use of greetings and other expressions in pupils' home languages for affective reasons. Including multilingual teaching methods in teacher training modules could equip future and in-service teachers with more flexible and effective teaching strategies.

Initial and continuous teacher training challenging teachers' and student teachers' previous beliefs (cf. Borg 2006; 2018) and introducing new multilingual practices may give them opportunities to reflect on their beliefs and practices and adopt new ones if they are convinced that change is needed. Thus, teacher education could legitimise pre-planned and multimodal use of effective translanguaging practices. As Jaspers (2018) reminds us, one should naturally not forget the transformative limits of translanguaging, as it may become a dominating practice instead of liberating and empowering pupils and teachers.

## 6.4 Limitations and future directions for research

This study aimed to explore what factors and language ideologies have affected the Namibian LEP, what beliefs Namibian teachers have about LEP implementation and the MoI, what language ideologies may be seen underlying their beliefs, and teachers' classroom practices. The approach adopted was critical sociolinguistic ethnography, as it allows research into the interplay between local language practices and the larger LP discourses and language ideologies (Pérez-Milans 2015, 103), offering a framework combining critical LP approaches and ethnographic methods. This study combined historical–structural analysis with data collection methods including a questionnaire, teacher interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations. This allowed comparing teachers' self-reported beliefs and practices in the questionnaires and the interviews with classroom observations. This approach was advantageous, as it allowed discovering the discrepancies between self-reported beliefs and enacted beliefs, as well as the beliefs and practices, a common phenomenon in teacher cognition research (e.g. Borg 2018). The relatively large number of questionnaire responses ( $N=140$ ) allowed for obtaining a wider perspective on teachers' beliefs and practices, whereas the interviews and focus group discussions offered a deeper understanding of the context and phenomena studied. The methodological approach proved suitable for the study's aims and

offered a significant perspective and insight into the state of the Namibian LEP and its implementation, despite the limitations I discuss later in this section.

A mixed method approach was used to analyse the collected data, allowing the triangulation of the different parts of data. The questionnaire responses were analysed mostly quantitatively, which made analysing the relationships between teachers' self-reported beliefs, practices, and certain background variables possible. The interview and observation data were analysed using qualitative content analysis, considered a suitable analysis method for rich data requiring interpretation (Schreier 2012), and then triangulated with the quantitative data. The mixed method approach and the chosen analysis methods were suitable for attaining the research's aims.

One of this study's biggest limitations was the lack of video recordings of the lessons, which were included in the original research design but could not be made without parents' and pupils' consent. The relatively short time (approximately one week in each school) was insufficient for sending the information letters to pupils' homes and obtaining the parents' written consent. The information letters were in English, but the teachers explained the content to the parents in their home languages when necessary. However, some parents were still seemingly reluctant for their children to be video recorded in class. However, video recordings could offer more accurate data on classroom practices, and allow using different analysis methods such as discourse analysis. For future research purposes, a prolonged stay in one school, or even a case study approach, to overcome these challenges would be worth considering.

Regarding future research, including other levels of LEP implementation, the attitudes of stakeholders, such as school principals and regional authorities, as well as pupils and their parents towards the LEP and their beliefs about LEP implementation, would add an important aspect to the research. The present research was conducted in two linguistically different regions, so its results will probably apply to similar regions in Namibia. What limits their applicability is the lack of rural schools in the data, and future research in rural schools would widen the perspective concerning the LEP implementation issues. Comparative studies between different African countries would also enrich the research.

A fascinating research setting for future purposes would be an intervention project combining research into teachers' or student teachers' pre- and post-intervention beliefs about multilingual education. The intervention could include introducing, practising and documenting various translanguaging practices in classroom learning situations. Combining conscious reflection on beliefs with a change in practices could yield fascinating insights into their mutual relationship and benefit initial and in-service teacher education development.

## 6.5 Concluding remarks

Despite this study's limitations, it provides important insights into the LEP and its implementation in Namibia. It suggests the language ideologies underlying the LEP must be challenged and the LEP developed if quality education standards set by the UN 2030 Agenda are to be attained. This study's results also indicate directions to follow to develop language practices in schools to better correspond to the society's natural multilingual language practices in the society and support learners' multilingual identities, learning motivation, and outcomes.

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# Appendices

## **Appendix 1.** Information letters.

### INFORMATION LETTER / TEACHERS (CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS AND INTERVIEWS)

**Project: Mother tongue based multilingual education in Namibian basic education**

**Responsible researcher: Ms Soili Norro, soili.norro@utu.fi**

Dear sir / madam,

This research is part of my PhD studies that I am conducting for the University of Turku, Finland. The research investigates the implementation of the language education policy and multilingual education in Namibia and intends to help teachers to develop their professional skills. The results of the research will be published in academic journals and in the doctoral dissertation of the researcher.

With your consent, I will attend and observe your class during one week and video record some of the lessons for later analysis. I also intend to combine the observations with an interview with you at the end of the observation week. The interview will be audio or video recorded for the analysis. All data obtained through observing (field notes, video recordings, interviews and their transcriptions) will be handled and stored with care in the University of Turku's secured services. The transcriptions of the interviews will be anonymized so that the participants will not be recognized. Full anonymization can not be guaranteed, as some of your colleagues might be able to recognize you in the data, but it will be done as thoroughly as possible. During the research process, the researcher, her supervisors and the research assistants or a company doing the transcriptions will have access to the data. The data will be archived in the University of Turku (Digilang or corresponding) repository and can later be opened for future research if the participants give the permission to do so.

I have the permission of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture of Namibia and of the Regional Director to conduct this research project. I also have the consent of your school's principal. Nevertheless, you have the right to deny observing and / or video recording your class or retract your consent at any time of the research. The denial will cause you no harm. In the case of retraction, the data obtained that far will however be legally utilized for the research project.

I want to emphasize the fact that the observations made in your class will not be reported to your superiors and they will in no way affect your career. You are asked to express your consent or denial in a separate consent form. If you have any questions about the research project, I will be happy to answer them.

I hope that you will be willing to make possible the research project by giving your consent and I sincerely thank you for your cooperation.

**Ms Soili Norro, PhD student**  
**School of Languages and Translation Studies**  
**University of Turku, Finland**  
Koskenniemenkatu 4  
20014 University of Turku  
Finland

INFORMATION LETTER / TEACHERS (FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS)

**Project: Mother tongue based multilingual education in Namibian basic education**

**Responsible researcher: Ms Soili Norro, soili.norro@utu.fi**

Dear sir / madam,

This research is part of my PhD studies that I am conducting for the University of Turku, Finland. The research investigates the implementation of the language education policy and multilingual education in Namibia and intends to help teachers to develop their professional skills. The results of the research will be published in academic journals and in the doctoral dissertation of the researcher.

My data consist of classroom observations, teachers' questionnaire and teachers' interviews. I also include teachers' focus group discussions on the topic in my data. The focus group discussions will be audio or video recorded for the analysis. All data obtained through observing will be handled and stored with care in the University of Turku's secured services and the transcriptions will be anonymized so that the participants will not be recognized. During the research process, the researcher, her supervisors and the research assistants or a company that will be doing the transcriptions will have access to the data. The data will be archived in the University of Turku's (Digilang or corresponding) repository and can later be opened for future research if the participants give the permission to do so.

I have the permission of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture of Namibia and of the Regional Director to conduct this research project. I also have the consent of your school's principal. Nevertheless, you have the right not to participate in the focus group discussion and / or retract your consent at any time of the research. The denial will cause you no harm. In the case of retraction, the data obtained that far will however be legally utilized for the research project.

I want to emphasize the fact that the opinions and ideas expressed in the focus group discussions will not be reported to your superiors and they will in no way affect your career. You are asked to express your consent in a separate consent form. If you have any questions about the research project, I will be happy to answer them.

I hope that you will be willing to make possible the research project by giving your consent and I sincerely thank you for your cooperation.

**Ms Soili Norro**

**PhD student**

**School of Languages and Translation Studies**

**University of Turku, Finland**

Koskenniemenkatu 4

20014 University of Turku

Finland

Soili Norro

INFORMATION LETTER / PRINCIPALS

**Project: Mother tongue based multilingual education in Namibian basic education**

**Responsible researcher: Ms Soili Norro, soili.norro@utu.fi**

Dear Sir / Madam,

This research is part of my PhD studies that I am conducting for the University of Turku, Finland. The research investigates the implementation of the language education policy and multilingual education in Namibia and intends to help teachers to develop their professional skills. The results of the research will be published in academic journals and in the doctoral dissertation of the researcher.

My data consist of classroom observations, teachers' questionnaire and teachers' interviews. I also include teachers' focus group discussions on the topic to my data. I intend to observe grade 4 classes, one week per class. I also intend to video record some of the lessons. The teacher interviews and the focus group discussions will be audio or video recorded for the analysis. All data obtained through observing (field notes, video recordings, interviews and their transcriptions) will be handled and stored with care in the University of Turku's secured services and the transcriptions will be anonymized so that the participants will not be recognized. During the research process, the researcher, her supervisors and the research assistants or a company doing the transcriptions will have access to the data. The data will be archived in the University of Turku's (Digilang or corresponding) portal and can later be opened for future research if the participants give the permission to do so.

I have the permission of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture of Namibia and of the Regional Director to conduct this research project. I hereby request your consent to give me access to your school to conduct this research. You have the right to deny access to your school and / or retract your consent at any time of the research. The denial will cause you no harm. In the case of retraction, the data obtained that far will however be legally utilized for the research project.

I want to emphasize the fact that I am doing this research for academic purposes only and will give no official report to the Ministry. If you have any questions about the research project, I will be happy to answer them.

I hope that you will be willing to make possible the research project by giving your consent in a separate consent form and I sincerely thank you for your cooperation.

**Ms Soili Norro**

**PhD student**

**School of Languages and Translation Studies**

**University of Turku, Finland**

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20014 University of Turku

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**Appendix 2.** Consent letters.

CONSENT LETTER / TEACHERS (OBSERVATIONS AND INTERVIEWS)

**Project: Mother tongue based multilingual education in Namibian basic education**

**Responsible researcher: Ms Soili Norro, soili.norro@utu.fi**

I have read and understood the information letter concerning the above mentioned research project. By signing this consent letter, I agree to participate in the research in the following ways: (Please tick the relevant boxes.)

I give my consent to the researcher to observe and video record my classes for research purposes in the way described in the information letter.

I consent to being interviewed by the researcher and the interview to be audio or video recorded for research purposes in the way described in the information letter.

I consent to my interview to be archived for later research purposes.

I consent to the classroom video recordings to be archived for later research purposes.

---

(Date and place, signature and name in block letters)

I have also read and understood the privacy statement attached to the information letter concerning the above mentioned research project and give my consent to handle my personal information in the way described in the privacy statement.

---

(Date and place, signature and name in block letters)

CONSENT LETTER / TEACHERS (FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS)

**Project: Mother tongue based multilingual education in Namibian basic education**

**Responsible researcher: Ms Soili Norro, soili.norro@utu.fi**

I have read and understood the information letter concerning the above mentioned research project. By signing this consent letter, I agree to participate in the research in the following ways: (Please tick the relevant boxes.)

I consent to participate in a focus group discussion.

I consent to the focus group discussion to be recorded for research purposes in the way described in the information letter.

I consent to the focus group discussion to be archived for later research purposes.

I do not consent to my interview to be archived for later research purposes.

---

(Date and place, signature and name in block letters)

I have also read and understood the privacy statement attached to the information letter concerning the above mentioned research project and give my consent to handle my personal information in the way described in the privacy statement.

---

(Date and place, signature and name in block letters)

CONSENT LETTER / PRINCIPALS

**Project: Mother tongue based multilingual education in Namibian basic education**

**Responsible researcher: Ms Soili Norro, soili.norro@utu.fi**

I have read and understood the information letter concerning the above mentioned research project. By signing this consent letter, I give the researcher the permission to conduct the above

mentioned research in \_\_\_\_\_ (name of the school).

---

(Date and place, signature and the name of the principal in block letters

**Appendix 3. Questionnaire.**

QUESTIONNAIRE

**Project: Mother tongue based multilingual education in Namibian basic education**

**Responsible researcher: Ms Soili Norro, [soili.norro@utu.fi](mailto:soili.norro@utu.fi), +358 50 3316 857 / 081-2515193**

This questionnaire forms part of the research data for my PhD study that I am conducting for the University of Turku, Finland. The research investigates the implementation of the language education policy and multilingual education in Namibia and intends to help teachers to develop their professional skills.

All data obtained through this questionnaire will be handled and stored with care in the University of Turku's secured services and anonymized so that the participants will not be recognized. During the research process, the researcher and her supervisors only will have access to the data. The results of the research will be published in academic journals and in the doctoral dissertation of the researcher. The anonymized data can later be opened for future research.

I hope that you will be willing to make possible the research project by giving your consent and I sincerely thank you for your cooperation.

I consent to participate in the research by answering the questionnaire.

I have read and understood the privacy statement attached to the questionnaire and give my consent to my personal information being handled in the ways described in the privacy statement.

**I Background information**

Tick the right alternative.

1. Age:                     19-24 yrs         25-30 yrs     31-40 yrs  
                               41-50 yrs         51-55 yrs     over 55 yrs
2. Years in service:  under 3 yrs         3-5 yrs         6-10 yrs  
                               11-15 yrs         16-20 yrs     over 20 yrs
3. Academic and professional qualifications:  
 less than Grade 12  
 Grade 12 or 1–2 years' tertiary  
 more than 2 years' tertiary  
Do you have formal teacher training?     yes             no
4. School region: \_\_\_\_\_
5. What grade(s) do you teach this academic year? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What grade(s) have you taught during the last three years? \_\_\_\_\_
7. If you are a subject teacher, what subject(s) do you teach?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What language(s) do you most identify with yourself? (What would you call your mother tongue, if any?)  
 Khoekhoegowab     Ju'/hoansi             Oshiwambo  
 Otjiherero             Afrikaans             Silozi  
 Setswana               Thimbukushu         Rumanyo  
 English                 German                 Rukwangali  
 Portuguese             Other : \_\_\_\_\_  
Comments (if any): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Are you qualified to teach in your mother tongue?     yes             no

10. In which language do you find it most comfortable to teach?

English  home language

Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

11. What are the main home languages of your learners? (You can tick several boxes.)

Khoekhoegowab  Ju'/hoansi  Oshiwambo

Otjiherero  Afrikaans  Silozi

Setswana  Thimbukushu  Rumanyo

English  German  Rukwangali

Portuguese  Other : \_\_\_\_\_

Comments (if any): \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

12. What other languages do your learners speak at home? (You can tick several boxes.)

Khoekhoegowab  Ju'/hoansi  Oshiwambo

Otjiherero  Afrikaans  Silozi

Setswana  Thimbukushu  Rumanyo

English  German  Rukwangali

Portuguese  Other : \_\_\_\_\_

With whom do they speak these languages? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## II Language policy and teaching practices

1. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Choose the amount of agreement that best corresponds your opinion.

1= I strongly disagree

2= I disagree

3 = I don't know

4 = I agree

5 = I strongly agree

a) Learners learn best when they are taught in their home language. 1 2 3 4 5

b) English should be the medium of instruction from Grade 1. 1 2 3 4 5

c) Instruction in the home language should be extended beyond Grade 3. 1 2 3 4 5

d) Both English and the home languages should be used as medium of instruction throughout the Primary cycle (Grades 1-7) 1 2 3 4 5

e) The learning outcomes do not depend on the language of instruction. Other factors are more decisive. 1 2 3 4 5

f) My learners have difficulties in understanding when they are taught in English. 1 2 3 4 5

g) The existence of many languages in Namibia is a problem in education. 1 2 3 4 5

h) Every child has the right to be educated in his / her own language. 1 2 3 4 5

i) The many different languages of Namibia are a resource in education. 1 2 3 4 5

2. In what ways do you facilitate learning in class? Circle *often* / *sometimes* / *never* according to your teaching practices. You can comment on your answers in the end.

a) I switch the language if I notice that the learners do not understand. *often / sometimes / never*

b) I introduce a new topic in the home language. *often / sometimes / never*

c) I prepare (myself or with the learners) vocabularies to help them understand a new text in English. *often / sometimes / never*

d) I explain the core terms and concepts in the learners' home language. *often / sometimes / never*

e) I let the learners use their home languages when doing group work. *often / sometimes / never*

f) I ask other learners to translate to their peers. *often / sometimes / never*

g) I use some words, e.g. greetings, in the learners' home languages in class to make them feel comfortable. *often / sometimes / never*

- h) I make the learners' home languages visible in class (e.g. posters / word walls / drawings). *often / sometimes / never*
- i) I use charts, pictures, drawings and other visual support. *often / sometimes / never*
- j) I edit English texts by removing extraneous information and / or by replacing difficult words by easier ones. *often / sometimes / never*
- k) I provide handouts containing some of the language the learners will need when completing the task. *often / sometimes / never*
- l) I split new content into smaller chunks. *often / sometimes / never*
- m) I ask questions to direct the attention to the essential concepts to be learned. *often / sometimes / never*
- n) I help learners correct their oral utterances by asking them to repeat and by providing clues to the correct form. *often / sometimes / never*
- o) I reformulate learners' erroneous utterances in correct form. *often / sometimes / never*
- p) I accept that learners use their home languages or mix codes in class. *often / sometimes / never*
- q) I accept that learners use other languages than English in assessments. *often / sometimes / never*

3. Can you give examples of your best practices in class? You can also comment on your answers to questions a-q.

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**III In-service training**

1. What in-service training have you attended?

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2. What did you find the most valuable in the training(s) you have attended?

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3. If you were to attend in-service training in the future, what areas would you find the most important? Tick the five most important.

- Discipline in class \_\_\_\_\_
- Mother-tongue instruction \_\_\_\_\_
- Use of different elicitation techniques \_\_\_\_\_
- English grammar \_\_\_\_\_
- Explaining concepts \_\_\_\_\_
- Use of non-verbal support \_\_\_\_\_
- Preparing teaching material \_\_\_\_\_
- Mastery of subject content \_\_\_\_\_
- Use of home languages as resource \_\_\_\_\_
- Assessment \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

If you chose "Other", please specify what:

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**IV Comments**

Is there anything you would like to add or are there any comments you have on this questionnaire?

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*Thank you for your participation!*

**Appendix 4.** Teacher interviews and focus group discussions.

## TEACHER INTERVIEWS

**Project: Mother tongue based multilingual education in Namibian basic education****Responsible researcher: Ms Soili Norro, [soili.norro@utu.fi](mailto:soili.norro@utu.fi), +358 50 3316 857, XXX****Starting the interview:**

The interview is part of the data collection procedures for the above-mentioned study. The purpose of the study is to investigate the state of multilingual education and the teaching practices in Namibian basic education. I thank you for having given your consent to participate and remind that you do it voluntarily and can withdraw your consent at any time. You may also choose not to answer some questions if you do not want to answer them.

**Interviewee code:****Background information**

1. Age and years in service:
2. School region:
3. What are your academic and professional qualifications?
4. Do you have formal teacher training?
5. Are you qualified to teach in your mother tongue?
6. What are the home languages of your pupils?

**Interview questions**

1. Tell me about your teaching methods.
2. How do you deal with the different language backgrounds of your pupils?
3. How does the transition from mother tongue instruction to English usually take place?
4. How do you facilitate learning in your class? What kind of support do you use (visual or other)? What kind of teaching material do you use?
5. What do you think about the language policy in Namibian schools? (mother tongue vs. English)
6. What about the language policy in families? How do you communicate with parents?
7. What kind of training would you like to attend? What topics do you find important?
8. Questions of the researcher on the recorded lessons.

## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

**Project: Mother tongue based multilingual education in Namibian basic education**  
**Responsible researcher: Ms Soili Norro, [soili.norro@utu.fi](mailto:soili.norro@utu.fi), +358 50 3316 857, XXX**

### Starting the interview:

The interview is part of the data collection procedures for the above-mentioned study. The purpose of the study is to investigate the state of multilingual education and the teaching practices in Namibian basic education. I thank you for having given your consent to participate and remind that you do it voluntarily and can withdraw your consent at any time. You may also choose not to answer some questions if you do not want to answer them.

**Group code:**

**School region:**

### Participants:

<b>Background information</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Age						
Yrs in service						
Qualifications						
Formal teacher training						
Qualified to teach in mt?						
Grade or subject						

### Discussion topics

- Being a teacher in Namibia in general
- The main strengths and challenges of the pupils
- Languages used in class (Why and when and in what proportions are they used?)
- Opinions on the language policy in Namibian schools (mother tongue vs. English)
- The competence of the pupils and the teachers in English
- Teaching material, support and scaffolding used in class
- Training (What topics would be important?)





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