

LARGE SCALE PROJECT PROPOSAL FORM

Please complete proposals electronically and enter text into the boxes provided.

SECTION 1. ESSENTIAL FACTS

Project Title (maximum 120 characters)

IMPROVING LANGUAGE AND LITERACY IN LOW INCOME COUNTRIES FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

Short Title (maximum 60 characters)

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

Summary of Purpose of project (maximum 200 words)

The main purpose of the research project is to generate new knowledge that will lead to initiatives in improving the quality of education in Tanzania and Ghana. The project will specifically address issues of literacy and language development on the assumption that quality education presupposes that learners have the requisite language competence to access knowledge. The project intends to target disadvantaged members of the community as beneficiaries of the research outcomes: i.e. the poor and women. The project team will work closely with policy makers, especially Ministry of Education officials, with a view to influencing policy formulations that will utilize research outcomes to improve literacy, language education and levels of achievement in subjects. This, it is hoped, will consequently raise the quality of education in the target communities. The project will also strengthen capacity building in the partner institutions in the two countries, thus helping them to become centres of innovations and change in language and literacy research.

Name of Lead researcher/s

University of Dar es Salaam: Prof. Casmir Rubagumya, Prof. Justinian Galabawa;
University of Cape Coast: Dr Yaw Ankomah; University of Bristol: Prof. Pauline Rea-Dickins
Consultants: Mr. John Clegg, University of Bristol

Lead Institution

University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Project Partners

University of Cape Coast, Ghana, Bristol University.

Start Date

April 2006

End Date

August 2010

(these should correspond with the end of the inception phase and the end of the project respectively unless explicitly stated otherwise)

Total Cost of Project

Breakdown of Total Cost by Financial Year

FY:2006/07	FY:2007/08	FY:2008/09	FY:2009/10	FY:2010/11

Which countries will the project cover?

Tanzania, Ghana

SECTION 2. PROJECT INFORMATION

Rationale

1. What is the rationale or the 'big idea' behind the project?
2. How will the project enable the RPC to meet its overall objectives?
3. Why is there a need for this research?
4. In what ways will the proposed research provide new knowledge and build on existing research?
(maximum 1500 words)

The main purpose of the research project is to undertake initiatives that will improve the quality of education by addressing issues of literacy and language development in two low income countries: Tanzania and Ghana. As appropriate, the project will also draw on experience of language in education within similar contexts. Beneficiaries of the research outcomes will be disadvantaged groups in the community: the poor and women. By working closely with policy makers in the two countries, it is hoped that the project will influence policy formulation that will utilize research outcomes to improve literacy and language education and raise levels of achievement in subjects. The project will also support partner institutions in the three countries to build capacity to become centres of excellence in language and literacy research.

In this proposal, language refers to (i) home/community language – referred to as L1, (ii) European language of school learning – referred to as L2, but often a third (L3) or subsequent language for many African children. Language ability refers to (i) general purpose language ability, and (ii) language ability for school learning (i.e. Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency). Literacy refers to (i) general purpose print literacy (i. e. ability to read and write), and (ii) literacy for school learning.

Meeting the RPC's Objectives

The research project will generate new knowledge about language and literacy and their impact on quality of education in low income countries. It will specifically focus on how literacy in school affects the lives of disadvantaged groups such as the poor and women. Literacy at primary school level and its impact on surrounding communities will be given priority because of the potential benefit to poverty reduction.

Need for Research

There is evidence that improving the quality of education can reduce poverty by increasing income and output (UNESCO 2004). Literacy, in particular, and education, more generally, have the potential to empower people to have more control over their lives. Literate people in poor communities can acquire knowledge to help them increase agricultural output (Jamison & Lau, 1982), improve health, increase income (see the detailed analysis by Vijverberg, 1999, of the schooling and cognitive skills impact on income from non-farm employment), and develop control over technology. There is unequivocal evidence that literate women are more likely to have control over their fertility and to learn more about child care and nutrition, especially in the early years of life (Glewwe & Desai, 1999; See Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, 1985: pp.290-304 discussing extensively the work of Cochraine, 1979 and Cochraine et al., 1980).

However, the quality of education cannot be improved without effective use of

language to impart knowledge. In this regard, there is evidence that learners in African L2-medium classrooms may not be able to use the language of instruction sufficiently well as a medium of learning. Specifically, it is hypothesised that:

- (a) education through the medium of European languages (L2) in Africa, as currently practised, can depress school achievement (see for example the recent ADEA report, specifically, Heugh 2005). This question is fundamental to the effectiveness of schooling in Africa.
- (b) in particular, it may impact most negatively on learners from low-socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds. There is some evidence that learners from more educated backgrounds benefit more from L2-medium education (Tollefson 1991). In terms of poverty reduction it is important to know to what extent this might be the case in Africa.
- (c) schools in Africa may not be using learners' L1 to the greatest pedagogical effect, despite widespread agreement that the quality of education through community languages (L1) is crucial in determining the effectiveness of education through L2 (e.g. Cummins 2000).
- (d) the role of L1 and L2 in school discourse may affect the school performance of boys and girls differently (Alidou & Brock-Utne 2005). This is under-researched in general, but could be important to the education of girls and women in Africa.
- (e) textbook design may contribute to low achievement. It is possible that in L2-medium education in Africa, textbooks are not sufficiently comprehensible to learners of the L2. This is not widely researched.

There is therefore a need to pursue research in low-income countries that will establish best practice in the teaching of literacy, as well as in teaching other subjects through the mother-tongue or through a second or third language. Since the three countries involved in this research are bilingual/multilingual, there is a need to establish how education in low-income countries can best utilize all the linguistic resources at their disposal for optimum effect on the quality of education.

Building on Existing Research

From the focused literature review and national workshops it has been possible to identify existing initiatives in the field of language and literacy development locally (Ghana and Tanzania). The study has also benefited from a literature review with an international perspective which will help to better conceptualize language and literacy and how they contribute to the quality of education in specific low-income contexts.

In many African countries, the debate on medium of instruction has been going on for a long time. A considerable amount of research on language policy and language in education from a macro perspective has been done, for example since the 70s in both Tanzania and Ghana, e.g. Rubagumya (1990, 1994 in Tanzania; Collison, 1975 & Annor-Kumi 1992, 1997 in Ghana), and in Southern Africa, e.g. Macdonald (1990), Williams (1996). Similarly there is a lot of seminal writing on the subject, e.g. Alexander (2001), Dutcher (2001). However, there is a dearth of studies that have investigated empirically the development of literacy and subject knowledge in L1 and L2 in sub-Saharan Africa. The main focus of the present project will therefore be on under-researched areas, such as the problems of developing literacy and subject knowledge in L1 and L2, the effectiveness of teaching and learning through L1 and L2, as well as how bilingualism can be effectively used to improve the learning/teaching process, especially in disadvantaged communities.

The following issues are current in research into bilingual/multilingual education both in Africa and the wider world and have an important bearing on this project:

The quality of education in multilingual settings

- The role of L1 cognitive and literacy skills is crucial in L2 medium learning: this is a widely accepted principle in education in multilingual settings. In Africa, it is doubtful whether the benefits of quality L1-medium education are fully exploited (Heugh 2005).
- The concept of additive bilingualism and its contribution to learners' use of L1 and L2 in school learning is broadly acknowledged as a likely basis for increased school achievement in education in multilingual settings generally (Cummins 2000). However, additive bilingualism is rarely realised and its implementation and effects rarely researched in African education.
- Teaching subjects in L2 requires a distinct pedagogy: few studies have looked closely at this within the African context.

Education in L1 and L2 in Africa

- The quality of classroom discourse including L1/L2 code switching is important in effective L2-medium teaching and learning (Arthur 2001). This is recognised as important but under-researched.
- There is evidence that classroom discourse in L2-medium lessons in Africa can be cognitively unchallenging with few opportunities for the negotiation of meaning (Hornberger & Chick 2001).
- Research in South Africa shows a wide gap at the switch of medium between the L2 ability of learners and the language demands of the curriculum (Macdonald 1990).
- There is evidence that learners in African L2-medium classrooms do insufficient talking, reading and writing in the L2 to use it adequately as a medium for learning (Alidou & Brock-Utne 2005).

These are crucial questions in the debate on education in low-income countries. They relate directly to questions of quality and effectiveness in classroom processes, school literacy levels, gender parity in schooling and people's capacity to benefit from education, especially with respect to poverty reduction.

The research project will take account of the mixed views on the role of L1 and L2 in education which exist within communities and education authorities in Africa. It will also take into account the role of teacher-education in developing an understanding in schools of the roles of L1 and L2 in teaching and learning. In general, initial teacher-education in Africa has not so far contributed widely to this understanding. It is anticipated that new knowledge from the research project will influence policy on bilingualism in education in Africa.

Aims and Research Questions

1. What are the aims of the project?
2. What are the key research questions that you hope to address?
(Maximum 500 words)

As part of the larger Research Programme Consortium (RPC) on quality education in low income countries, the Language and Literacy Development project has the following aims:

- (a) To identify effective practice in teaching subjects and basic literacy through the medium of L1 and L2.
- (b) To develop and pilot initiatives, including new learning materials, teaching strategies and related school-based professional development, in the teaching of subjects and basic literacy through the medium of L1 and L2.

- (c) To develop guidelines to support the mainstreaming of these initiatives.
- (d) To develop policy options regarding the introduction of forms of bilingual education.

In view of the above aims, the research project will address the following **research questions**:

- (a) i. What are the characteristics of current classroom interaction in lessons used for teaching subject knowledge and basic literacy through L1 and L2?
ii. What would make this interaction more effective?
- (b) i. What is the nature of current teachers' competence in teaching through L1 and L2 (focus on both core linguistic competence and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency)?
ii. What would make teachers' competence in teaching through L1 and L2 more effective?
- (c) i. What is the nature of current learners' competence in learning through L1 and L2 (focus on both core linguistic competence and cognitive academic language proficiency)?
ii. What would make learners' competence in learning through L1 and L2 more effective?
- (d) Is there any difference in the nature of classroom interaction between boys and girls especially with respect to the roles of L1 and L2? If so, what are the underlying causes of this difference?
- (e) What are the perceptions of learners, teachers, teacher educators, parents and education authorities of the roles of L1 and L2 in education?
- (f) i. To what extent is the content of L1-medium and L2-medium textbooks accessible to learners of L1 and L2?
ii. What measures can be taken to make the textbooks more learner-friendly?

Outcomes

1. What new initiatives are you hoping to develop?
2. What guidelines/ strategies do you intend to produce to assist with the mainstreaming of initiatives?
3. What other outcomes are anticipated?
(Maximum 500 words)

The following initiatives are expected to result from the research project:

- New teaching/learning materials for literacy and subject learning in L1 and L2 using a range of techniques for providing support for learning in bilingual school settings.
- Teacher development programmes aimed at helping teachers realize the link between subject knowledge, language choice and L1/L2-medium pedagogy. These programmes will equip subject teacher trainers with the means to make curricular contexts accessible to learners who are still developing their L2 ability

and to exploit the pedagogical value of bilingual school settings. Where possible, these teacher-education programmes and materials will be made available digitally for access in online teacher centres. In this regard links to the RPC ICT project will be explored.

- Community involvement in language- and literacy-related school practice through consultation with parents and school committees
- Guidelines for textbook writers on the production of learning materials which are designed for use by L1 especially in the Ghanaian context as well as L2-medium learners in both Tanzania and Ghana.

Strategies for Mainstreaming Initiatives

The research group will work to adopt the following strategies:

- Work with Ministry of Education officials in the partner countries by including them in planning, execution and evaluation processes both in the advisory group and in regular presentations and discussions of progress (see Communication with User Groups and Policy-makers).
- Work with teacher-education institutions in order to develop teacher-education capacity and to improve teaching quality through initial and in-service teacher education. At least one Teacher Training College in each country will be involved in the research in developing new materials and piloting them. College lecturers/tutors will be trained in data gathering and processing, in pedagogical issues related to the focus of the project, in materials design and in training for education in bilingual contexts. Morogoro Teacher Training College in Tanzania will be approached for this purpose because it is already involved in a SIDA (Swedish International Development Agency) supported project on language innovation in schools. In Ghana, Berekum Teacher Training College in the Brong Ahafo Region (one of the regions targeted for the study) will be contacted for this aspect.
- Work with teachers in schools: teachers will be involved in school-based data gathering.
- Work with communities: the research group will work with school committees and local community leaders to consult them on the use of language in schools, inform them of innovations in language use, gain acceptance of these innovations and evaluate the effect of these innovations on learner achievement.
- Disseminate project outcomes to the wider educational, research and publishing community in printed and digital form.

Poverty reduction

1. How will your project contribute to poverty reduction?
2. What indicators will you use to monitor the impact of the project on poverty reduction?

(Maximum 1000 words)

Education, and for that matter literacy, has acknowledged effects on poverty reduction. It has the capacity to lower birth rates, increase civic engagement, increase economic productivity, increase the ability of people, particularly women, to make informed health choices. In general education also gives people greater control over their own lives. Specifically, the quality of school and classroom processes – such as the effective use of resources and of instructional time – has a positive impact on levels of achievement and thus on national and individual productivity (UNESCO 2004).

Underlying these potential effects on poverty-reduction is the capacity of learners to

learn and thus gain these benefits. The ability to use the language of learning is fundamental to this capacity. This project hypothesises that language ability has an impact on:

- levels of school literacy, i.e. the ability to use literacy for school learning
- levels of achievement in subjects

Specifically, it is hypothesised that these levels of ability and achievement can be increased by more effective use of L1 and L2 in education. With respect to learners, this can:

- increase their capacity to participate in lessons
- increase the capacity of girls to perform at par with boys
- increase the capacity of learners to use specific language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) for learning

With respect to teachers, it is recognised that cognitively unchallenging teaching practices are common in sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO 2005) and that low-meaning lessons in the L2 contribute to this (Hornberger & Chick 2001; Cummins 2000). This project also hypothesises that more effective pedagogical uses of L1 and L2 in education can increase the capacity of teachers to use effective teaching strategies.

It is further hypothesised that more effective uses of L1 and L2 in education can benefit school communities through improved school achievement, increased literacy-related activity in homes by school-age children and the strengthening of school-community bonds which can result from legitimising the use of L1 in school learning.

Indicators:

- Increased learner-participation in lessons
- Increased participation amongst girls in particular
- Improved use of writing, reading, talk and listening for learning subjects in both L1 and L2
- Increased levels of learner subject knowledge
- Improved ability of teachers to use L1 and L2 for teaching
- Enhanced range of teacher pedagogic activities
- Improved positive attitude of community to the quality of classroom learning.

Addressing disadvantage

1. Which disadvantaged groups are you hoping to target in your project and why?
2. How will your project contribute to reducing the disadvantages faced by these groups?
3. What steps will you put in place to ensure that the outputs of your project are relevant for these groups?
4. What indicators will you use to assess the impact of your project on these groups?

(Maximum 1000 words)

The research activities will focus mainly on rural communities, but urban deprived schools will also be targeted. In both areas, exposure to the L2 medium of instruction can be low and the number of low-SES families can be high. Both factors may impair learners' ability to use L2 for learning and thus reduce their access to the curriculum. It is assumed that improving learners' ability to use L1 and L2 for learning

can increase access to education and raise achievement.

In all research sites, girls will be given special attention because they tend to be more disadvantaged than boys and because improvements in their education have recognised poverty-reducing benefits. Specifically the project will investigate whether improving learners' ability to use L1 and L2 more effectively for learning will affect girls in particular, making it easier for them to express themselves and thus lower an affective language-related barrier which may affect them more than boys. In this respect, the project addresses an issue of gender access to quality education. It will work explicitly with local community leaders and school committees to achieve this objective.

Indicators:

- Increased participation in lessons by learners in low-income communities
- Increased awareness amongst teachers of language barriers to classroom learning amongst low-income learners
- Increased participation by girls in lessons
- Improved confidence on the part of girls in using language for learning
- Increased awareness amongst teachers of language-related barriers to learning amongst girls
- Improved awareness in communities of factors that enhance classroom language learning
- Improved awareness in communities of factors that enhance and support the classroom language learning of girls

Learning Contexts

1. Which learning contexts are you hoping to address and why?
2. If the focus is on institutions such as schools then how will the project benefit broader processes of community learning/development/empowerment?
(*Maximum 500 words*)

Primary schools, mainly in rural and poor urban communities will be the main learning contexts addressed in this research project. This is in line with the overall RPC focus on disadvantaged communities. Initiatives at primary school level are more likely to have the biggest and immediate impact on poverty reduction and gender equity.

The languages involved in Tanzania will be English and Kiswahili and in Ghana English and Akan (Twi/Fante), the latter being the dominant indigenous language spoken in Ghana.

Distinctions between L1 and L2-medium education are visible within primary schools in Ghana because the medium of instruction changes to English within the primary phase. However, in practice, private schools (and a few urban schools) use English as the medium of instruction throughout the primary level. The project will therefore look at differences in quality of learning between private English-medium all-primary (i.e. both lower and upper primary) and public local-language-medium (i.e. Akan) lower primary schools. In Tanzania, because Kiswahili is used as the medium of instruction throughout public primary education, the project will look at distinctions in the quality of learning between private English-medium primary schools and public Kiswahili-medium primary schools. In addition, it will observe a small number of

Tanzanian English-medium secondary classrooms for which project primary schools are feeder schools to capture possible transfer effects from primary to secondary.

The project will involve communities surrounding the schools in the following ways (see also Methods and Monitoring and Evaluation sections):

- The project will encourage community ownership of new initiatives by involving community leaders and school committee members in local planning and evaluation.
- The project will consult communities on their views of the role of L1 and L2 in education by surveying individuals and groups.
- It is assumed that by expanding the role of community languages in education, better school-community communication can take place. The project will monitor this by interviews with school committee members and sample community groups.

Methods

1. What methods do you anticipate using in your project and why?
2. How will the methods support the realisation of the project aims and research questions?
3. What participatory methodologies will you use if any?
(*Maximum 1000 words*)

The proposed research will develop a rich descriptive and analytic account of literacy and language development practices. A key feature of the research will be the way in which the teachers in participating schools, and teacher-educators, will be involved through an action-research oriented methodology. Overall the research will adopt a multifaceted approach using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. This will involve:

(i) a broad socio-cultural approach, which emphasises the need to understand literacy and language development practices within the social and cultural contexts in which they take place. This theoretical approach leads to a methodology in which literacy and language development will be studied in depth – involving teacher engagement – within the ecology of (a) the classroom, in a relatively small number of schools, and (b) selected out of school and home environments – involving parent/guardian engagement – in which learners from the case study schools are involved. Teacher and learner literacy and language development practices will be analysed from an interactional perspective through the detailed analysis of classroom discourse informed by a variety of conceptual lenses

(ii) survey methodology for capturing data from the range of stakeholder groups across the target schools about perceptions on central issues that impact on effective first language literacy and second/third language development (e.g. teachers' self report on language competence, stakeholders' attitudes to the use of L1 and L2 in education).

The project envisages two main phases of data capture.

Phase 1: Baseline

Quantitative survey methods will be used for collecting baseline data on the following:

- (a) Teachers' views on the development of L1 literacy skills and appropriate pedagogic practices.
- (b) Teachers' views on the importance of language in delivering subject content.
- (c) Methodologies used in primary schools to impart literacy skills and subject learning.
- (d) Teachers' self report on language competence (both L1 and L2).
- (e) Stakeholders' (teachers, pupils, parents, girls etc) attitudes to the use of L1 and L2 in education.
- (f) Stakeholders' awareness of language-related barriers to education

Tests will be used to measure both local and English language abilities of teachers and learners, and the subject knowledge of learners. Qualitative data will be gathered through individual interviews and focus group interviews as well as classroom observations.

Phase 2: Case Studies

The number of case studies will be reviewed as the research progresses and it may be the case that the proposed samples will be reduced in order to allow more in-depth analysis and documentation of fewer schools to allow the distinctiveness of each school 'type' to emerge.

• **Samples**

Tanzania: 10 primary schools:

6 rural primary schools: Kiswahili medium

2 urban (slum) primary school: Kiswahili medium

2 urban primary school English medium

+ feeder secondary schools (1 or 2) to capture potential transfer effects (small scale studies)

Ghana: 10 primary schools drawn from the Brong Ahafo and Central Regions:

4 urban poor schools (2 in each region)

4 rural schools (2 in each region)

2 private schools (1 in each region).

• **Procedures**

Quantitative data on subject knowledge and language ability of learners will be collected by means of tests. Textbooks will be analysed for comprehensibility. Data on teacher- and learner-confidence and attitudes as well as data on community perceptions will be gathered using survey and interview techniques. Classroom interaction and participants' responses to it, i.e. through classroom observations, interviews, simulated recall, focus group discussions and interviews will be analysed by means of qualitative methods; as appropriate, different conceptual and analytic frameworks will be used. In particular practitioner action-research approaches will be used to support some of the data collection and interpretation: teachers will be trained to use techniques such as classroom observation and simulated recall to collect data.

As classroom observation will be a major data collection procedure, this is explained in more detail, as follows:

Classroom Observations

Classroom teachers (of both literacy and school subjects, i.e. maths, science, social sciences) will be observed and audio/video taped. The focus will be on classroom interaction between the teacher and his/her pupils on the one hand, and among

pupils themselves on the other hand. Exemplar focal points include:

- how teachers build on knowledge that pupils bring into the classroom from their homes and other out-of-school learning environments (including Madrasa lessons in Tanzania, for example).
- the nature of classroom interaction, e.g. teachers' questioning strategies, their feedback to pupils and the impact of these strategies on learner uptake (content and language); the relative balance between a transmissive or an exploratory approach to teaching and learning
- the teaching and learning experiences of boys and girls; the extent to which these might be different and an exploration of the reasons why
- teachers' competence levels in relation to (i) their own L1 and L2 language competence, and importantly how this impacts on (ii) their teaching and learning strategies and their effectiveness to develop school subject knowledge.
- the perceptions of teachers and learners on the use of L1 and L2 in education
- the extent to which learners are able to engage with textbooks
- the extent to which there are differences in relation to the above across lower and upper primary and, via the small scale studies, the lower secondary stage

Audio and video recorded material will be used as the basis for teacher simulated recall, linked to specific literacy and language development practices. Focus group discussions based on this recorded material will be used as one of the key means to engage teachers in a critique of their professional practice and to gather evidence (e.g. specific classroom vignettes) of 'best practice'. These discussions will also provide a springboard for the design of innovative teaching/learning materials, and the refining and development of effective approaches to supporting literacy, language and content learning that will then be trialled in the case study schools. Differences between experiences in Tanzania and Ghana will be studied and taken into account in the mainstreaming of initiatives.

Data Analysis

The data analysis will be carried out using a multi-layering technique combining ethnography, discourse analysis and linguistic description, as follows:

Layer 1: will use observations, interviews and demographic data to provide a rich *ethnographic* description of the ecology of the classroom, and in out-of-school informal learning contexts, in which literacy acquisition and L2 development takes place.

Layer 2: will adopt a *discourse analysis* approach for investigating the interview, including focus group data.

Layer 3: will use classroom transcripts for the *linguistic and discourse analysis* of teacher and children's talk and, in particular, the linguistic outputs and interaction along dimensions that emerge as significant from research on L1 literacy and L2 development.

Layer 4: will use classroom transcripts to analyse the *interactional features* of lived literacy and language development episodes in classrooms - in the core subject areas of numeracy, literacy, social science, and science - in relation to (i) ways in which teachers assist their learners' literacy and linguistic performances, (ii) different modes of learner engagement in literacy, language and subject learning contexts, and (iii) peer interaction.

The analysis of data will be supported through NVivo (a qualitative software programme for use with lesson transcript and interview data) and SPSS for the quantitative (e.g. questionnaire, test and teacher feedback strategies) data.

Ethical Issues

The importance of ethical considerations and responsibilities of the researchers are critical in the conduct of this study. These will be addressed by each participating country/institution. This is also an area for which there will be further discussion / training within the project team. Some key considerations – exemplars - to be taken into account are as follows:

Researcher access

- Letters to District Education Offices, building of rapport with school heads, teachers etc.

Information to participants

- Brief details of the purpose and nature of the research project

Rights of participants to withdraw

- Participants may withdraw at any point
- Make prominent the benefits of the study to participants

Rights of participants to ask questions and receive answers

Informed consent of participants

- Consent forms drawn up, as appropriate
- Consent forms to schools, parents of targeted learners, n.b. Head teachers may stand in proxy for parents in some cases

Procedures for complaints

- These should be developed and clear and communicated to participants, for example through the school Head to the Lead Researcher

Anonymity and confidentiality

- Schools and participants

Data storage

- Lockable cupboard/cabinet

Plan of Project Activities

1. Provide a work plan of main activities, including approximate time allocated to each activity.
2. What are the main milestones/ outputs in the project?
3. How will responsibility for each activity be distributed amongst research partners?
(*Maximum 1000 words*)

To be inserted

Risks

1. What are the most likely problems which will inhibit the proposed project from achieving its objectives? How will you counter them?
2. How likely are these to happen and how serious the consequences to the project if they occur? What means have been/will be taken to minimize or mitigate potential risks?
3. Evaluate the risks which might prevent the project from influencing policy and practice.
(*Maximum 500 words*)

In both Tanzania and Ghana it might be difficult to get access to some remote research sites, especially during the rainy season when roads are impassable without a four-wheel drive vehicle. The project will as far as possible plan field activities to coincide with clear days based on national weather forecasts. Where necessary, a reliable vehicle will be hired for field trips. Power blackouts areas are also common experiences in both countries. This will call for strict adherence to work schedules so that there are no outstanding activities to attend to.

There is also danger that some policy makers may not be interested in the innovations proposed by the research project: views on the issue of languages of learning are often diverse. In both Tanzania and Ghana, the debate on language of instruction has often generated into unresolved heated arguments. The research team will try to counter this by involving policy makers at all stages of the research process, so that ownership of the outcomes is really felt to belong to all stakeholders, including policy makers. The team will do this by:

- Sharing of information with policy-makers and NGO representatives on the Advisory group
- Targeted presentations to ministry officials and NGOs (see Communication with User Groups and Policy-makers) to keep them abreast of the progress being made on the project to keep their attention focused on the future possible benefits to the two countries.
- Planning and organising school- and community-based activities during which teachers from other communities would be enlightened on the critical issues the project addresses.

The question of language of instruction will also affect communities and parents: it is common in African education for them to be wary of measures which may seem to downgrade English. In both Tanzania and Ghana, some stakeholders might view innovations aimed at improving literacy in Kiswahili and an indigenous language like Akan as a signal of moving away from English which is considered as a language of prestige. Measures will be taken during the research process to convince teachers, parents, pupils and policy makers that the research project is not intended to marginalize English in the schools. On the contrary, the project aims at demonstrating that being literate in L1/community languages can be a strong foundation on which to build English language competence. The research team will aim to do this by the establishment of local school liaison groups and by its communications strategy (see Monitoring and Evaluation and Communication with User Groups and Policy-makers).

Monitoring and Evaluation

1. How do you intend to monitor and review the implementation of the project and assess its impact?
2. What existing key indicators of quality will you use in your project and what indicators will you seek to develop?
3. What baseline/benchmarking data will be used?
(Maximum 500 words)

Advisory group

Apart from the overall RPC monitoring and evaluation, a local advisory group will be put in place in each partner country. Each team will have three members drawn from the Ministry of Education institute/division responsible for curriculum development, an

NGO/international organization involved in language teaching initiatives (e.g. the British Council), a university department with expertise in language/literacy teaching. Individual partner countries will decide on the most suitable candidates within the framework of this guideline. The team will oversee the overall operation of the project.

School liaison groups

In addition, the project will involve school communities in the monitoring of project activities by establishing semi-formal school liaison groups consisting of teachers, parents, school committee members and community leaders. These groups will allow the project to:

- involve communities in local planning and evaluation
- consult communities on their views of the role of L1 and L2 in education
- present findings to communities, monitor their responses and feed these responses back into project activities

Project monitoring systems

Systems will be put in place for the systematic collection of data. Training for field researchers in data collection and logging will take place at the beginning of the project. Regular and frequent (monthly) research coordination meetings will take place with lead and field researchers to ensure that data-collection is secure and reliable.

Baseline data

Baseline data will be collected on:

- Teachers' views on the development of L1 literacy skills and appropriate pedagogic practices.
- Teachers' views on the importance of language in delivering subject content.
- Methodologies used in primary schools to impart literacy skills.
- Teachers' self report on language competence (both L1 and L2).
- Stakeholders' (teachers, pupils, parents, girls etc) attitudes to the use of L1 and L2 in education.
- Stakeholders' awareness of language-related barriers to education

Where appropriate, tests will be used to measure local language and English language abilities of teachers and learners and the subject knowledge of learners.

Indicators of quality

The following indicators will be used:

Participation in lessons

- Increased participation in lessons by learners, particularly, in low-income communities
- Increased participation amongst girls in particular
- Improved use of writing, reading, talk and listening for learning subjects in both L1 and L2

Subject knowledge

- Increased levels of learner subject knowledge

Teacher competence and awareness

- Improved ability of teachers to use L1 and L2 for teaching
- Increased awareness amongst teachers of language barriers to classroom

learning amongst low-income learners and girls

- Increased repertoire of language-related pedagogic strategies for promoting learning among low-income learners and girls
- Increased awareness amongst teachers of the comprehensibility of textbooks
- Evidence of changed perceptions amongst teachers of the use of L1 and L2 in learning

Teacher educator competence and awareness

- Improved ability of teacher-educators to train teachers to use L1 and L2 for teaching
- Increased awareness amongst teacher-educators of language barriers to classroom learning amongst low-income learners and girls
- Increased awareness amongst teacher-educators of the comprehensibility of textbooks

Community response

- Improved positive attitude of community to the quality of classroom learning
- Increased awareness in communities of language-related barriers to learning, especially to the learning of girls
- Increased awareness in communities of the roles of L1 and L2 in schooling
- Increased use of school graduates in production and services provision

Communication with User Groups and Policy Makers

1. How will you communicate and work with user groups?
2. How will you ensure that your main research findings are accessible to non-academic audiences?
3. How do you hope to use popular media to disseminate research findings?
4. What are your intended pathways to policy influence?
5. What steps will you take to ensure that policy makers take ownership of the research and to support the mainstreaming of initiatives?

(Maximum 1000 words)

User groups

This research involves working very closely with schools, teachers and other professionals. The project will develop a collaborative and iterative dissemination strategy in order to reach the schools and their teachers, teacher educators, the local communities, policy makers, NGOs, and textbook authors.

(a) Schools/teachers

The project will work closely with school managements and with teachers, e.g. contributions to inset days and specialist workshops at various points during the research, e.g. training teachers for participatory action research, and also by communicating with institutions through school liaison groups on an ongoing basis.

(b) Communities

The project will involve school communities in project activities by establishing semi-formal school liaison groups consisting of teachers, parents, school committee members and community leaders. These groups will allow the project to:

- involve communities in local planning and evaluation
- consult communities on their views of the role of L1 and L2 in education
- present findings to communities, monitor their responses and feed these responses back into project activities

(c) Teacher-education

The project will feed back findings into the teacher-education community by:

- involving local teacher-education institutions in the research in developing new materials and piloting them. College lecturers/tutors will be trained in data gathering and processing, in pedagogical issues related to the focus of the project, in materials design and in training for education in bilingual contexts
- contributions to specialist workshops at various points during the research
- making available research outcomes online to teacher-education institutions within and outside the participating countries

(d) Academic community

The teacher-education community will be involved as indicated above. The local academic community will be represented on the advisory group, and the project team will communicate with local universities by means of a national workshop (see below) and occasional presentations of findings.

The findings will be presented more widely as the research progresses, e.g.

(i) presentations at BAAL (British Association for Applied Linguistics (UK), a proposed symposium at both SAAL (South African Association for Applied Linguistics) and AAAL (American Association for Applied Linguistics)

(ii) to maximise the theoretical impact of the research, a 2 day International Symposium will be held in the final year of the research project. It is proposed that this will be largely a self-financing event with donors requested to support, say 3, international speakers.

(iii) publications will be prepared as the research progresses for international peer reviewed journals such as *Language Teaching Research*, *Journal of Educational Management*, *Journal of Educational Development and Practice* (of IEPA & Institute of Education, UCC, respectively)

(e) Textbook publishers

Contact with textbook publishers will be established and maintained throughout the project period, through Ministries of Education and directly. By engaging textbook publishers in a dialogue, the quality of textbooks can be monitored and improvements suggested, relating to accessibility to learners according to their level of language competence. Project outcomes related to the comprehensibility of textbooks will be presented to publishers in the form of publishing guidelines.

The team will also seek opportunities to publicise the research through relevant websites and newsletters (e.g. through the Association for the Development of Education in Africa ADEA) newsletter.

The Media

The media will be invited to an official launch of the “Language and Literacy Development” research project. Press releases in each country will be part of the launch activities. Press contacts will be maintained by making progress reports and interim findings available through the life of the project

Policy-makers

Links with policy-makers will be established and maintained throughout the project period, chiefly through the local advisory group. Each team will have three members drawn from the Ministry of Education institute/division responsible for curriculum development, an NGO/international organization involved in language teaching initiatives (e.g. the British Council), a university department with expertise in

language/literacy teaching.

There will be a national dissemination workshop in each country, led by national coordinators and lead researchers in year 4, aimed both at disseminating research findings to policy-makers and other important stakeholders and at eliciting views on the materials the project intends to produce. Strategies for mainstreaming initiatives developed during the research process will be discussed at these workshops.

In summary, the proposed dissemination strategy will be transformative in aiming to present the research evidence in accessible ways through a variety of appropriate local, regional, national and international fora – for practitioners, school communities, policy makers and members of the academic community.

Capacity strengthening

1. Within a limited budget what are your most pressing capacity strengthening needs as a team?
2. How do you plan to realise these?
(Maximum 500 words)

Capacity building is needed in the following aspects of research which have been included in the plan of activities as part of training. It is expected that colleagues at Bristol University (John Clegg, Katie Scott, & Pauline Rea-Dickins) will lead the training sessions, most likely to take place in Dar es Salaam. Project lead researchers in Tanzania and Ghana will be trained in the planned workshops. Two teacher trainers, ten teachers (two from each sample school) and two research assistants on the Tanzania part of the project will also be trained. The lead researcher from Ghana will train the Ghanaian practitioners and research assistants after attending the training workshops in Tanzania. Key issues to address at these workshops will include the following:

- 1) Data management, archiving and retrieval: e.g. preparing data sets for archiving, the development of a project data base, indexing all project documents (paper, audio, video)
- 2) Classroom observation
- 3) Development, validation and implementation of procedures for data collection:
- 4) Ethical positioning in research: e.g. working with vulnerable groups, researching/data collection with young children
- 5) Data analysis mechanisms: analysing qualitative data using NVivo; Coding and analysing quantitative data using SPSS
- 6) Action research for practitioners.
- 7) Data analysis and interpretation

Key Researchers

1. Name the principal researchers from the lead institution and collaborating partners.

2. Specify the amount of time to be devoted to project activities by each researcher.
3. How will the skills of the team complement each other in realising the project goals?
(Maximum 1000 words)

University of Dar es Salaam

Prof. Casmir Rubagumya has undertaken research and consultancy work in the field of language in education at both primary and secondary levels and has widely published in this area. He has more than 20 years experience of teaching English as a foreign language at secondary and tertiary levels of education. He will bring to the project his wide experience of language issues in the Tanzanian educational system.

Prof. Justinian Galabawa has undertaken research in language policy and comparative analysis of performance in Kiswahili and English as media of instruction in selected Tanzanian secondary schools. Currently he is working on a cost benefit analysis of teaching in a local language. He has done research on education and poverty alleviation in Tanzania. He is also coordinator of a research project called Languages of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa (LOITASA). Prof. Galabawa's expertise in the economics of education as well as research on education and poverty alleviation are very relevant to the concerns of this project and they are likely to enrich it.

University of Cape Coast

Dr. Yaw Ankomah briefly taught a Ghanaian language (Twi) at secondary school level and has been involved in the translation of church literature and the Bible into Twi (the most dominant Ghanaian language) since 1988. As a lecturer in Educational Policy Analysis he has been working with students in analyzing the evolutionary process of Ghana's educational language policy.

Each lead researcher will spend at least 3 months a year on the project. It is expected that Prof. Rubagumya and Dr. Ankomah will spend more time on the project because they will coordinate research activities in Tanzania and Ghana respectively.

Bristol University

Prof. Pauline Rea-Dickins will act in a coordinating role for the Bristol team. Her expertise in researching language classrooms, language assessment and language programme evaluation will inform the project at various stages. The Bristol team comprises **John Clegg**, with responsibilities in the area of classroom teaching and learning and pedagogy to support classroom language learning and **Dr Katie Scott** who will contribute expertise in doing research classroom research and the analysis of classroom interaction.

Project Management

1. How will responsibility for managing the project be shared?
2. How will you ensure effective communication between research partners?
(Maximum 500 words)

The Tanzanian National Coordinator, Dr. Dachi and the Lead Researcher, Prof. Rubagumya, will be responsible for the overall project management. Dr. Dachi will handle administrative and financial matters while Prof. Rubagumya will handle the

professional side of the project. Communication within the research team will mainly be through e-mail and regular telephone calls. Yearly meetings of all research partners will be arranged, at key points in the project's development. The first full meeting of the Language and Literacy research team (Dar es Salaam, Ghana, Bristol) took place in June 2006. During this meeting, this research proposal was revised, and issues of research design and implementation provided the main focus. Detailed notes were kept and these are appended to this proposal. These will be reviewed as the project progresses, with specific points being revisited and/or taken further in subsequent communications, and research training events. In addition to project meetings and training sessions, contact will also be kept with the British collaborators, Prof. Pauline Rea-Dickins, John Clegg and Dr Katie Scott, through e-mail, and telephone.

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SECTION 3: FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Other Sources of Funding

1. What other sources of funding besides that available through the RPC are you hoping to attract?
2. How do you plan to go about accessing these alternative sources?
(Maximum 500 words)

The project will seek for additional financial support from Development Partners' supported bilateral collaborative projects such as those supported by SIDA/SAREC NUFU, UNICEF, UNESCO, in-country as well as regional education networks. Additional funds will be sought by writing proposals to compete for funding from research institutions such as Research for Poverty Alleviation (REPOA).