Conflicting Ideologies: When the Ideological Meets the Perceived and Operational

– A study of primary teachers' attitudes, perceptions and practice of Seychelles Creole (Kreol Seselwa) and English as mediums of instruction in the Seychelles Primary Schools.

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ABSTRACT

This paper builds on Zelime & Deutschmann, 2016, where we examined language ideologies/directives in the Ideological and Formal domains of the curriculum in a multilingual postcolonial context – the Seychelles. Our overall conclusion from this work was that there was a clear mismatch between the roles that different languages were ascribed in these two domains. In this paper, we look at manifestations of the Ideological and Formal curricula in the Perceived and Operational domains of the curriculum, more specifically, the language beliefs, attitudes and classroom practices of primary school teachers. We base our findings on questionnaire answers from 142 respondents in 22 primary schools, coupled with classroom observations and teacher interviews. The Seychelles has

a fairly typical postcolonial language-in-education system and follows a transitional model of medium of instruction (hereafter MoI). In this system children are taught in Kreol Seselwa (hereafter K.S.), the mother tongue of the vast majority, during the first two years of schooling after which it is replaced by English. Officially, K.S. retains its role as a "support language", but in reality, controversies surround this practice. Our results indicate that while K.S. plays a central role in the everyday lives of the teachers, they are surprisingly negative to its role in education. The majority want to see it removed altogether and replaced by an English-only model. At the same time, most teachers also acknowledge the importance of K.S. as a support language. Using a framework of postcolonial theory, we try to explain this inconsistency.

INTRODUCTION

In the wake of post-colonialism, policy makers in many former Sub-Saharan African colonies have grappled with language education issues, one of which is the choice of medium of instruction (hereafter MoI) in schools. According to Kamwangamalu (2013:325) these policy makers have historically been informed by "conflicting ideologies including decolonization, development, internalization, [and] globalization". On the one side, there have been those who have felt that education should be available to all through the vernacular or the mother tongue (UNESCO Model, 1953 and 1995; Hornberger, 2009; Hanna, 2011). On the other side, there were those who argue that the colonial languages, such as English and French, should remain MoIs because they guaranty educational and economic success nationally and internationally (Dewey 2007; Ferguson 2009; Jenkins, 2006).

In effect, the language-in-education issue is not limited to the African continent alone. The question of which language(s) to use in education has been a point of contention in most multilingual contexts around the world where minority or native languages are often marginalized in favor of a more powerful foreign language. For instance, in India the Three Language Formula (TLF) of 1968 has meant that English has been used to educate many Indian children whose mother tongue isn't English (see Hornberger & Vaish 2009). In Singapore, the bilingual education policy, which prefers English as the MoI, has led to learners' mother tongues taking a second language (hereafter L2) position (see Hornberger & Vaish 2009). Also in Brazil, Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia (see

Hornberger & Skilton-Sylvester, 2000), research has pointed out the necessity "to pay attention to and grant agency and voice to oral, bilingual interaction at a micro level" (Hornberger & Skilton-Sylvester, 2000:102). Some other examples include the case of bilingual schooling models in Bolivia (Benson, 2005), investigation of hegemonic literacy practices of schools in Indigenous settings of Quechua rural community in the Peruvian Andes (see de la Piedra, 2006), multilingual literacy among young learners of North Såmi (Outakoski 2015), and the investigation of literacy in multilingual classrooms of Haiti (Jean-Pierre 2013). Another recent study of interest was done in the New Zealand Maori context (see Lourie, 2016), in which the role of Maori in the school curriculum is debated. All of these contexts have felt the impact of globalization processes, which have led to "the spread of English as a medium of instruction in national school systems" (Hornberger and Vaish 2009:305), and which have also lead to local languages oftentimes being increasingly marginalized in education.

The practice of strict implementation of L2 MoI teaching has been widely questioned in academic and educational circles, where it has been shown to be linked to low school achievement (see Cummins, 2000; Prophet and Badede, 2006; Brock-Utne, 2007; Tibategeza & du Plessis, 2012); teacher malpractice (see Clegg 2005, Mohamad 2013, Abd-Kadir and Hardman 2007, Mwinsheikhe 2009); and educational inequity (see Clegg & Afitska, 2011; Nkwe & Marungudzi, 2015; Hornberger & Vaish 2009). In spite of such evidence, the majority of African countries have chosen to keep English as the sole MoI, or to combine it with the local languages, but using the latter only for the first few years of education (Hamid, Nguyen & Kamwangamalu 2014:1). Using extensive data from primary school teachers in the Seychelles, a small African island state where English is the MoI from a very early stage of formal education, this paper investigates the relationship between the prescribed *Ideological* and *Formal* domains of the curricula (Goodlad et al., 1979:61) and the *Perceived* and *Operational* domains of the curricula in post-colonial situations in order to examine how "conflicting ideologies" translate into teachers' attitudes and beliefs and thereby impact every-day teaching in such contexts.

BACKGROUND

The Seychelles, a former British and French colony, has a transitory system of MoI. The language situation in schools has gone through many phases. Initially,

schooling was organized by the Catholic Church and conducted in French until 1947, when the state took over this responsibility and English was introduced as MoI. Seychelles then went from a situation where *Kreol Seselwa* (hereafter K.S.), the mother tongue of the vast majority, was banned from school altogether (pre-independence and early independence 1947–81), through a phase when K.S. was introduced into schools and given a very prominent role in the system (1981–1996), to the current situation (1996–ff.), where many scholars agree that K.S.'s role in education is gradually diminishing again (see Laversuch, 2008 and Fleischmann, 2008). In the current system, children are taught in K.S, during the first two years of primary school. From primary three onwards, the MoI changes and children are instructed and examined in English in virtually all school subjects. Officially, all languages included in the nation's trilingual policy (K.S., English and French) have equal status, and the role of K.S. as a "support language" is emphasized in the overarching language policy documents. However, many previous studies have indicated that K.S. has a lower status than English in the system (see Deutschmann & Zelime, 2015; Laversuch, 2008; Fleischmann, 2008).

The idea of "conflicting ideologies" (Kamwangamalu, 2013:325) is very much in evidence in the Seychelles educational system. In previous research (Zelime & Deutschmann 2016), we investigated how the *Ideological domain* (Goodlad et al., 1979) of the curriculum, i.e. the general principles relating to language issues in the Seychelles National Curriculum Framework (hereafter NCF), match/mismatch the *Formal domain* of the curriculum, i.e. the part of the curriculum that forms the starting point for practical implementation such as subject curricula, implementation directives etc. Our overall conclusion from this work was that there was a clear mismatch between these two domains: While all languages in the trilingual system were said to have an equal status in the Ideological domain, instead the Formal domain suggested that K.S.'s role in education is transitional, a means of acquiring literacy in English. We also found that K.S.'s role as a support language was heavily questioned in government practice directives: "[…] the prescribed medium of instruction has to be respected by teachers and greater emphasis has to be placed on more effective curriculum implementation." This statement was motivated by inspectorate reports revealing "a high degree of code-mixing during the delivery of lessons" (Ministry of Education, 2014). These conflicting components in the documents, which are meant to act as road

maps for teachers, risk confusion, especially since there is little recognition of the challenges involved in L2MoI teaching in the curriculum, which lacks clear directives on language practice in the classroom. Also, this issue is not approached in current teacher training. In this study, we explore language-in-education issues in the *Perceived* and *Operational* domains of Goodlad et al.'s model (1979).

AIMS

The study builds on Zelime & Deutschmann's 2016 study and explores how the *Ideological* and *Formal* domains of the Seychelles NCF and other policy documents interplay with, and translate/relate to the *Perceived* and *Operational* domains of the curriculum. More specifically, we examine primary teachers' perceptions, attitudes, beliefs (*Perceived domain*) and practice (*Operational domain*) surrounding language issues and compare these with previous findings with the aim of shedding more light on how aspects such as unequal power balances between languages, globalization, national ideologies, a nation's sociolinguistic situation, etc. interplay in the complex language-in-education situation that exists in many post-colonial contexts. In short, we want to explore the idea of "conflicting ideologies" in relation to teacher attitudes and language practice.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Any analysis of the language situation in schools in post-colonial nations has to take the legacy of colonialism into account. Postcolonial theory thus forms the overall backdrop of our theoretical framework. While difficult to define, a central object of interest in this framework is the development of cohesive national identities since the end of colonial rule, including the role of language in this process. An overarching idea here is that the end of colonial rule was not the end of unequal power relations – the colonial past is still present (Gregory, 2004). On the same theme Young (2003:18) maintained that the existing systems of knowledge in postcolonial contexts have been produced, sanctioned and cemented by the Western countries' academies.

With specific reference to language, the "colonial present" in postcolonial societies often manifests itself in the continued stigma attached to local, low status vernaculars. In this study, we use Hornberger's Continua of Biliteracy framework as a tool to describe the unequal balance of power between K.S. and English in the

classroom. According to Hornberger, biliteracy refers to "any and all instances in which communication occurs in two (or more) languages in or around writing" (1990: 213); of particular interest to our study is the attention paid to the power variable in the continua model, whereby one end is constructed as the norm (powerful) while the other end is the deviant (powerless). Hornberger (2003) identified four sets of continua: *context*, *development*, *content* and *media* of biliteracy, and described the roles of the languages in relation to these. For example, the powerless language is often confined to the "oral" domain and micro contexts, while the powerful language occupies the written domain and macro contexts (see Figure 6.1 below). Deleon (2014:12) maintained that Hornberger's framework has the "ability to analyze more complex relationships and interdependencies, and to empower diverse actors".

The continua of biliteracy

traditionally <u>less</u> powerful ◄ – – – – – – – ► traditionally <u>more</u> powerful

<u>Contexts of biliteracy</u>

micro	◄ – – – – – – – ►	macro
oral	◄ – – – – – – – ►	literate
bi(multi)lingual	◄ – – – – – – – ►	monolingual

<u>Development of biliteracy</u>

reception	◄ – – – – – – – ►	production
oral	◄ – – – – – – – ►	written
L1	◄ – – – – – – – ►	L2

<u>Content of biliteracy</u>

minority	◄ – – – – – – – ►	majority
vernacular	◄ – – – – – – – ►	literary
contextualized	◄ – – – – – – – ►	decontextualized

<u>Media of biliteracy</u>

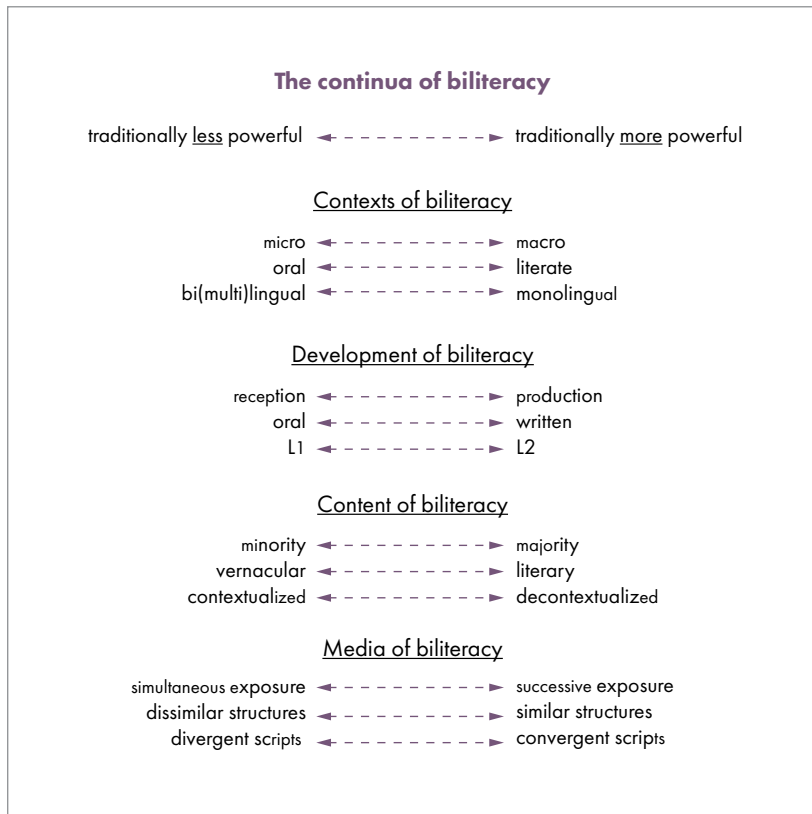| simultaneous exposure | ◄ – – – – – – – ► | successive exposure |
| dissimilar structures | ◄ – – – – – – – ► | similar structures |
| divergent scripts | ◄ – – – – – – – ► | convergent scripts |

Figure 6.1   Continua of Biliteracy Framework (Hornberger, 2004:158).

In our analysis, we also include teachers' general attitudes that surround K.S. and English in Seychelles society. Many studies have shown that teachers' beliefs play a crucial role to our understanding of educational processes such as teacher practice, their coping strategies and professional development, as well as learners' attitude, motivation, etc. (see Mohamed, 2006). Similarly, Spolsky (2009) maintained that teachers' interpretation of educational policy and their teaching practice are greatly influenced by their own personal ideologies and beliefs about languages, their functions and how they should be taught. From this vantage point, we have used Spolsky's trilogy of language practices (2004, 2012) as an analytic framework. Spolsky (2004) provided a framework to approach the oftentimes complex language-in-education circumstances that surround post-colonial educational contexts. He proposed that there are several co-existing but often conflicting factors that motivate a country's language-in-education policies. These include national ideology, the role of English as a global language, a nation's sociolinguistic situation, and an increasing interest in the rights of linguistic minorities. According to Spolsky (2004:133), the language policy of any independent nation state will reveal the complex interplay of these "interdependent but often conflicting factors". Using the trilogy of considerations suggested by Spolsky as starting point: 1. language practices, 2. language beliefs and values, and 3. language planning and/or management, we thus hope to shed more light on the "interrelated but independent" factors that shape the language situation in schools in the Seychelles and elsewhere in the post-colonial world.

METHOD AND MATERIALS

In this study, the subject Social Studies was chosen as object of particular interest. Although taught in English, the subject deals with many local aspects of life in the Seychelles. The content of Social Studies, probably more than many other subjects taught at school, thus has the potential to be "contextualized" (c.f. Hornberger's model in Figure 6.1 above) in the local micro setting, at least hypothetically motivating the use of K.S. to explain and clarify curriculum content. We applied a triangulation of different methods to collect our data. Our primary data were based on responses in questionnaire surveys, but we complemented these data with classroom observations and teacher interviews of a limited number of teachers (six).

Survey questionnaires

A survey questionnaire was distributed to every primary teacher who teaches Social Studies from primary 3 to 6 (Cycles 2 and 3) from 22 primary schools in the Seychelles. This constitutes over 95 per cent of all state schools, and although some teachers were absent when the surveys were handed out, our study captures the majority of the targeted population: teachers teaching Social Studies in state primary schools. The survey questionnaire included personal data, respondents' teaching experience, concerns and perceptions of teaching their subjects through English, among other relevant questions. The aim was to collect quantitative and qualitative data on the teaching and classroom context as well as out of school factors relating to the teachers' use of English, K.S. and French. In all 142 teachers responded to the survey questionnaires and this data was subsequently analyzed.

Population

Of the 142 respondents that were included in the survey 94 per cent were female. The vast majority (108) taught both English and Social Studies. The spread between the different levels at which teachers taught English and Social Studies (Primary 3–6) was quite even. On average, the teachers teaching Cycle 2 (Primary 3 and 4) were less experienced than those teaching Cycle 3 (Primary 4 and 5). Figures 6.2, 6.3 and Table 6.1 below summarize some additional key characteristics of the sampled population.
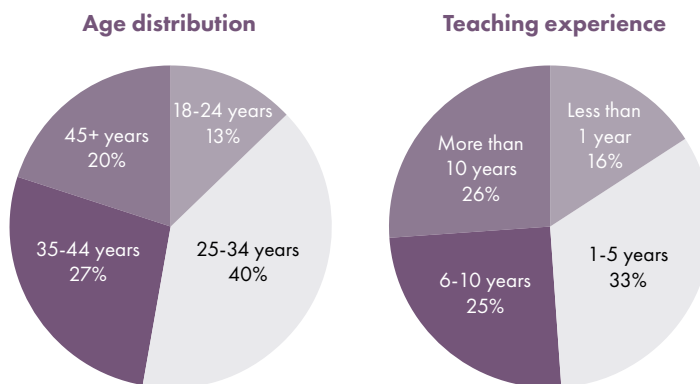
Age distribution

18-24 years 13%

45+ years 20%

25-34 years 40%

35-44 years 27%

Teaching experience

Less than 1 year 16%

More than 10 years 26%

1-5 years 33%

6-10 years 25%

Figure 6.2   Age distribution of respondents.

Figure 6.3   Teaching experience.

Table 6.1   Levels of formal qualifications.

No formal training	Certificate level (limited)	Diploma level	Bachelor level	Master's level
23%	5%	63%	8%	>1%

Classroom observations

Classroom observations were carried out with a smaller focus group of teachers (six altogether) in order to collate the data from the questionnaire with what really goes on in the classroom. During the observations, the researchers targeted the teachers' use of English or K.S. or both and the frequency of such usage. The teachers' teaching strategies were of interest here too. We wanted to observe how and to what extent the teachers were using English or K.S. during their lessons and in what kind of communication they were engaging the pupils.

Interviews with teachers

We also carried out semi-structured interviews with all the six teachers observed to give them an opportunity to talk more about their challenges in the classroom and their views on language.

RESULTS

Summary of findings from the survey questionnaires.
Everyday Language Practice

Note that while the questions in this section implied one answer only, respondents could actually choose more than one response. In response to the question "What language do you speak most often?", 75 percent answered K.S. while 54 percent chose English. While this result implies that many respondents have answered both K.S. and English, the answers to the questions "In what language do you communicate with your family members?"; "What language do you use to communicate with your colleagues at work?"; and "What language do you use to communicate with your friends outside school?" clearly illustrate that K.S. is the preferred language in every-day oral communication outside the classroom. About 98 percent answered K.S. in response to all of the above questions, while approximately only 20 percent also included English.

When it comes to the written medium the picture is quite different. In response to the question "In what language do you write most often, 96 per cent answered English". Only 20 percent mentioned K.S. Similarly, in response to the question "In what language do you read most often?", 97 percent answered English, while a mere 16 percent chose K.S. French was a marginal option to all of the above questions with scores around 3–5 percent in the oral domain and 10 per cent in the written domain. In summary, K.S. has an important role as an oral "vernacular" in the continuum of biliteracy (see Figure 6.1), but holds a very weak position in the literary/literate/written domains.

General Attitudes towards English and K.S.

We also tried to capture general attitudes towards the languages in society. In this questionnaire, high values represent agreement with the statements (5 = strongly agree) and low values disagreement (strongly disagree). The value 3 represents "neutral" opinions.

Table 6.2   General attitudes towards English and K.S. among the teacher population.

Statements	English	K.S.
English/K.S. is a superior language than K.S./English in society as a whole.	3.42* (1.20)**	2.75 (1.12)
English/K.S. is a very rich language.	4.36 (0.76)	3.65 (0.98)
Good knowledge of English/K.S. is a mark of prestige in society.	3.93 (0.81)	3.09 (0.95)
Good knowledge of English/K.S. can help students get a good job.	4.14 (0.86)	2.32 (0.98)

*Values greater than 3 indicate agreement with the statement and vice versa
**Values in brackets indicate standard deviation.

K.S. is generally viewed as less prestigious among teachers. The largest differences are observed in the answers referring to "instrumental aspects" of the languages, i.e. the professional advantages that are embedded therein. Particularly conspicuous is the fact that relatively few of the teachers thought that a good knowledge of K.S. was advantageous on the job market. They did however recognize K.S. as a "rich" language.

General Attitudes to languages in teaching contexts

In spite of K.S. having such a strong position in the everyday lives of the teacher population, it is clear that its use in the classroom is highly questioned. A striking 96.5 percent of the teachers asked wanted to introduce English as medium of instruction even earlier in the system. In response to the question "At which level in Primary school should English be introduced as the medium of instruction," 32.5 percent answered, "At the Crèche level", i.e. even prior to compulsory school. Fifty-seven percent thought that it should be introduced from Primary 1, while 7 percent thought it could wait until Primary 2. A mere 3.5 percent thought that the system should remain as it is. No respondents thought that English should be introduced later in the system. The responses to the question, "At which level in Primary school should K.S. stop being the medium of instruction?" show that even K.S.'s role as a co-medium of instruction is questioned: 51 percent of the respondents answered Primary 1, and 13 percent Primary 2, mirroring the answers in the previous section. The answers in the other large group – "Other", are in many cases qualified with statements to the effect that K.S. should never be used in education, or that K.S. should be taught as a separate subject but that it should not be used as MoI. In summary, the attitudes of the teachers were very negative towards the use of K.S. in the classroom where English is seen as the norm.

More Specific Aspects of the Languages' Roles in Education

In this section, we looked at opinions regarding more specific aspects of language-in-school issues. Again, high values represent agreement with the statements (5 = strongly agree) and low values disagreement (strongly disagree). The value 3 represents "neutral" opinions.

Table 6.3   Teachers' language confidence/suitability of the languages as MoIs.

Statements	Response (av.)
1. I am not proficient enough to teach Social Studies entirely in English.	2.09 (0.87)
2. I don't think I have enough knowledge of K.S. to use it as the medium of instruction for Social Studies.	2.23 (1.01)
3. I feel more confident teaching my subject of Social Studies in English.	3.84 (0.80)
4. I would feel more confident teaching my subject of Social Studies in K.S.	2.41 (0.85)
5. K.S. has too limited vocabulary to be used in the Social Studies lessons.	2.95 (0.99)

From the responses above, it is evident that teachers feel that they are proficient enough to teach Social Studies in English. Similarly, they also acknowledge that they have enough knowledge of K.S. to allow them to teach the subject in the mother tongue if that had been the case. In spite of this, there seems to be a clear preference for English as MoI and the reasons for this are uncertain. There is no clear indication that they believe the language is deficient in any way (see neutral answer to Question 5).

Table 6.4   K.S. role as independent language in the school system.

Statements	Response (av.)
1. Using Seychelles Kreol as a medium of instruction promotes Seychellois culture.	3.36 (1.09)*
2. Learning K.S. as a subject should be compulsory at all levels of schooling	2.61 (1.27)

From the responses to the questions in Table 6.4 it is evident that teachers recognize the role of K.S. in the transmission of local culture but few want to see the subject being given a place in the curriculum in secondary school (today it is a compulsory subject until Primary 6). This is, at first sight, somewhat contradictory.

Table 6.5   Teaching and learning in English / and K.S.

Statements	Response (av.)
1. Teachers should be using only English during the English lesson.	3.76 (1.13)
2. Teachers should be using only English during their Social Studies lesson.	3.26 (1.13)
3. I believe that pupils would perform better if they were taught Social Studies entirely in English.	3.18 (1.08)
4. I believe that pupils would perform better if they were taught social Studies entirely in K.S.	2.31 (0.82)
5. I think the advantages of learning through the medium of English outweigh the disadvantages	3.63 (0.95)
6. I think that using English as a medium of instruction reduces the participation levels of my students in my Social Studies classes	3.07 (0.96)
7. Most of my students have difficulties explaining Social Studies concepts in English.	3.08 (1.03)
8. Most of my students have difficulty understanding Social Studies concepts explained entirely in English.	3.09 (1.02)

Based on the above responses it is evident that teachers are more positive towards English as a MoI than K.S. Very few teachers think that pupils would perform better in Social Studies, a subject which is very locally contextualized, if taught in K.S. (their mother tongue), and a clear majority think that the advantages of teaching in English outweigh the disadvantages. A substantial number of the teachers also believe that only English should be used when teaching. With special reference to the subject Social Studies, the answers in this section thus indirectly contradict the acknowledgement of K.S. as important for Seychelles culture. On the other hand, in the second part of this section (Questions 6–8), teachers at least partly acknowledge the fact that many students have difficulties learning/communicating their knowledge through English. The overall impression is that teachers are rather uncertain of their attitudes towards the role of S.K. in the subject.

Table 6.6   K.S as support language.

Statements	Response (av.)
1. Teachers should be allowed to use K.S. to explain difficult terms during Social Studies lessons.	3.61 (1.01)
2. I believe that my pupils would be more motivated if I explain concepts of social studies in K.S.	3.15 (0.92)
3. My students should be allowed to do their group work in K.S. if it facilitates their explanation in English later.	3.08 (1.0)
4. I think that students should be allowed to provide oral answers in K.S. during the Social Studies lesson.	3.11 (0.94)
5. I believe that if my students could sit their written exams for social Studies in K.S. they would perform better.	2.98 (1.1)

In spite of the rather negative attitudes towards K.S. expressed in previous sections, teachers acknowledge a limited role of K.S as support language (see responses to Questions 1 and 2) and also show some acceptance for learners to use it as an oral medium in the classroom. Although less positive, teachers are not entirely negative towards students using K.S as a written medium in exams. Again, these answers do not really match opinions expressed in other sections of the questionnaire and we are left with a rather blurred picture of how teachers view the role of K.S in the subject of Social Studies.

In summary, teachers' attitudes towards more specific aspects of the languages' roles in education are rather unclear. There is a clear preference for English, and the answers to some questions indicate that many teachers want to see K.S. disappear entirely from the classroom. At the same time, the difficulties of the students are acknowledged and the merits of K.S. as an oral medium in the classroom are acknowledged.

Findings from the classroom observation

Purposive sampling based on the school managers' willingness to participate in the study and availability of the teachers was used in the selection of respondents. Six teachers volunteered, five females and one male, and one lesson from each teacher was observed. Among the teachers selected, two were "experienced" (more than 10 years of teaching), and the rest had less than five years teaching experience. Five of the six teachers taught both English and Social Studies. Three of them taught at Primary 5–6 level, and the other three taught at Primary 4 level. They were all generalist teachers, which means they taught all the academic subjects at their level. The lessons were 45 minutes each. The main aim of the observations was to obtain additional information on the use of English as a medium of instruction and what pedagogical role, if any, K.S. played during the Social Studies lessons. One of the researchers was present in the classroom for the entire duration of all the six lessons, which he recorded digitally and in writing.

In our observations, K.S. was used very frequently by the majority of students, but hardly ever by the teachers. For instance, it was used extensively during group work when the teacher was out of earshot. About 70% of students used K.S. when answering questions posed by the teacher and when they encountered difficult English vocabulary during the lessons, but this was not encouraged by the teachers (see below). There were several examples of pupils struggling to express themselves in English, to explain terminology for example, and eventually resorting K.S. to do so. All the six teachers showed a reluctance to accept answers in K.S. They insisted that the pupils should answer in English. Arguably, many students chose not to participate orally due to fear of errors in English. This hypothesis is supported by observations of lessons where one or two students did almost all the talking because they were clearly proficient in oral English. Further, over 90% of the teacher–student discourse was made up of teacher

centered instructions in English of different kinds: *Plenary Talk* (Hardman, 2008), whereby the teacher did all the talking and learners took notes or copied text from the blackboard, *Safe-Talk* (Hornberger & Chick, 2001), low-challenge questions and prompts to which students responded briefly and sometimes in chorus without further elaboration, and *IRF-Talk* (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975), where the focus lay on transmission rather than construction of knowledge, with turns characterized by long initiations by the teacher followed by short prompted responses by the pupil and finalized by short feedback from the teacher. Only minimal amounts of *Exploratory Talk* (Barnes 1976, 2008), less formal and more dialogic in nature and where the teacher and students interact to explore new concepts, took place. Similar patterns have been observed in other post-colonial classroom contexts (see Clegg & Afitiska, 2011; Brock-Utne & Alidou, 2006; Setati et al., 2002; Bunyi, 2005; Hardman, 2008).

Findings from the interviews

Of special interest here was the fact that five of the six teachers chose to conduct the interview in K.S. A central theme in the interviews was the challenges involved with meeting the individual needs of pupils in classes where the pupils displayed a range of abilities. When describing the nature of their classroom, all respondents talked of a system of "mixed ability grouping", whereby the class was divided into three ability groups: Group 1 (high performers), Group 2 (average performers) and Group 3 (low performers). The fact that the class was composed of three groups of pupils with different ability levels meant that the teachers had to use so-called "differentiated teaching" strategies. In effect, they had to devise activities according the groups' abilities. For example, each group would be assigned a different set of writing tasks. According to the teachers, Group 1 would usually complete their assignments on their own without much help. Group 2 usually needed help with appropriate vocabulary, and were also given template sentences and text structures (guided writing). In addition to this, Group 3 pupils would receive most instructions in K.S. According to all the six teachers, the majority of their pupils (Groups 2 and 3) had limited mastery of written English, and therefore they could not read instructions and proceed to complete writing tasks on their own. In the low ability group, most of them had problems formulating single words, let alone sentences when writing.

The teachers however maintained that this group had good ideas, which were expressed orally in K.S., but that they failed to do so in English and in writing. On those occasions when low ability learners did write, they would mix English words with K.S. or they would translate K.S. words and structures directly into English. This matches the observations of the pupils' language behavior in the classroom, i.e. the pupils using K.S. in the absence of the teachers, and the frequent but "unacceptable" use of K.S. to explain concepts that they were unfamiliar with, which suggests that pupils are far more comfortable with K.S. According to the teachers interviewed, the language strategies used in Social Science classes to help the low ability pupils understand and participate in the lessons included translation of concepts, new vocabulary and instructions from English to K.S. and vice versa, but there was no evidence of more comprehensive use of K.S. in teaching.

Overall Summary of Findings

Our results are not clear-cut, but rather incongruous and at times even contra-dictory. On the one hand, it is evident that K.S. has an important role in the daily lives of teachers; all appear to use it in their everyday oral communication (five out of six teachers chose to conduct the interviews in K.S), they recognize its value for the local culture (the main topic of the subject Social Studies), and few question its functionality – most respondents acknowledge that it has the vocabulary needed to be used as a MoI for the subject of Social Studies. Almost all teachers asked maintained that they are proficient enough in K.S. to teach Social Studies if needed, but a substantial majority claim that they are more confident doing so in English (we can only speculate why this should be the case). Secondly, the challenges surrounding the use of English as MoI are evidently also recognized in the latter sections of the questionnaire. In the interviews and questionnaires, many respondents acknowledged that pupils have difficul-ties in understanding and communicating concepts in English, and a majority of teachers believed that they should be allowed to use K.S. for this purpose (i.e. to explain concepts). On the whole, these findings match the essence of the Ideological Domain of the curriculum (see Zelime & Deutschmann, 2016), where the importance of K.S. for the local identity and its given role as support language are emphasized.

Paradoxically, it is also evident that teachers are very negative to the use of K.S. in education on a macro-level. All teachers asked want to see its role as MoI during the first two years of schooling reduced, and a majority want to see it removed as MoI altogether. It is clear that English is seen as a "superior", "rich" language, which opens up job opportunities, and a majority think that the advantages of learning through the medium of English outweigh the disadvantages. Similarly, a majority believe that students would perform better if they were taught Social Studies entirely in English, although the classroom observations provided a different picture, and in some sections of the questionnaire, there is reluctance to acknowledge the difficulties students encounter when taught in English. From the classroom observations, it was also evident that teachers discouraged the use of K.S., although pupils used it frequently. These results match the general message of the Operational Domain of the curriculum (see Zelime & Deutschmann, 2016), where K.S.'s role in education is downplayed and at times even condemned. In our discussion in the section below, we try to make sense of these contradictory results.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Just as in our previous study of various steering documents (Zelime & Deutschmann, 2016), we meet collisions of ideologies in the Perceived and Operational domains of the Seychelles curriculum. This can be interpreted as a direct result of the unclear, and sometimes contradictory, directives that are provided for teachers in the NCF and other documents dealing with language-in-education issues. Teachers are actually left with little guidance, and it is perhaps understandable that the Perceived and Operational curricula are incoherent. We would, however, like to venture further here and explore the findings in the light of other explanative models.

English in the Seychelles, and elsewhere in the post-colonial world, is more than just a language among equals. In the Seychelles English subject curriculum, the language is actually described as one that "encodes major cultural understanding and traditions", "enhances cognitive skills" and "broadens awareness and appreciation" (see Zelime & Deutschmann, 2016). These articulations, also mirrored in the attitudes of the teachers in this study, can be seen as manifestations of a "colonial present" (Gregory, 2004), an inherited left-over from colonial

times that not only inform the curricula and teachers, but post-colonial societies in general (see also Baldauf, 2006). According to Jourdan (2013: 271), investigating the language situation in another Creole speaking country, the Solomon Islands, this line of thinking stems from colonial language ideologies, which were "appropriated by the elite and middle class" and subsequently embraced by all social classes, even those that were seriously undermined by such ideologies. In this model, local vernaculars are denigrated to the position of non-languages, inferior and incomplete, at best fit as oral mediums. English, on the other hand, is seen as the carrier of knowledge and culture. Knowledge is somehow seen as embedded in the language itself as the descriptions from the curriculum text above illustrate. According to Spolsky's model, such language beliefs and values will affect language planning and management, and there is clear evidence from around the world that they do. In nations that have never been colonized, such as many parts of Europe, the national languages are unquestioned as media of instruction. This includes very "small" national languages such as Icelandic (see Albury 2016). Note, however, that the same status has not been afforded to minority languages in the European national states. Historically languages such as Sami in Scandinavia, for example, were long seen as unacceptable as media of instruction, and there are clear parallels here to the post-colonial parts of the world, where it is still regarded as "radical" or even "controversial" for *national/ local* languages to hold a central role in education (see Outakoski 2015).

However, this historical colonial language ideology has not gone unchallenged. In the Seychelles, as in many other parts of the post-colonial world, post-independent movements have tried to raise the status of local languages as part of the nation-building process. Spolsky listed such factors (national ideology and increasing interests in the rights of linguistic minorities) as also contributing to the post-colonial society's language beliefs and values, but whether such ideas gain popularity or not obviously depend on active *Prestige and image* planning, as well as *Status* planning (see Liddicoat, 2013: 2). In the Seychelles, prestige planning was very active during the early eighties. K.S. became a symbol of national identity and the bearer of local culture. These efforts obviously made an impact and the results are particularly salient in the *Ideological* domain of the curriculum, where K.S. is given the same status as English and French. We also see effects of these efforts in the opinions of the teachers, who in spite of their

generally negative attitudes towards K.S., recognize it as an important part of Seychellois culture. Status planning, i.e. the selection of languages to perform particular functions in a society, was arguably less successful. In spite of great efforts to establish K.S.'s role in education during the eighties, we are now seeing a return to former structures where English, and English only, seems to be the answer to the majority of challenges facing the education system. Also in society at large, K.S. has failed to make a lasting impact in the official domains: English has always been, and still is, the written medium in domains such as public written media, finance and law. Arguably in the era of globalization, the efforts of the post-independent era are being undermined. Colonial ideologies have been replaced by market logic – the global market, international success – in short what Spolsky refers to as "globalization". The message may be slightly different, but the end result is the same: English equals success. This is clearly reflected in the attitudes of the teachers, and a realistic reflection of how things are.

But there is another reality that we have to take into account as well – the micro-reality of the classroom. According to Spolsky (2009) teachers have a powerful role to play in planning /managing language at the micro level, especially in multilingual contexts like the Seychelles. However, as our results have shown, this role becomes problematic when teachers are informed by conflicting ideologies concerning which language to value more and to use in the classroom. For instance, the same teachers who want to see the realization of the English-only classroom are forced to acknowledge the role of K.S. in everyday communication. Many children simply do not understand English. Clearly visions and reality contradict each other here, creating an interesting dilemma. Teachers recognize the power and value that English has for the students, in both the short-term (passing exams) and in their futures (getting jobs). However, they also acknowledge that use of K.S., the students' mother tongue, will facilitate learning in the short run and solve practical dilemmas in the classroom. Jones (2014) described a similar situation in Kenyan schools, where teachers gave priority to English as MoI and yet recognized the importance of other languages in the learners' language repertoire. The explanation here was that this was a result of teachers being pragmatic, using the learners' first language in order to move them towards English. According to Jones, these teachers would ideally prefer to see an English-only classroom, but the reality of everyday teaching forced

them to use practical strategies that included using other languages. There are many similarities here with our study. Similar classroom practices to get over language hurdles are also evident from the two studies: these include safe talk, choral teaching, teacher dominated and formulaic discourse, and minimal student contribution, but also translation of concepts into local languages etc. Further, according to Jones (2014), language planning also has other practical concerns to deal with such as a restricted teacher supply and limited teaching experience, poor qualifications, low availability of resources and materials as well as very varied student needs. These concerns represent the daily reality of teachers and often mean that language ideologies have to be compromised.

So where does all this leave us, and more importantly where does it leave the students? We would argue that the English-only classroom is a Utopian fantasy based on old colonial ideals. Classroom reality in the postcolonial world clearly tells a different story. Until such a time that English has totally taken over in the postcolonial world (let's hope this never happens), teachers will have to continue to grapple with the "language question", and will need informed guidance to do so. This guidance cannot be based on Utopian visions, but has to acknowledge the language reality of the postcolonial classroom and recognize the importance of the mother tongue in learning. There are also good arguments for question-ing the monopoly of English as a bearer of knowledge. While we are the first to recognize the global importance of English and the benefits it brings, we also recognize that you actually can acquire knowledge through other languages. These two facts are not in conflict.

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