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Language Matters: What are the Primary School Teachers' Perspectives and Lived Experiences of Burundi's Language Policy?

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LANGUAGE MATTERS: WHAT ARE THE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS'
PERSPECTIVES AND LIVED EXPERIENCES OF BURUNDI'S LANGUAGE POLICY?

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SIT Graduate Institute PIM 77

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- Leah Passauer

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List of Abbreviations

BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
DL	Dominant Language
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
L3	Third Language
L4	Fourth Language
LOI	Language of Instruction
MT	Mother Tongue
NGO	Non-Government Organization
SIT	School for International Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WFP	World Food Program

Abstract

Burundi is a small country in the Great Lakes region of Africa. Burundian language policy dictates that four languages, Kirundi, French, English, and Kiswahili, must be taught starting in the second trimester of grade one. The language policy decision is not an obvious one since the country is linguistically homogenous, meaning that almost the entire population speaks Kirundi as their first language. Primary school teachers in the public education system typically receive training in a vocational setting that may not fully prepare them for the complex multilingual classroom environment they are expected to cultivate. The aim of this small-scale mixed-methods study is to better understand the perspectives and lived experiences of Burundian primary school teachers in relation to the language policy. To do so, this study utilizes surveys, focus groups, and interview methods to sample across eight different primary schools in the province of Bururi. A total of three school principals and 50 teachers participated in the study. Findings indicate that, with the exception of Kirundi, sampled teachers lack confidence in teaching the languages that are a required portion of the curriculum. Data highlights issues within the pre-service and in-service training for teachers including issues with corruption and funding by the government. The study emphasizes that participants struggle to meet their basic needs as a result of poor salaries and the threat of violence due to the political instability that exists in Burundi. Findings showcase that there is a difference between policy and practice as teachers tend to use Kirundi throughout the curriculum despite policy recommendations to help mitigate the issue of students' weak linguistic abilities. The present study represents a contribution to the areas of language issues and teacher motivation in education by providing a strong focus on the neglected perspective of the teacher. The study serves to highlight their opinions of how these issues could and perhaps should be addressed.

Introduction

Burundi is a linguistically homogenous country (Simons & Fennig, 2018) in Africa with 98 percent of the population speaking Kirundi. In fact, according to Simons and Fennig (2018) 4,000,000 of the roughly 11,000,000 people living in Burundi are monolingual, speaking only Kirundi. Burundi is unique in the African context where many countries have at least 30+ languages within their borders. However, language in education policy dictates that starting in grade five, French is the language of instruction (LOI) (UNICEF, 2017). The language policies that exist in Burundi reflect colonial times when the policy of French as the LOI and language of the ruling power was first adapted into the education system. In post-independence times, the effects of colonialism are still seen as French is used in the classroom as the LOI.

The challenges for education have grown as Burundi has adopted even more languages as possible solutions for economic success within the East African region and world. Burundi requires that four languages be introduced to students starting in grade one. In addition to Kirundi, the public-school system deems necessary that students must learn French, English, and Kiswahili. This policy is problematic as the majority of public-school teachers lack the educational training necessary to teach effectively in their second language, French, while needing to speak three languages other than their own. My work in Burundi has allowed me to conduct classroom observations that have highlighted how many students and teachers both struggle with basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) in the French language and many teachers may not be prepared to instruct students at an academic language level using French.

Over the past year and a half, I had the opportunity to work in rural Burundi, in Bururi Province as the Education Program Manager for a small NGO. One of my key tasks was to work with teachers in the primary school. As the Education Program Manager, I completed

hundreds of classroom observations, demonstration lessons, and teacher trainings. Throughout that time period I heard and witnessed the struggles teachers had in the classroom. However, most of the literature I read about multilingualism in school related to the challenges for students and provided little insight into the needs of teachers. Listening to the ideas of teachers during my time in Burundi made me realize that there is a fundamental gap in how we are approaching education if we do not first take into consideration the needs of the teacher.

Burundi's education system has very low standards of pre-service training to prepare teachers for success within their classrooms. In order to develop long-term sustainable solutions for education in Burundi, it is imperative to understand the education system through the teachers' eyes and how they are affected by government policy. This will help the education sector of the government and NGOs understand what improvements can be made to teacher training to mitigate issues in the classroom caused by language policy. This capstone paper seeks to answer the following question: What are primary school teachers' perspectives and lived experiences of Burundi's language policy? The paper is focused specifically on the primary school teachers within the Burundian public-school system. The present study represents a contribution to the areas of language issues and teacher motivation in education by providing a strong focus on the neglected perspective of the teacher. The study serves to highlight their opinions of how these issues could and perhaps should be addressed. Over the course of the paper, I will begin with an overview of key language-in-education issues in Burundi, the education system, and language policy. After that, I will analyze the current literature to discuss issues that have already been raised in regard to LOI in Africa and teacher specific issues. I will then present the data and analysis that was found throughout this small-scale mixed-methods study. Lastly, I will close with recommendations for steps that could be taken to reduce the negative impacts of policies on language specifically for teachers.

History of Burundi

The history of Burundi is extremely important to understanding the full context of the current political climate that ultimately affects policy decisions. Burundi's population is divided between three different ethnic groups: Hutu (85%), Tutsi (14%), and Twa (1%) (Ndura, 2015). The violence that has continuously entrapped Burundi has played a major role in contributing to the failing education system. Most researchers point to the colonial era, 1916-1962 (BBC, 2018), as the time when the initial ethnic tensions began to form due to the emphasis on ethnic heritage, and this slowly divided the country into classes based on their ethnic group. During the Belgian rule of Burundi beginning in 1916 (BBC, 2018), the Tutsis were supported in taking on a more prominent role over the Hutu and were provided with better educational opportunities (Ndura, 2015). This helped to erode an already problematic relationship and largely serves as a basis for the crisis that still exists today. Burundi has been independent of Belgian rule since 1962, and yet, throughout the time of post-independence Burundians have struggled significantly to reunify as a nation (Ndura, 2015).

The most recent surge of violence began during the 2015 presidential election. According to the World Bank (2018), "the past few years have seen Burundi withdrawing from international engagement: it opted out of the International Criminal Court in October 2017, and rejected UN Resolution 2303, which authorized the deployment of 228 UN police officers" (para. 3). The World Bank (2018), in referencing a report from the World Food Program (WFP), also noted further that, "Food insecurity is alarmingly high: almost one in two households (around 4.6 million people) are food insecure (WFP, 2014 and 2016)" and that approximately "56% of children suffer from chronic malnutrition" (World Bank, 2018, para. 5). Upon arrival in the country, one can sense the overarching feeling that people are on edge and worried about where and when the next conflict will arise.

Throughout the history of Burundi, there have been moments that showcase how language and conflict accompany one another. One of the interesting things about Burundi, is that the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups that have had this history of violence and tension speak the same language. While elsewhere there is often an argument for governments to decide on a unifying language for the country, this does not seem to be a major issue in Burundi as it is a largely linguistically homogenous country. However, the upper class tends to speak French and affords private classes for their children, so it is possible that language serves as a proxy to ethnic tensions on the level of classism. The Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups are constantly struggling to keep their political and economic stakes in the country. A third and minority group, the Twa, have their own struggles that are separate from the Hutu versus Tutsi struggle. The Twa are indigenous to the Great Lakes region of Africa coming from Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda. Historically they have been discriminated against through negative stereotyping, denial of their rights, and segregation (Minority Rights Group, 2003, para. 3). In the following section I will highlight the Burundi Educational structure and how ethnic issues relate to language.

Burundi educational structure

The education system in Burundi has undergone many changes over the years as the government has attempted to address different issues within the education system. At present, there are four main education levels in Burundi with secondary being sub-divided into lower secondary and upper secondary. For the purpose of this paper, I will be focusing on primary teachers' perceptions and lived experiences of the language policy in Burundi. Two components of the education system are particularly relevant to understanding teachers' roles: 1) curriculum goals that teachers are meant to achieve and, 2) how teachers were educated prior to becoming teachers themselves. This section guides the reader through the second topic, explaining the education that a teacher in Burundi may receive prior to entering the classroom,

depending on their economic status or geographical location. The section ultimately wraps up with a look at teacher pre-service education in Burundi. This will provide a strong background for understanding how a teacher is educated for a primary school position in Burundi.

Some students in Burundi may receive two years of pre-primary or pre-school level education dependent on access to a pre-school. Most students in Burundi do not actually have access to pre-primary schools. According to UNICEF (2015) data on attendance at pre-primary school, only 4% of students actually attend formal early childhood education. UNICEF pre-school infrastructure projects have increased accessibility to early childhood education in Burundi. There are also options for pre-school education if you are a Burundian elite living in the city and have the ability to pay for your child to attend a private pre-school. Pre-school is meant to introduce students to the basics of education and with a little help in French to help prepare them with the BICS needed for the primary school. There is a clear demand for pre-school education when it is provided and affordable.

After pre-school, there is primary school (grades 1-6) which is supposed to be compulsory and free however this is not necessarily the case as there are typically costs involved. Primary school is important for students as this is the time where they need to acquire enough French to begin studying all content subject in French. The change from Kirundi as the LOI to French takes place in grade five as well so this is a highly important time in a student's life. The change of LOI in grade five means this is a late exit model, a term that will be addressed in a later section. This time period represents the linguistic preparation for students to prepare for lower secondary school. Investigating teachers' perspectives and lived experiences at this level is critical to understanding the linguistic baseline students have as they progress academically.

Grades 7-9 is the next education level and is considered fundamental school or lower secondary school. Lower secondary is a critical and high-pressure time for teachers and students as the students prepare to take the national exam. The national exam determines where or if a student will be able to attend upper secondary school (post-fundamental school) grades 10-12 and if they are eligible to go to a school of excellence, boarding school, or a vocational tract such as teaching. In Burundi, students, families, and teachers consider “schools of excellence” and boarding schools to be both prestigious and desirable to attend. Every year, schools in Burundi are ranked according to their passing rates for national exams and this determines if they are designated as a “school of excellence.” These schools are able to attract better teachers. Boarding schools allow students to study in an environment free from distractions with guaranteed electricity so that they can study after dark. School principals and Burundians in general perceive boarding schools and schools of excellence generally as the best way for a student to be able to attend university. However, in order for students to be successful on the exams they must be able to complete an examination in all content areas (ex. Math, science, ect.) in the French Language. The exam also tests them on their French, English, Kirundi, and Kiswahili as content areas. The structure of the exam process makes it extremely difficult for students to make it into university if a student is not successful in their language studies in primary school and fundamental school.

The final school level in Burundi is upper secondary, which is grades 10-12. Students in upper secondary school will end up in different education tracts dependent on multiple factors such as level of success on the national exam, geographical location, and financial means. There are options for some students to attend vocational training while others will transition into tertiary education. The vocational level enrolment is 25.3% and tertiary education enrolment rate in 2018 was just 7.37% (UNESCO, 2019). This number demonstrates that only about one third of the students in Burundi attend post-secondary school. Teacher

education begins in upper secondary school. The following sub-section will address the specifics of teacher education.

Teacher Education

Teacher education is one education path that upper secondary students may take. There are many different levels of teacher education in Burundi. Researching official statements and finding official documentation on the educational requirements to become a teacher in Burundi has been a challenging process. The specific reasons for this challenge may be political in that government members do not want to share official documents with a foreigner, my lack of Kirundi speaking, or that there is simply no official document stating specifically what qualifies a teacher per grade level. In preliminary discussions, school principals and teachers consistently told me that everyone knows the requirements because of meetings between the ministry of education and school principals. Table 1 provides an overview of educational levels of teachers, types of teaching diplomas in Burundi, and what grade levels they are meant to teach.

TABLE 1: TEACHER EDUCATION LEVELS

Education Level Descriptor	Year of Pre-Service Teacher Training	Years in University	Details of Education Level
Diploma 6 (D6)	0 Years (No opportunity to ever attend university)	0	Complete grades 1-10 followed by two years of teacher training at a lycee pedagogique. Only can teach at the primary school level.
Diploma 7 (D7)	0 years (Option to take the national exam and attend university)	0	Complete grades 1-10 and then four years of teacher training at a lycee pedagogique. Teachers with D7 are meant to only teach in primary school but due to teacher shortages they can teach grades 1-9.
IPA (Applied Pedagogy Institute)	2	2	Complete all grades in secondary school and pass the national exam. After they complete two years of teacher training at the University of Burundi in the Institute of Pedagogy. Teaches in grades 7-12.
IPA 3 (Applied Pedagogy Institute)	3	3	Complete all grades in secondary school and pass the national exam. After the complete three years of teacher training at the University of Burundi Institute of Pedagogy. Teaches in grades 7-12.
IPA 5 (Applied Pedagogy Institute)	5	5	Complete all grades in secondary school and pass the national exam. After the complete five years of teacher training at the University of Burundi Institute of Pedagogy. Teaches in grades 7-12.
ENS3 (Private school degree)	3	3	Three year long program at a private school doing teacher training. Teaches in grades 7-12.
ISCO (University of Burundi management degree)	0	2	The management program at the university of Burundi that is two years long. Due to the shortage of teachers participants in this program can also become teachers. Teaches in grades 7-12.

The main areas to note on the chart are the Diploma 6 (D6) and Diploma 7 (D7) levels of education. D6 and D7 represent the education levels of teachers in Burundi's primary schools which is the ultimate focus of the present study. In rural areas it seems that it is most common that a primary school teacher's education level is D6 as the D7 teachers can teach up to grade nine due to the shortage of teachers. Another important thing to note is that primary school and even fundamental school (grades 7-9) teachers typically teach all subjects for the grade they are assigned. This means that teachers with a secondary level of schooling that were not able to pass on to university either because of their poor results on the national exam or financial constraint are the same teachers that are required to teach the primary school students all subjects. The primary school teachers that have received minimal education are all affected by language in education policies which the following section will address.

Language in education policies in Burundi

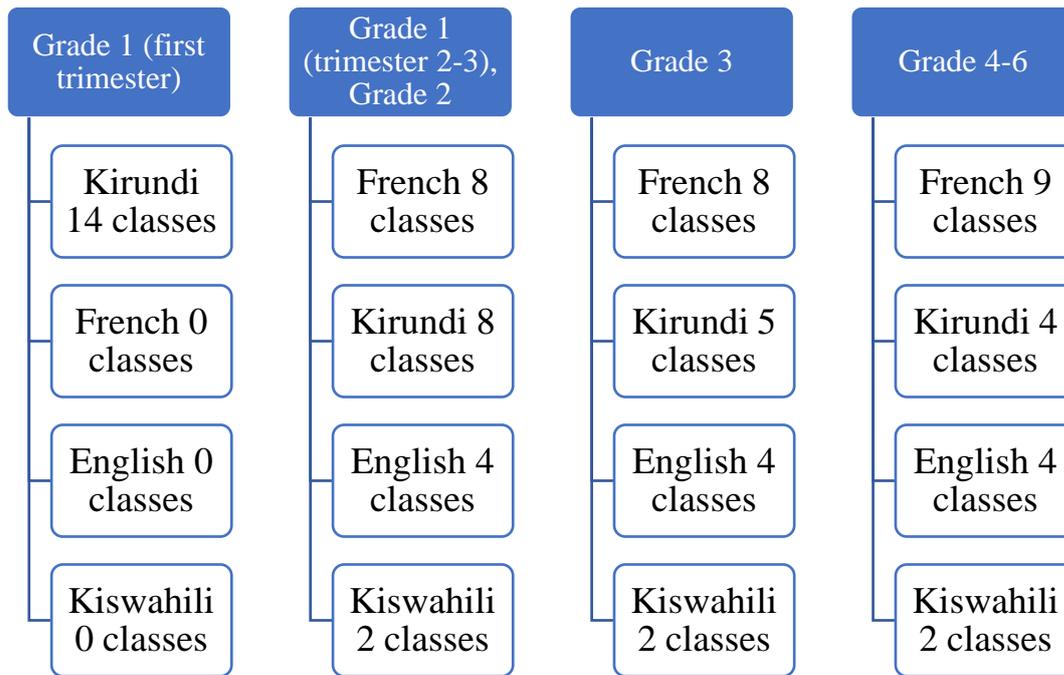
As noted in the introduction, Kirundi is spoken by 98% of the population in Burundi (Simons & Fennig, 2018). Students in Burundi start learning French, English, and Kiswahili in grade one. The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the language policies in Burundi before identifying the challenges and lived experiences of the teachers that this paper seeks to highlight.

In the Burundian classroom, students begin by learning in Kirundi in first grade. The assumption is that Kirundi is the L1 for the majority of students and by learning in a language that they understand, children can begin to develop their reading and writing skills. Skutnabb-Kangas (as cited in Kosonen & Benson, 2013, p. 6) defines L1 as, “a language that one (a) has learnt first; (b) identifies with; (c) knows best; and/or (d) uses most” and can be understood at an academic level. Other terms are also often used to describe this relationship, such as mother tongue (MT), vernacular, native language, or home language (Kosonen & Benson, 2013). The curriculum focuses exclusively on Kirundi during the first of the three trimesters of grade one. Starting in the second trimester French, English, and Kiswahili are introduced and considered core subjects. Other core subjects such as math and sciences are taught with Kirundi as the LOI.

The number of classes students from first grade to sixth grade (primary school) have at most schools is eight classes per day. Students spend up to five of those classes focusing on languages. While English and Kirundi both have similar totals of classroom hours devoted to student learning (see figure 1 below), French receives the highest amount of classroom time. Due to the fact that students are required to eventually learn in the French language it is listed as the L2 language. Further compounding language in education issues in Burundi, is the fact that many teachers have low-levels of schooling themselves and limited capabilities in French,

English, and Kiswahili. Which brings into question their ability to teach the languages or content effectively to students. Figure 1 demonstrates a typical Burundian school’s breakdown of classes per week based on the different grade levels that students are learning different languages.

FIGURE 1: CLASSES PER LANGUAGE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL



In total students in primary school spend approximately twenty-five hours in class each week or a total of thirty-five classes. The language classes are forty minutes each. After four years of instruction in French as a subject, students are expected to be able to use French as their language of instruction. However, from my personal observations in classrooms I believe the academic capacity of those students is often highly limited.

In Burundi, introducing the French as the LOI in grade five is a decision potentially based on socioeconomic goals. The idea is that students need to learn French in order to be successful academically and, later in life, economically. The additional time spent reading, writing, speaking, and listening to the language in the classroom is thought to be a mean for students to become fluent faster. Within the Burundian context, it must be noted that the reasons

for this policy include economic growth, appropriated colonial mentalities, and the policies of surrounding countries. According to a report by UNICEF (2016), “Burundi’s membership in the East African Community has led to the introduction of English and Swahili as early as Grade 1, even though these two languages are spoken by less than 5 per cent of the population” (p. 4). The government believes these two additional languages are necessary due to the economic value in trade within the East African Community. However, studies and current results demonstrate that these practices are not working for all students and the teachers are not equipped to teach these languages as content classes.

A complaint I often hear from teachers in the lower secondary school (7-9 grades), is that the students that are entering seventh grade do not actually know enough French to keep up in the class. The issue creates a situation of high-anxiety between many lower-secondary and primary school teachers as the lower-secondary school teachers are frustrated and will blame the primary school teachers for the lack of student preparation. While it is completely understandable that the lower-secondary school teachers are frustrated it is also understandable that the primary school teachers lack the training, linguistic skills, resources, and time to prepare the students for lower-secondary school. Lastly, it is important to know that the national exam is done in French and students are also tested on their English, Kiswahili, and Kirundi abilities as part of the exam. The national exam determines a student’s ability and right to continue their studies into secondary school and, for some, is also an important step towards university.

A prominent scholar on language in education, Cummins, (2009) generally addresses the issues of linguistic minority students in the following statement:

It is frequently argued that linguistic minority students need to become fluent and literate in the majority or dominant language in order to succeed academically; in order

to achieve this goal, maximum exposure to the dominant language is claimed to be necessary. (pp. 19-20)

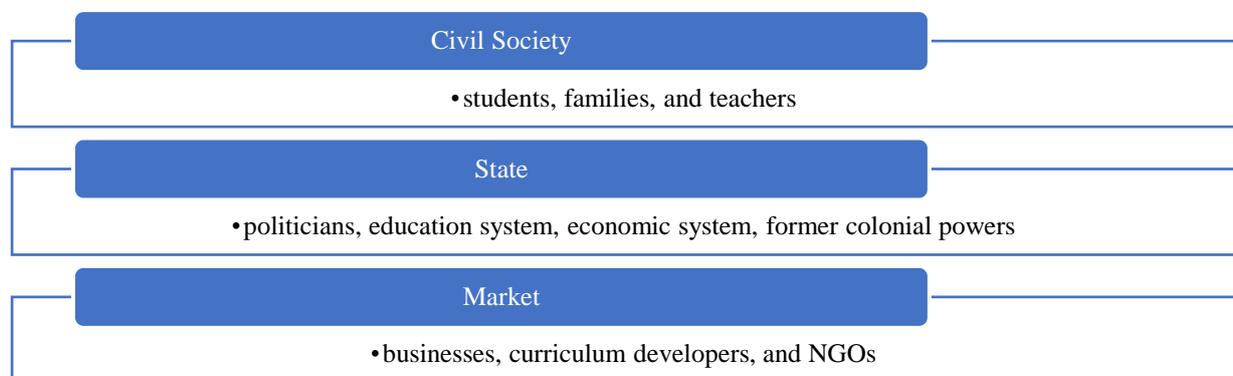
Cummins is saying that this argument is in fact erroneous and over exposure prior to mastering their L1 can in fact hurt a students' potential in the classroom. Developing a base in their L1 tends to be the ideal scenario for students before they begin utilizing a dominant language or L2 as their LOI. This argument applies to the Burundian context as well. It is important to note that in Burundi, Kirundi speakers are the majority, but the power differential is such that French-speakers have greater economic and social mobility. Since languages such as French and English are often seen as languages of power, individuals and countries whose L1 is associated with the minority, often seek out these languages to potentially increase their economic power globally. It is often the parents who voice their support for policy decisions that switch the LOI from the L1 to a dominant language (Cummins, 2009). According to Benson & Kosonen (2012), "Dominant language (DL) refers to the/a language that has official status and high prestige and is spoken by dominant group members" (As cited in Benson & Kosonen, 2013, p. 1). In Burundi, French is considered the dominant language and it is the social elite who utilize it. The effects of this policy on Burundi's primary school teachers is what this study hopes to find through understanding the teachers' perspective.

Stakeholders of Burundian Language-in-Education Policies

The language policy within Burundi directly affects a number of stakeholders. At the civil society level, the direct stakeholders of the language policy in Burundi are students, families, and teachers. At the state level, the indirect stakeholders are the politicians who are making these decisions. At the market level, the indirect stakeholders are businesses, curriculum developers, and NGOs. The lack of a singular language within the schools and the constant variations between languages have created an environment where students are failing

to be successful. As a result, this is having long-term impacts on the society and the economic system as a whole. The stakeholders are far-reaching in this national policy as it impacts everyone in society and even international organizations that participate within the system in one way or another and some stakeholders benefit from the system failure. Former colonial powers may also continue to benefit as they continue to have a hold on the market, educational products, needs since French remains the LOI. The following diagram, figure 2, displays a breakdown of the different stakeholders.

FIGURE 2: STAKEHOLDERS



Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The theories and concepts that provide the framework for this study draw from the fields of multilingualism, teacher motivation, and language acquisition in order to provide an overall understanding of language issues and related experiences of teachers. Literature by Benson and Kosonen (2013), Cummins (2009), Maslow (1943), Ouane and Glanz (2011), in particular, come together to fill out overall understanding of the phenomenon this study seeks to better understand. This literature spans the globe but none of these studies address Burundi specifically.

Language in Education Policy and Effects

The following paragraphs will review the existing literature regarding multilingual issues surrounding policy decisions and the effects these policies have on students. The purpose of the theory is to identify a foundation for the findings and conclusions from this study. I began my research process by using SIT's library website. Key terms I referenced were "Burundian teacher's experiences," "mother tongue language," "policy and language of instruction," "multilingual issues in Africa," "teachers' perceptions of language policies," and "history of Burundi." I did not find any literature related to teachers' experiences or perceptions of language policies. Most of the literature I found focused on students' results based on language policies and the implications on the learning process. There is a plethora of research on multilingual issues in Africa which has been extremely helpful in guiding my research and helping me understand the underlying issues that brought me to the point where I wanted to understand a teacher's perspective on this topic. With this study, I hope to contribute important information to the lack of literature on teachers' perspectives and lived experiences of language policies.

The general global technical literature on language acquisition and instruction in multilingual contexts argues that for students to transfer successfully into an L2 for instruction they need to spend the first twelve years of their instructional years focused on their L1. It follows that students that are able to learn literacy in their L1 will have a significantly easier time developing literacy skills in an L2 because of transfer (Ouane & Glanz, 2011). A study of late-exit versus low-exit programs by Heugh (2011) in South Africa showcased what happens when MT instruction is decreased. Students originally had eight years of MT instruction. When MT instruction decreased to just four years the passing rate dropped from 83.7% to 44% (Ouane & Glanz, 2011, p.126). Another interesting fact from the study in South Africa is that students' English levels did not improve by transitioning to English earlier on. Instead they got worse,

the English language passing rate went from 78% to 38.5%. One of the main arguments that policy makers, educators, and governments use to explain the decision for early exit from MT instruction is that students will learn their L2 faster, but this does not prove to be factual. The argument to extend MT instructional period seems counter-intuitive and, it is understandable that people would think that learning in the L2 language would provide for faster acquisition in the language.

Another study from Nigeria found similar results. The project compared the use of Yoruba (MT) as the language of instruction for the first six years compared to students who switched to English as the language of instruction within the first three years. The study found that students who had the six years of MT instruction still had better English proficiency than those that switched to English as the language of instruction earlier. The students also had better results in all curriculum content areas (Ouane & Glanz, 2011). MT as the language of instruction is extremely important especially in countries where resources are limited. Teachers do not have the capabilities or resources necessary for successful bilingual education. Multilingual classrooms cause even more complications for both the students and teachers. Ouane and Glanz (2011) suggest the following in regard to research that has been done specifically in resource poor countries, “no acknowledged expert in psycholinguistics and second language acquisition will suggest that children in developing countries and minority or poor communities can switch from mother-tongue education by the end of the third year” (p. 124). Based on this research, Burundi’s early-exit practices (i.e., transition at grade 4) may be detrimental to students’ long-term achievement in the classroom. Students are more likely to drop out from the daily issues they face in their classrooms. Even though 98% of the population speaks Kirundi, making it one of the few countries in Africa that is linguistically homogenous, Burundi maintains a strong focus on L2, L3, and L4 language acquisition in the school system (World Atlas, 2017). Through conversations I have had during my time in Burundi, I believe a

strong feeling exists among Burundians that languages are key to economic prosperity in the country. However, this will not be possible if students are not able to function academically in any language including their own. Students will never be able to grow in their education as they are forced to learn in a language they do not understand without a solid foundation.

A study by Ouane & Glanz (2011) found the following on the relationship between government policies and what actually takes place in schools:

Without realizing the consequences, the education officials of most countries select a model which can only offer limited success, and limited access to secondary school and beyond. Students will not be able to understand or succeed in areas of the curriculum such as science and mathematics if they do not have a sufficient proficiency in the medium of instruction. (p. 134)

The challenge to find a balance between encouraging L2 and L3 acquisition while ensuring students are able to learn core subjects is a delicate balance for policy makers. Elevated school drop-out rates show that students are struggling to stay in school. In the 2017-2018 school year, a school I work closely with had 34 students drop-out which represented 17% of the student body. This rate was similar to previous years. Teachers and school principals noted in preliminary conversations about drop-out issues that some parents said that students had too many issues understanding their teacher and eventually decided to drop-out. Nationally, 47% of students in Burundi have a survival rate to fifth grade (UNICEF, 2017). Survival rate refers to the percentage of students that start the first year and make it until the final year of the cycle which in this case is a measurement between grade 1 and grade 5. Regardless of the reasoning behind the chosen LOI and other language policies, it is clear that the policy is not pushing students towards success but instead holding them back. Collier and Thomas (1999) found that “linguistic minority students must make 15 months gain in every

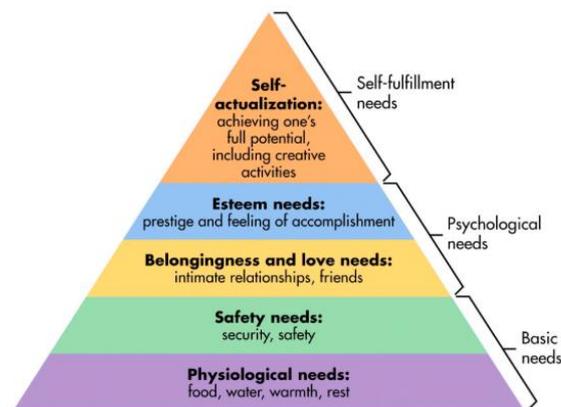
10-month school year. By contrast, the typical native-speaking student is expected to make 10-month gain in a 10-month school year” (as cited in Cummins, 2009, p. 24). However, this study was done by comparing linguistic minority students and native English speakers in the United States. Teachers in the western context may have some advantages over Burundi teachers. Therefore, it is plausible that Burundian students may be making even slower gains throughout the school year due to the L2 abilities of their teachers. If a student is on a constant academic trajectory that forces them to spend a majority of their time simply trying to catch up in language, they will most likely have a difficult time being successful in the classroom. If this becomes the case teachers and students both will systematically focus on simply trying to deposit knowledge into their brains, so they can hopefully achieve some degree of success on exams.

Teacher Motivation

This study situates itself through existing literature on teacher motivation within the following paragraphs. I was unable to find specific literature on teacher motivation in Burundi or East Africa. I utilized the SIT Library Website to search the terms “teacher motivation,” “primary school teacher motivation,” “teacher motivation in crisis contexts,” and “multilingual classrooms.” The conceptual framework relevant to teacher motivation for this study draws heavily from two sources: Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (1943), and a UNESCO (2010) report. It was difficult to find literature especially in relation to contexts similar to Burundi. Maslow’s seminal framework contributed significantly in grounding the findings of this study through considering the basic needs of the teacher as a human being. This study references a report by UNESCO (2010) to understand how teacher training affects both esteem and motivation of teachers. I hope that with this present study I will contribute valuable insights into the motivating factors for teachers in crisis contexts, multilingual classrooms, and economically challenged environments.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs provides an important lens to view the lived experiences of teachers within the classroom. If a teacher in Burundi is faced with economic struggles and security issues due to the politically unstable environment their behavior in the classroom may be affected. The two basic needs in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs are physiological needs (examples: food, water, warmth, rest) and safety needs (security and safety) (McLeod, 2018).

FIGURE 3: MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS



(McLeod, 2018, p. 1).

Currently in Burundi, it may be difficult for many teachers at the primary school level, to meet any of these goals. According to the theory as needs are met the person becomes free of the burden of that need and can move on to new goals or new needs. If teachers do not have something as simple as food, there will not be time to focus on other goals as the primary focus of that person is to find food. If teachers are worried every day about the potential of violence for themselves or their family that becomes their main focus. If a teacher is not able to address their needs at the bottom of the pyramid there is little chance, they will arrive at the top. Teachers in Burundi may find that self-actualization and psychological needs such as esteem and belongingness may be difficult to achieve. Teachers esteem or feelings of accomplishment may have a direct impact on their levels of motivation in the classroom. The findings of this study show that teachers struggle with confidence in teaching multiple languages. The

opportunity for teachers to be highly motivated in the classroom may not exist on a regular basis due to the need to focus on their most basic needs.

The UNESCO (2010) report titled *Methodological Guide for the Analysis of Teacher Issues* discusses how poor pre-service training and a lack of in-service training may affect primary school teachers' motivation in in Sub-Saharan Africa. The study began by introducing different issues that actively affect many teachers. The study emphasizes the importance of understanding policy decisions within a country, "Firstly, it is important to consider the policy and administrative framework in the country, by examining the different policy documents in which education issues are addressed" (UNESCO, 2010, p. 6). The other things that the report examined were: number of students, number of teachers, macroeconomic context (understanding the resources available in the country), and the school context (UNESCO, 2010). Within these topics one can find the issues that affect teachers in the classroom. Language policy in Burundi, for instance, may affect teacher motivation as the task of teaching in so many languages may seem insurmountable. Macroeconomics factors also contribute to a lack of funding for teacher training and materials potentially leading to a lack of teacher preparedness. In addition, if teachers live in a world where they are consistently worried about violence, they will struggle to find time to prepare engaging lessons or practice self-development. High student/teacher ratios often make for additional classroom challenges in engaging students in the topics they are being taught given the large class sizes. These are just a few of the many issues within the school environment that may create a situation that is challenging for teachers. If teachers in Burundi are faced with a multitude of obstacles in both their daily life and in the actual classrooms this may cause them to lose motivation. The present study continuously references teacher motivation and the effects on teachers.

Research Design and Data Collection Methods

This study utilizes a mixed-methods approach that incorporates surveys, focus groups, and interviews in order to answer the research question: What are teachers' perspectives and lived experiences of Burundi's language policy? According to Klassen, Creswell, Clark, Smith, & Meissner (2012) mixed method research is fundamental for understanding complex social issues for the following reasons:

Mixed methods research, then, is more than simply collecting multiple forms of qualitative evidence (e.g., observations and interviews) or quantitative evidence (e.g., surveys and diagnostic tests). It involves the intentional collection of both quantitative and qualitative data and the combination of the strengths of each to answer research questions. (p. 378)

The study's findings are more impactful due to the use of mixed methods as each tool will be used to build upon each other. Creswell and Plano Clark's (2011) explanatory sequential design showcases that through first collecting and analyzing quantitative data and then qualitative data one can use the qualitative data analysis to further explain the quantitative data. During the research process my intent was to begin the field research first with the survey, then the focus groups, and finished with the school principals. However, I quickly realized that the school principals wanted to interview prior to having me speak with their teachers. In reality, I began with interviewing the principals followed by the surveys and finishing with the focus groups. I followed an exploratory sequential design meshing the qualitative and quantitative data. I transcribed all the interviews and the focus groups. For the analysis of the results I used NVivo. I coded items based on the themes that became visible as I analyzed the surveys, focus groups transcripts, and the interview transcripts. For the survey analysis, I utilized descriptive statistics to look at percentage responses and then correlated that data with the qualitative finding from the interviews and focus groups. The qualitative data serve to provide greater insight into the

quantitative findings. It is also important to note that throughout this process I integrated on-going personal observations as I spent a great deal of time in Burundian classrooms due to my position in Burundi as the Education Specialist for a small NGO.

Sampling

The present study focuses on eight primary schools in Burundi with interviews of three school principals, a focus group with four primary school teachers and the completion of 46 surveys. Criteria for participating in the study can be found in the following sub-sections based on the type of methods used. However, the most critical criteria were that participants (teachers and school principals) had to work in a primary school. The profile of teachers that participated in the study can be found below in the presentation and analysis of data section. A total of 53 participants that work specifically in the primary school system inform this study in tandem with personal conversations I have had with secondary school teachers I work with on a daily basis. Secondary teachers provided the perspective of the post-primary students and whether or not they were prepared to begin attending their classes. The surveys represent participants from eight different primary schools in Bururi Province with vastly different economic and logistical challenges.

The sampling strategy used for the research included the use of purposeful, snowball, and convenience sampling. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016) “the criteria you establish for purposeful sampling directly reflect the purpose of the study and guide identification or information-rich cases” (p. 97). Purposeful sampling was ensuring I worked with a key primary school principal to get the process going that I knew would be effective as I moved into snowball sampling. Snowball sampling involves speaking with key people that are definitely qualified to participate in the study and then utilizing them to identify more participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The sampling strategy also utilized snowball sampling represented

in this study with the partnership with the school principal that I work with. Through him, I found my initial participants and then through each school principal I spoke with another would recommend other schools that would willingly become involved. Each school principal I asked at the end of their interview if they had anyone else, they would recommend that I speak with. Lastly, convenience sampling is simply “based on time, money, location, availability of sites or respondents, and so on” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 97). This study incorporates convenience sampling as I was working specifically with accessibility of sites that were logistically within a two-hour drive from my base. In the following paragraphs I will discuss each individual method of research and how they were utilized in the study.

Surveys

Primary school teacher completed surveys with close-ended responses that were specifically focused on gauging teachers’ individualized perspectives. The survey was completely anonymous, and I simply left them at the eight participating schools for teachers to fill out if they felt comfortable. The criteria for completing surveys was that the teacher be a primary school teacher in one of the eight schools surveyed. The goal of the survey was to collect as much quantitative data as possible on how teachers feel about a variety of language questions and to get a sense of education levels and basic demographic information of teachers in Bururi Province. The various questions were designed to differentiate if teachers feel that one language is more important in Burundi vs. the world as well as what languages they actually use for teaching. The surveys asked teachers to rank their confidence in teaching different languages in their classrooms. The surveys were completed in Kirundi, the original survey was in English and translated to Kirundi. All survey questions were multiple choice so I could review the completed Kirundi surveys utilizing my English version to access results.

Focus groups

Primary school teachers participated in focus groups allowing teachers further opportunity to expand on what is happening in the field. Focus groups often encourage peers to build upon what each other is saying. According to Kitzinger (1995) “focus groups are a form of group interview that capitalizes on communication between research participants in order to generate data” (p. 299). Within this study focusing on teachers, the hope was that focus groups would create a scenario where teachers were comfortable and willing to discuss their varying viewpoints. Due to a number of constraints, in the end, this study allowed for one focus group with four participants. The intention was to complete a minimum of two focus groups however the second focus group was cancelled due to a logistical issue and time did not allow for us to reorganize. Participants volunteered to join the session and also were teachers located near or on campus. Such an approach demonstrated the use of convenience sampling as it was the only time teachers were present at their school and not teaching. The focus group was conducted with a mixture of French, Kirundi, and English and the discussion was recorded for ease in translating all the results back to English.

Interviews

Three different primary school principals participated in interviews to articulate their perspectives on the language policy. The interviews were done face-to-face between me and the participants and I needed to have a translator present for two of the three interviews as I do not speak fluent Kirundi. Each interview was conducted separately with a time allowance of one hour per interview. According to Merriam (1998) “In qualitative case study research, the main purpose of an interview is to obtain a special kind of information. The researcher wants to find out what is in and out of someone’s mind” (p.72). The interviews provided a broader view of the government’s perspective on language policy as the school principals work closely

with the government. Since the school principals have a stronger link to the government, they were able to shed additional light on what is going on in the school systems. Also, one of the school principals that was interviewed was just promoted from primary school teacher to her current position as school principal this year which adds some additional views on the needs of a teacher. The interviews with school principals also allow for a better understanding of teacher education at the various primary schools in Burundi's rural regions.

Ethical Considerations

Before even beginning the process of research, it was important for me to take into consideration how the study process might affect the participants and the overall ethics of the study. I had to consider my own personal bias before conducting this research project as I have spent a considerable amount of time in Burundian classrooms and have preconceived ideas of what conclusions would be discovered over the course of this research project. In order to avoid issues with this during the process I relied strictly on quotes and evidence gathered throughout the research process.

In order to ensure the safety of all participants and that their willingness and comfort with participating in the study is maintained, I created consent forms that were translated into Kirundi so there was no misconception for participants on their agreement. Participants in the research were not directly asked by me if they were interested in participating in the projects (aside from the original school principal that I consistently work with) as there could have been potential for unintended pressure due to my role, as a trainer of teachers, in the schools. For the surveys I left copies at the schools to be distributed. For the focus group, school principals invited me to meetings to speak with the teachers, so I never had to ask for names or contact information. In an effort to protect the identity of all research participants, they were given a pseudonym starting during the note-taking process in the field. I did not maintain a list of

pseudonyms with the originals as there were no follow-up opportunities and this allows for further identity protection for the participants. All participants are 18 years old or older. No participants involved have been compensated in any form for their participation in this research. They participated in this project out of their own free will.

TABLE 2: LIST OF PSEUDONYMS

	#1	#2	#3	#4
Principal (Interviews)	John	Amy	David	None
Teachers (Focus Groups)	Lillian	Josh	Nancy	Jude

Limitations

As with all research, I acknowledge that this capstone paper has its limitations. This is a small-scale mixed-methods study intended to investigate teacher beliefs and experiences within a specific geographical area. One of the first limitations is that I am based in the southern province of Bururi and due to the challenging logistics of the area all the research took place in this province. Logistics for the focus group proved to be much harder than I expected due to personal needs of teachers and scheduling constraints, allowing for one rather than two focus groups. Accessing the schools was a challenge and only one school principal had a cellphone for us to do any scheduling prior to arrival. However, I was able to visit a variety of schools within the province to highlight a more diverse sample for study as a whole. The findings of the study cannot be generalized as it is a qualitative purposeful sample and focusses on a particular geographical location. Nonetheless, the findings from this study provide insights that may be relevant to other teachers within Burundi.

Language is also acknowledged as a limitation for this study as I do not speak the local language fluently and therefore must rely on a translator to get the results. French and English

could not be used in the study as I have already observed that in teacher training seminars most teachers are unable to fully communicate in both. This is acknowledged as a limitation as some things that the participants say in the surveys, focus groups, and interviews may not be fully captured due to the challenges of translating from Kirundi to English. I was highly focused on using the best translators and working with the translator prior to beginning the research to ensure they understand the importance of both the ethical considerations and the need for the participants' voices to be fully heard.

A limitation that became evident during the collection of surveys was one of the questions focused on whether or not teachers deliberately chose their career path. The response to this question was 100% yes. There may have been limitations due to teachers concerns about outcomes if the school principals saw they had answered no. This may have resulted in stifling teachers from sharing their honest perceptions on career advancement and job satisfaction. A deeper study would need to be conducted on this topic to completely understand the career goals of teachers in Bururi.

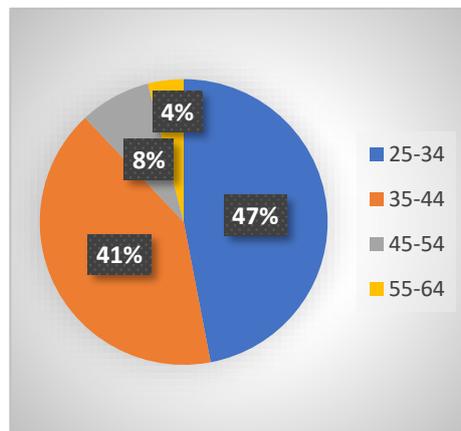
Presentation and Analysis of Data

In this section I will present the data found throughout the course of this study. As a reminder I utilized surveys, focus groups, and interviews to focus on primary teachers' realities of the Burundian language policy. The following section is organized based on the themes that were discovered upon analysis of the interviews, focus group, and surveys. The themes that developed out of this study are poor pre-service training, lack of in-service training, corruption in the education system, teacher confidence, low salaries, political instability, and student's lack of confidence in the languages.

The teachers and school principals that participated in this study were almost an equal number of 25 males and 24 females. The following is a breakdown of the demographics of the

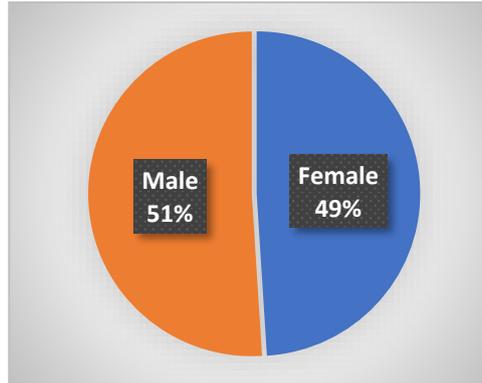
teachers and school principals involved in this study. The majority of the teachers and school principals were under 45 years old.

FIGURE 4 AGE OF PARTICIPANTS



The study also highlighted that teachers in Burundi's rural primary school system do not have a high level of education. All of the teachers that were interviewed or participated in surveys for this study were primary school teachers which means that they are expected to help students prepare to study with French as the LOI and prepare them in English, Kiswahili, and Kirundi at the same time. Eighty percent of the teachers surveyed have a D6 level of education meaning they attended school from grades 1-10 followed by two years of teacher training. The remaining teachers that were surveyed had a D7 education level, so they attended grades 1-10 and then had four years of teacher training. Out of all 46 teachers only three of the teachers had ever attended a government sponsored in-service training.

FIGURE 5: GENDER BREAKDOWN OF TEACHERS AND SCHOOL PRINCIPALS



Over the following sections I will introduce the main themes that emerged from the research. First, I will break down the factors complicating teacher performance in Burundi which has four sub-categories focusing on each issue. The factors are lack of quality pre-service training, absence of in-service training, low salaries, and political instability. After that, there is a section highlighting the perceived importance of each language in Burundi which could potentially be seen as a motivating factor if one language is seen to hold a greater importance over another. In general, teachers' viewpoints on the language policy reflect the perceived lack of importance they equate with Kirundi outside of Burundi. Teachers participating in this study tend to think that English and then French are in fact extremely important for their student's life-long success. I will then provide an overview of what sampled teachers are saying is actually occurring in their classrooms linguistically. The study found that most teachers said they have to use Kirundi in their classroom even though it is not the LOI drawing attention to the reality of the language policy.

Factors Impacting Teacher Performance

One of the strongest elements that came out of both the focus groups and interviews were the factors that influence teachers' performance in the classrooms. The question of motivation and overall capabilities arose based on external factors. The main factors that teachers reported were poor pre-service training, absence of in-service training, low salaries,

corruption, and violence. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) states that physiological and safety needs are considered basic needs for all people. The following paragraphs highlight that sampled teachers are saying that many of their basic needs are not being met. To provide further insight into these factors, I will utilize quotes from the interviews with school principals, focus groups, and some data from the surveys to allow for the perspectives of the teachers and school principals to shine through.

Pre-service and In-service Training

The biggest issue teachers face that reflects their performance in the classroom is without a doubt their pre-service and in-service training. It has already been noted in this paper that most teachers at the primary school level essentially have a secondary school degree. In the sample of teachers used for this study none of them attended university. Only one teacher had a D7 level of education (four years of teacher training) while the remaining 45 teachers all had a D6 level of education (two years teacher training). The language training teachers received was within the same system that creates the challenge within the classroom for most Burundian students in the public-school system. A UNESCO (2010) report focused specifically on sub-Saharan Africa and issues teachers face in the region stated, "it is not surprising that language tests, which inform us on mastery of French are linked to the result of the final exam" (p.55). The report is relevant to this study specifically for broadening the perspective of what was found in relation to the language levels of teachers. During the course of the UNESCO study they tested teachers' French skills who utilized the language as their LOI and showed that teachers whose language levels were low tended to have students with low poor results on the final exam. Teacher training is meant to improve the results of students within the classroom and without it, teachers with insufficient academic levels will struggle to provide for their students.

One school principal, David, in his interview spoke about the government's approach to preparing teachers to teach a language they have not previously spent a great deal of time learning. David shared that, "before introducing this subject [Kiswahili], the government had a one-week teacher training. And that is not enough" (Interview). That training was once back in 2008 so some teachers may not have even had the opportunity to utilize that training. The idea that teachers could begin teaching a completely new language that they themselves have never spoken before simply through a one-week training is shocking. Results from the surveys further reinforce this point. Of teachers surveyed, 41% of them reported having no confidence in teaching Kiswahili. The case is similar for English which also has comparable issues with in-service training as 0% of the teachers said they had completed in-service training for English. Of the sample, 30% of teachers surveyed reported they had no confidence in teaching English as a subject. The pressure that teachers around the world face to produce knowledgeable and successful leaders for the world is amplified when a teacher does not have the basic support necessary to understand the topic they are tasked with teaching.

Corruption in the Education System

Some technical training schools may exhibit corruption further exacerbating teacher training issues. The school principal, Amy, mentioned that even within the technical trainings schools that give the D6 or D7 level training there is possibility of corruption by the teacher trainees themselves. The following is Amy's statement regarding what could happen at the schools for teachers:

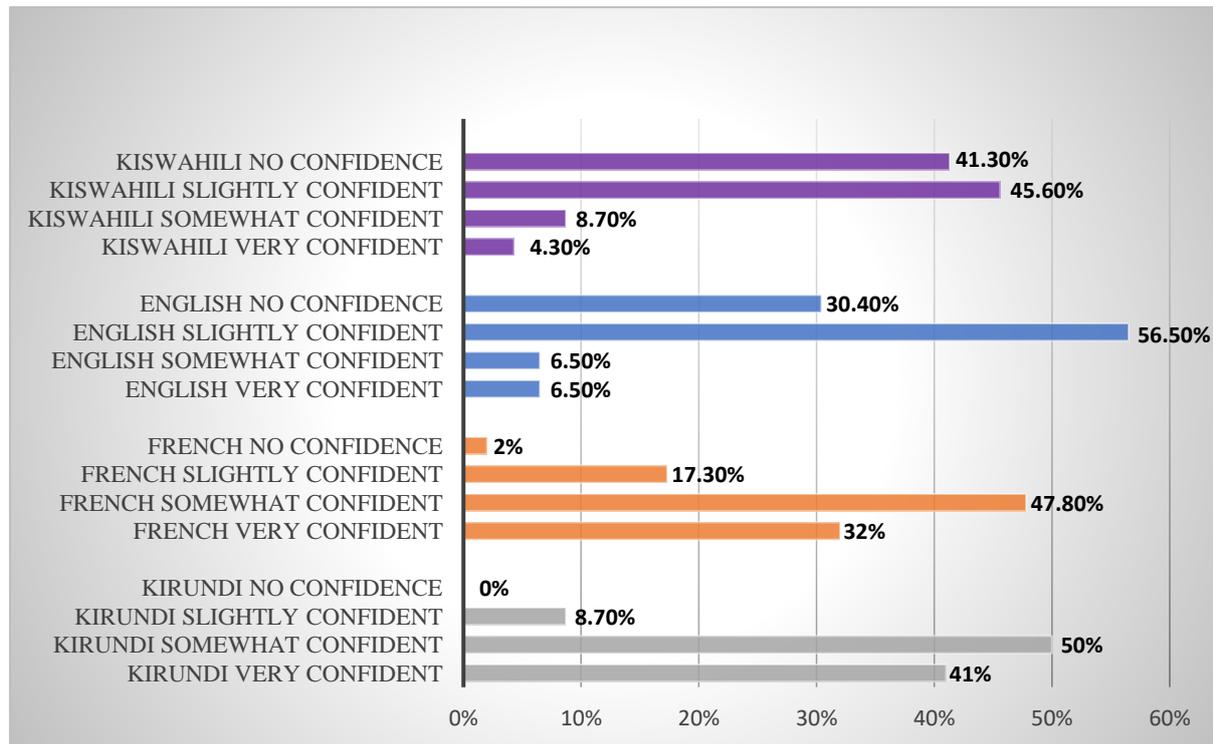
The problem is with the training that the teachers had while in school. There is corruption within the schools. Students give money to the teachers in order to pass. This is the reason why in their career they do not have confidence while teaching because they paid to get their pass and did not actually complete training. (Interview)

I had not heard this before and after learning it, I spoke casually with some other teachers and principals to see if I could triangulate this information. All agreed that this is very much the reality of the situation in Burundi. The UNESCO (2010) noted that, “teaching does not only require a satisfactory academic level and good motivation but also specific pedagogical skills” (p. 52). The pre-service teaching in Burundi is already recognized as being minimal in the skillset that it provides teachers. If some teachers lack engagement in even the basic D6 or D7 training, one can assume that this would be highly detrimental to their success in the classroom. Even if the teachers did actively engage in their education and did not resort to corruption in their path of education, they would still likely have severe challenges due to the language of instruction policies.

Confidence in Teaching

Teacher confidence in language teaching is important to understanding teacher motivation and their abilities in the classroom. For instance, teachers that openly state that they have no confidence in teaching English may have a completely different set of needs from those that say they are confident but lack materials. The survey asked teachers to respond to their confidence levels in teaching each language based on speaking, reading, writing, and listening (see table 3 below). Kirundi is the only language that over 40% of primary school teachers surveyed said they are very confident in their ability to teach. French 32% of teachers surveyed said they are very confident teaching, 48% are somewhat confident, and about 20% of them said they were only slightly confident in their teaching abilities. For English and Kiswahili, the survey showed very low levels of confidence for primary school teachers in Bururi Province. Kiswahili and English both had less than 7% of teachers saying that they are very confident in teaching these languages. In Kiswahili 41.3% of teachers said that they have no confidence in teaching and 30.4% of teachers had no confidence in teaching English. The results are worrisome and highlight how challenged these teachers are in the classroom.

TABLE 3: TEACHER CONFIDENCE IN TEACHING BY LANGUAGE



The majority of teachers in the school system have had very little exposure to English and Kiswahili during their time in primary school and secondary school. One of the teachers from the focus group commented that prior to his in-service training in Kiswahili he actually was unsure how the language should even sound. I observed a level of despair from both teachers and school principals in regard to teaching English and Kiswahili. The teachers seemed to think teaching either of these languages is an impossible task. As illustration, Amy said the following regarding how teacher’s language performance reflected in the classroom:

For French the teachers try but for English and Kiswahili they cannot even try. It would be better if we found someone who has graduated from university for example who has been prepared to be an English teacher to come teach English. (Interview)

The fact that Amy described the teachers’ capabilities by saying that they cannot even try shows a level of despair in regard to English and Kiswahili teaching. In-service training could be a way for the teachers to begin to have more exposure to these languages and allow them the

opportunity to begin to understand what they are expected to teach. At a bare minimum, teachers should be provided basic education that would make them confident in knowing the sounds of the language they are expected to try and teach.

Desire for In-service Training

A key finding from this study is that teachers shared their enthusiasm for any opportunities to receive in-service training, specifically among the teachers in the focus group. Despite this enthusiasm, I only met three teachers over the course of visiting ten different schools, that have ever participated in an in-service training provided by the government. The three teachers had all participated in trainings on Kiswahili. Over the course of the past year and a half from my position as Education Program Manager at a small NGO, I have observed that the government seems to be reluctant in investing in teacher education or materials. Within the focus group, the teachers who had the opportunity to attend teacher training discussed their experiences in the trainings showing genuine appreciation for the opportunity to participate. During focus groups, they expressed that the experiences were meaningful to them and gave them the opportunity to gain a little more confidence in what they are expected to do in their classrooms.

The trainings that the three teachers had participated in were both dedicated to Kiswahili. Two of the teachers had attended a two-week Kiswahili course three years ago and one teacher had attended a Kiswahili training for just one week back in 2008. Other than those specific trainings that only three out of the 46 teachers attended there is no standard for in-service training in place. When I asked Amy, the school principal at the most rural school I visited if any of her teachers got to attend teacher trainings she began laughing and then simply said “never.” The interviews with school principals and the focus groups with teachers all had elements of conversation about how teacher education impacts performance, confidence, and ultimately the outcomes of students. Findings seem to indicate that teachers would embrace

opportunities to further develop their skillsets and ultimately grow in their confidence within the classroom. However, without significant investment by either the government or NGOs this will be difficult for it to become a reality for teachers in Bururi.

Low Salaries

The issue of poor salaries surfaced frequently as a theme within the data. Mention of salaries arose with every single person I spoke to whether it was in a focus group or an interview with a school principal. The average salary for a Burundian primary school teacher is less than \$50/month. In Burundi, the fertility rate or the average births per female is 5.70 children (World Bank, 2019). The Gross National Income (GNI) in Burundi is \$290/year which reflects the average income of the citizens (UNESCO, 2019). The salary is simply not substantial enough for a family of eight to live well on. This would cause an added burden and a distraction from classroom issues for teachers as they try to balance their work at school with providing for their families. This relates back to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and whether or not teachers can be motivated in the classroom when basic needs are not being met. According to David, a school principal that works within two different primary schools, he said the following regarding teachers:

Teachers like their jobs but the problem is there is poverty in this country and the government gives a low salary to teachers. This causes them to not have enough time to prepare their lessons. They prefer to teach but they accept that they must make something like a small business in order to have enough money to cover all costs. (Interview).

Teachers holding second jobs or creating their own small businesses was another consistent theme during the interviewing process. Amy said that she is not sure what her teachers do when they do not show up to class, but it happens frequently and is probably related to financial

issues. As a result of socioeconomic factors that primary school teachers face, they may spend more time focused on finding alternative income than focusing on lesson planning or even trying to learn a second language. My own experience as an English teacher in Burundi further corroborates this finding. I have offered up free English classes to the local schools but only two teachers out of 45 consistently come as the others say there just isn't enough time for them to focus on their own learning. They told me that if I was able to provide a stipend to them for attending, they would love the opportunity to join otherwise they need to focus on earning money.

Political Instability

Unrest is another issue that the interviews highlighted. The teachers have been affected by the unrest that has taken place in Burundi over past decades. John, a school principal, stated the following regarding education issues in Burundi.

Before the social crisis that our country Burundi went through from 1993 until now [education] was good. Someone with a D6 or D7 degree was able to transmit knowledge but after the beginning of the crisis, the quality of the education decreased. Our teachers need to be trained regularly on how to teach and have assistance in mastering the content and curriculum. As violence was introduced into teachers' everyday life, they began to fear death. In war nothing is good, and teachers do not have time to even prepare their lessons when they are worried about safety. (Interview).

Unfortunately, instability continues to characterize the current situation within the country. The looming 2020 elections result in teachers focusing on how they will keep their families safe. A colleague of mine commented to me that in the past teaching was a noble profession, before the 1990s, before the crisis. Now teachers have other concerns and have a hard time focusing on teaching. In Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, safety is listed as a basic need for all human

beings. In order for someone to be able to be focused, motivated, and at peak performance they need to at least feel safe. Safety needs on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs are classified as: "protection from elements, security, order, law, stability, freedom from fear" (McLeod, 2018). Maslow further described the plight of a human who does not have their basic need of safety met in the following way, "A man, in this state, if it is extreme enough and chronic enough, may be characterized as living almost for safety alone" (Maslow, 1943, para.17). For many teachers in Burundi their life experiences would classify them as those living in a chronically unstable environment. The obsession to just find a way to live a safe life in some cases may overtake other priorities in life and can make it challenging to focus on anything but their safety. Coupled with the lack of training and issues surrounding teachers with the language policy it is actually extremely impressive how motivated the teachers of Bururi's primary schools remain.

Burundian Perception of the Importance of each Language

The perceptions that educators have surrounding the importance of each language in Burundi is also intriguing to understand as teachers might be less motivated to teach something if there is a perceived lack of value in a given topic. The following tables (tables 4 and 5) show the average responses for the survey questions related to the importance of languages per geographical regions and at home. The tables also show a breakdown of the spread of responses. Teachers in the surveys ranked Kirundi as the most important language for Burundian students as seen in Table 4 below. It is interesting to note that of the 46 survey participants, over half of them ranked Kirundi, French, and English as the most important language. While it is not definitive evidence it may represent that primary school teachers agree with the policy stating that these languages are in fact highly important for Burundian students to learn. Forty-three percent, or close to half, of all teachers ranked Kiswahili as a "most important" language. Thirty-two out of forty-six teachers ranked Kirundi as the most important

language in Burundi. Teachers chose Kirundi over Kiswahili because it is the mother tongue language spoken in Burundi.

TABLE 4: MOST IMPORTANT LANGUAGE FOR BURUNDIAN STUDENTS

Identifier	Most Important	Somewhat Important	Slightly Important	Least Important
Spread of responses				
Kirundi	32	10	2	2
French	25	19	0	2
English	24	6	10	6
Kiswahili	20	5	8	13

In Table 5 below the surveyed teachers shared their opinions on what language is most commonly used at home. Forty-one out of forty-six teachers (nearly all) scored Kirundi as the most important language at home. Teachers seem to recognize Kirundi as being the language of the home with 89% saying it is “always” used in the home. There seems to be a definitive difference in how teachers view languages in academic performance versus what is the reality of what students are capable of speaking. However, it is noteworthy that Kirundi, French, and English all ranked between most important and somewhat important for the question about which languages are most important in Burundi.

TABLE 5: LANGUAGE STUDENTS MOST COMMONLY USE AT HOME

Identifier	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Spread of responses				
Kirundi	41	1	1	3
French	5	26	5	10
English	3	4	15	24
Kiswahili	4	7	16	19

The results highlight how unsure some people are about the value of each language in Burundi as some people tended to rank multiple languages as “most important” or “somewhat important.” The results reflected that some teachers may have been torn in having to decide

between languages. What is unclear from that portion of the results is whether or not sociopolitical factors play into the difficulties in the decision-making or if the teachers genuinely believe the students must learn all four languages. This could be a topic for future research to further understand how different languages are viewed and why.

The results from this study also explore surveyed teachers’ perceived importance of languages outside of Burundi based on the geographical locations: East Africa, Africa, and the world. The majority of teachers (34 of 46) ranked English as the most important language in East Africa (see table 6), with 9 additional participants selecting that English is “somewhat important.” These findings align with my personal observations from working in the region of Bururi. My experience there indicates that most people believe that English is the way forward economically for Burundi because around the world and in the East African Region people speak English.

TABLE 6: MOST IMPORTANT LANGUAGE IN THE EAST AFRICAN REGION

Identifier	Most Important	Somewhat Important	Slightly Important	Least Important
Spread of responses				
Kirundi	8	4	13	21
French	11	19	10	6
English	34	9	1	2
Kiswahili	19	10	12	5

When asked about the importance of the various school languages within the African Continent as a whole, teachers once again selected English as the most important language, with 29 out of 46 teachers saying it is the most important language (see table 7). All of the languages did shift in perceived importance for Africa which is understandable as the use of these languages would change dependent on the region. French was ranked slightly higher

versus its ranking for East Africa and Kiswahili was ranked slightly lower. Kirundi stayed the same reflecting its limited use outside of Burundi.

TABLE 7: MOST IMPORTANT LANGUAGE IN AFRICA

Identifier	Most Important	Somewhat Important	Slightly Important	Least Important
Spread of responses				
Kirundi	9	4	10	23
French	24	14	4	4
English	29	12	4	1
Kiswahili	15	11	13	7

The last ranking that teachers completed was the importance of language in the entire world. Table 8 below shows English was once again ranked highest with 36 out of 46 teachers saying it is most important. French had a similar response with 20 out of 46 teachers saying it is the most important.

TABLE 8: MOST IMPORTANT LANGUAGE IN THE WORLD

Identifier	Most Important	Somewhat Important	Slightly Important	Least Important
Spread of responses				
Kirundi	8	5	5	28
French	20	16	8	2
English	36	4	4	2
Kiswahili	9	12	16	9

The rankings are important as they may shed some light on teacher motivation in teaching different languages if some are perceived to be more important than others. An illustrative quote on the topic of the importance of language came from the interview with the school principal, John. The quote highlights the viewpoint of how some Burundians may view this question of which language is important to them personally and their country when it comes to LOI.

The first ranking concerns students and the other concerns people who have finished school. For students the most important language is French because it is the language of instruction, then English because we are in the East African Community where we have to use English, Kirundi is used in many occasions and events in our country so you must know it. Last is Kiswahili, it is not a very important language. For those that have already finished their studies first comes English, French, Kirundi, and Kiswahili. To explain I will say this: I have heard that all over the world English is spoken by many, many, people. English is a language in many areas, domains, business, science, in so many things. If you want to progress in business, jobs, and a career you need to know English. Even though it is a new language which was recently introduced into Burundi's education system. But do not forget French. French is used to communicate, since Burundi is among the French speaking countries. French is used in media, administration...in many areas we need to use French. Then Kirundi, Kirundi is our mother tongue language which is why we must understand it and be able to use it. I think Kirundi is a very, very, difficult language. Even though I am from this country I have difficulty communicating in Kirundi without mistakes. And Kiswahili is of less importance. (Interview)

In personal discussions and throughout the interviews and focus groups this was a shared concept by the many people. French has not lost its significance in Burundi as it is used in government and schools, but people recognize that its international use or economic value at this point may not be as high as English. Within the East African Community, English and Kiswahili are the main languages. Many Burundians have accepted that they must learn French however there seems to be a change in its perceived importance at least with the primary school teachers in Bururi Province.

My own experiences support the findings that are emerging from the study as I often bring up in conversations with people the idea of choice of language or student/parent selected second language options. As a student growing up in the United States at my school, I was able to choose what second language I wanted to learn. I often ask people if they think that could be a solution for Burundi. Offering a late-exit strategy where mother tongue is used for the LOI at least for six years and then students could transition into learning in French. At that point they could have the option to choose either English or Kiswahili as a subject. When I bring this up as an option, I usually get looks like I am absolutely crazy, and this would simply not work as a solution in Burundi because “students might choose wrong” or “you need to know all the languages.” In the end, the findings from this portion of the study really show that there is not a clear solution for teachers and school principals to remedy the policy.

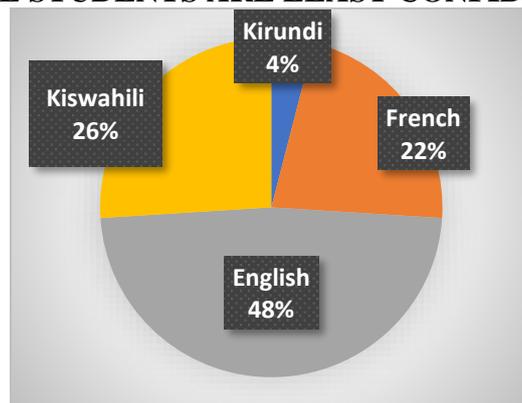
What Teachers Say is Happening in the Classroom

The personal observations of teachers in their classrooms are important in order to grasp what is working versus what policy says should be happening. This section will analyze the findings from what teachers say is actually occurring in the classroom. The sampled teachers were asked about their students’ confidence levels in each language to understand in which language they are most capable. Participants responded to the question: In your opinion what language do you think your students are most confident using? The response was overwhelmingly Kirundi, with 96% of respondents choosing that option. Two teachers within the sample, both male, responded that their students are confident in all four languages which may be accurate or could be related to bias. Jude, a teacher who participated in the focus group spoke to the importance of Kirundi by stating the following, “I would say a great majority of the population in Burundi did not go to school so all they understand is Kirundi, the mother tongue language.”

Many teachers also seemed aware of the challenge’s students faced learning a new language in the classroom that they would be unable to practice at home. Nancy, another teacher from the focus group, explained why it is so difficult. She explained that, “as a teacher, even with a teachers’ guide, difficulties remain as we are invited to teach languages even they do not understand” (focus group). However, the majority of teachers indicated feeling strongly that their students can use Kirundi with confidence which demonstrates that there is a language that could be utilized as the LOI that all students would understand.

In contrast to teachers’ perceptions that students are very confident using Kirundi, nearly half of all teachers identified that their students are least confident using English

FIGURE 6: LANGUAGE STUDENTS ARE LEAST CONFIDENT USING



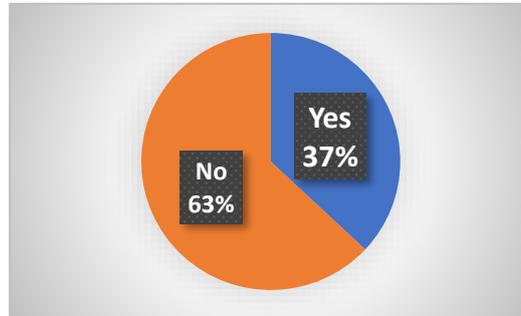
However, the result that stood out to me the most was that French and Kiswahili were almost equally ranked in terms of teachers’ confidence of students being able to use the language. As depicted in figure 7, sampled teachers stated that 22% believe their students are least confident in French and 26% in Kiswahili. French holds a great significance to students and teachers in that the national exam is taken in this language. Comparatively Kiswahili does not have a major academic impact outside of it being a content class. If students are not confident in their abilities in French, they will not be able to be successful as they move into core curriculum for the national exam in lower-secondary school. It is also important to note that, as seen in Table 3 above, teachers feel much more confident in teaching French than they do teaching Kiswahili.

Therefore, it is surprising to see that teachers' linguistic confidence in the classroom may not align with their students' linguistic capabilities. The study done by UNESCO (2010) noted that although there seems to be a direct correlation between teachers' low-test scores in a language and student poor results a high-test score by the teachers in a language does not always mean the students will be successful. If the teachers lack the pedagogical skills necessary to teach a second language, they will likely still struggle to help the students acquire their language skills. This may be the case for the comparison between the teachers own confidence and their perceptions of their students' confidence. Further research would be needed to completely understand how these findings may relate to each other.

The current study is focused on how teachers feel about the current language policy in Burundi and how it affects their classrooms. The study found that over two-thirds (68%) of sampled teachers said that French is not the ideal language for student learning. This number is high; however, I had thought that it might be even higher based on the fact that the teachers recognize that 96% of their students are most confident in using Kirundi. However, the social norms and government policy most likely play a role in the thought process behind this. Teachers and those who have been schooled within the French system may also be frightened of the prospect of a policy change resulting in a change of priority within languages that could impact their identity and value as individuals. As stated previously in the literature review it is not uncommon for people to have this view. Ouane & Glanz (2011) argue that, "Students will not be able to understand or succeed in areas of the curriculum such as science and mathematics if they do not have a sufficient proficiency in the medium of instruction" (p. 134). Primary school teachers all want the best for their students, and when they see French, English, or Kiswahili as having a greater impact on the lives of the students they naturally think that the more time the students spend working in the languages the more likely they will be to learn it. For the 63% percent of teachers sampled that believe French is not the ideal language for

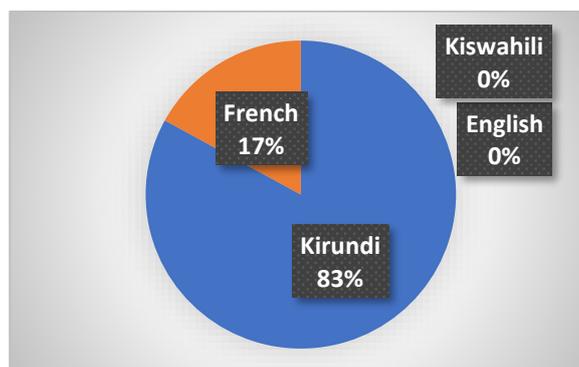
students to learn in they may understand that their students are unable to learn in the language due to their low levels in the language.

FIGURE 7: FRENCH AS THE IDEAL LANGUAGE FOR STUDENTS TO LEARN IN



Practice versus policy is important in understanding what is actually taking place in the classroom. Most teachers generally know the policy on languages simply through the required hours they teach per week, but for this study it is important to see how that translated into practice. When asked which language teachers use most consistently for classroom management, over four-fifths (83%) of teachers said that they use Kirundi for classroom management consistently. Seventeen percent of teachers said they use French, and none use Kiswahili or English. This seems to indicate that teachers are able to separate themselves from the policy as they are able to observe their students and change their own behaviors to try and create a better learning environment for them. In the following sections there are further quotes that support this phenomenon of practice vs. policy in the classroom.

FIGURE 8: LANGUAGE USED MOST CONSISTENTLY FOR CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT



The data represented in the survey complement the data from interviews and focus groups that addressed their own confidence and student confidence. The lived experiences of teachers in the classroom highlighted through the interviews illustrated the difference between policy and practice. Surveyed teachers and school principals ranked English as the most important language in the world, Africa, and East Africa and it was even discussed that it should potentially become the new LOI for Burundi. Conversations like this made me even more certain that decision-makers in Bururi Province may be language confused as they search for the ideal language for their students to become economically successful. Given the lack of resources and training available to teachers there does not seem to be an immediate way for the teachers to feel as though they can successfully carry the burden of this language policy. For illustration, John stated the following in regard to the importance of language:

Language is something that is a vehicle for knowledge. If you do not master the language the rest will fail. Also, I think it would be very easy for students to pass or succeed if we used only one language in the classroom. (Interview).

The points this director makes is extremely important and should not go unnoticed. Without having the required understanding of the languages used in the classroom both the teachers and the students will struggle. As noted in figure 9, 83% of the teachers who responded to the survey said they consistently use Kirundi for classroom management regardless of whether or not the LOI is Kirundi or French. This brings into question if a policy change to Kirundi as the LOI would better suit the needs of both teachers and students for learning and teaching. If the teachers and students are struggling with the languages perhaps decreasing the number of languages would create a sustainable solution in the face of a lack of teacher training. In the focus group one of the teachers, Josh, said the following about his experience in the classroom trying to get students to understand a lesson taught in French:

In grade five and six, almost all the subjects are taught in French. And, it is only the teacher who is speaking in French. The students just watch because they are not able to communicate or transmit a message orally. If I realize that the students are not understanding what is being said I will just switch and teach the lesson in Kirundi.
(Focus group)

The other teachers within that focus group nodded their heads in agreement that this was also a practice that they had to utilize, seeming to indicate that many teachers may use Kirundi even in upper-level primary classes where French is the LOI. It highlights that although there is a language policy in place there is language use in practice. The same teacher also noted the extreme challenges of teaching reading in the classroom in French. He explained how with “comprehension texts [in French] if you are asking students how to answer questions from the text you are talking alone. Students do not react because they do not understand.” The amazing thing about discussing this topic with these teachers is their personal drive to try and find a way to connect the students to learning. The teachers and school directors’ passion and eagerness to get involved in additional training and making suggestions on how to positively impact student learning indicated to me that those involved care about the outcomes of the classroom. However, the teachers face such an extreme number of obstacles that it may be difficult to envision a future without so many challenges.

Participants’ Suggestions for Impacting Teacher Performance

As a reminder, this study focuses on understanding primary school teachers’ perceptions of the Burundian language policy. Consistently the data from this study showed that teachers struggle to teach English and Kiswahili. Teaching in French and Kirundi for some teachers was also a struggle. As previously stated, the study also highlighted that teachers in Burundi’s rural primary school system do not have a high level of education. Within the

sample, 70% of teachers surveyed had a D6 level while 30% of teachers had a D7 level, a difference of 2-4 years of secondary education focused on teacher training. The majority of teachers are using Kirundi for classroom management and 63% of the participants stated that French is not the ideal language for instruction. Throughout the research process, many teachers indicated similar answers in which actions could be taken to decrease the burden of the current Burundian language policy on teachers which requires teaching four languages. The following are key suggestions raised by teachers in the focus groups and interviews:

- **Increase the in-service training provided for teachers.** While many participants noted that this should be the role of the government, they also indicated that they could work with partner NGOs in developing materials for these trainings. Participants had a wide-range of ideas on what these trainings could entail. For instance, some said training should be actual language classes for teachers to master English and Kiswahili. Other participants suggested that the government could provide schools with audio that they could use to practice their accents and at a minimum understand how a language should sound. Other teachers thought there should be classes focused on the pedagogy of teaching a language. John stated the following in regard to why trainings are so important and how it should be done:

I think my suggestion is that the government of Burundi via the ministry of education or education partners should organize many trainings for teachers.

The training could help to stress the importance of teaching languages.

- Another suggestion that Amy had is to hire an external teacher that has taken a language (French, English, or Kiswahili) at the university-level. These teachers would preferably have a background in the pedagogy of teaching a language, to teach that specific language for certain grades in primary school. That way, they are the linguistically specialized to teach that language. However, this approach would require government

to change policies related to teacher hiring practices. At the organization I work with we have done something similar. The government granted us special permission to hire a university-educated French teacher for the primary school we have a partnership with. While the benefits in the classroom so far have been incredible it would require an overhaul to teacher salaries in Burundi to attract university educated teachers to the public-school system.

- The final recommendation is an overall policy change that would focus on using only one language in primary school. Findings were inconclusive as responses varied on what language should be used in primary school, but almost everyone agreed that there are too many languages being introduced early on.

The fastest way to facilitate change in the classrooms in Burundi would be through increasing the amount of in-service trainings provided for primary school teachers. This could be done by NGOs or through lobbying for the government to consider making this a focal point of the ministry of education. Hiring language specialists to work with teacher trainees on their language skills so they could be better prepared for the classroom could also prove to be quite helpful. Ultimately the most substantial impact would come from a change of policy on which languages are used in the classroom. A late-exit strategy, for instance, and then students focusing on either French or English may have a significant impact on students' abilities to learn. However, the purpose of this paper was to understand the teachers' perspectives and lived experiences of the Burundian language policy. Findings from this study indicate that teachers within the sample would feel supported on a personal level if they received quality teacher training that could build their own confidence in accomplishing what they are tasked by the government to teach within their classrooms.

Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Research

The language policies in Burundi will continue to affect classroom outcomes if teachers' perspectives are not sincerely taken into account. The suggestions that teachers and school principals have made over the course of this study would indeed help alleviate some of the issues caused by such policies however they will not end the issue for students. Even with changes in how teachers are trained, including language specialists in the classroom, can only go so far when primary school students have a limited amount of time each week in the classroom. The study, however, was meant to highlight the experiences and realities of these teachers to understand their perspectives on how they are affected by the language policies and practices. The study has, highlighted ways that the government and NGOs could work to provide teachers better support and training. Findings indicate that teachers sampled definitely showed that they care about their students they simply lack the skills necessary to be the teachers they would want to be.

Future research on this topic could focus more on what quality in-service training looks like for teachers in systems that require one teacher to teach in more than three languages. The study could look to provide qualitative and quantitative data indicating if a long-term investment in the teachers either impacted teacher's confidence and motivation or significantly changed student performance. A study that focused on either of these two topics would assess the value in governments investing in such programs. If the study showed that such an investment had very little influence because students simply are not prepared in environments like Burundi, where resources and even electricity are scarce, to learn multiple languages perhaps governments would be more willing to reevaluate language policies. However, I do think it would be an interesting topic regardless of the outcome to understand how highly supported teachers might feel compared to unsupported teachers in challenging environments and attempting to connect that to student outcomes.

Even though this study utilized a small sample size that does not allow for generalization of teachers' perspectives throughout Burundi, findings provide insightful and useful data from one particular region of the country. The literature currently available on teachers' perspectives and lived experiences of language policy is limited and is often restricted to the regional context in which it was developed. The current study provides an overview of how teachers and school principals in Burundi, specifically in Bururi Province, view the language policy and an understanding of how it affects them. This study provides a basis for many future studies that could be done with teachers in Burundi. The study also provides insight for organizations and the government, that may provide teacher training workshops in the region and country, through emphasizing the lack of teacher education. The present study highlights strategies for mitigating issues with the policy through providing teachers with professional development, hiring teachers specific to each language being taught, as well as classroom materials needed to assist in the issues surrounding LOI in Burundi.

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Appendix A: Survey

1. How old are you?
18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64
2. What is your sex?
Male Female
3. What is the highest level of education you have attained?
D6 D7 IPA IPA3
IPA5 Licencié ENS3 ISCO
4. Have your career goals been focused on becoming a teacher?
Yes No
5. Rate your level of confidence in the following language-related tasks:
(1 = most confident, 2 = somewhat confident, 3 = slightly confident, 4 = least confident)
Speaking Kirundi ____
Writing Kirundi ____
Listening in Kirundi ____
Reading in Kirundi ____
6. Rate your level of overall confidence in teaching in Kirundi.
no confidence slightly confident somewhat confident very confident
7. Rate your level of confidence in the following language-related tasks:
(1 = most confident, 2 = somewhat confident, 3 = slightly confident, 4 = least confident)
Speaking French ____
Writing French ____
Listening in French ____
Reading in French ____
8. Rate your level of overall confidence in teaching in French.
no confidence slightly confident somewhat confident very confident
9. Rate your level of confidence in the following language-related tasks:
(1 = most confident, 2 = somewhat confident, 3 = slightly confident, 4 = least confident)
Speaking English ____

Writing in English ____

Listening in English ____

Reading in English ____

10. Rate your level of overall confidence in teaching in English.

no confidence slightly confident somewhat confident very confident

11. Rate your level of confidence in the following language-related tasks:

(1 = most confident, 2 = somewhat confident, 3 = slightly confident, 4 = least confident)

Speaking Kiswahili ____

Writing in Kiswahili ____

Listening in Kiswahili ____

Reading in Kiswahili ____

12. Rate your level of overall confidence in teaching in Kiswahili.

no confidence slightly confident somewhat confident very confident

13. Please rank the languages that are the most important for students in Burundi?

(1 = most important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = slightly important, 4 = least important)

Kirundi____

French____

English____

Kiswahili____

14. Please rank the languages your students most commonly use at home?

(1 = always, 2 = sometimes, 3 = rarely, 4 = never)

Kirundi____

French____

English____

Kiswahili____

15. Please rank the languages you think are the most important in the East African Union?

(1 = most important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = slightly important, 4 = least important)

Kirundi____

French____

English____

Kiswahili___

16. Please rank the languages you think are the most important in Africa? (1 = most important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = slightly important, 4 = least important)

Kirundi___

French___

English ___

Kiswahili___

17. Please rank languages you think are the most important in the world? (1 = most important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = slightly important, 4 = least important)

Kirundi___

French___

English___

Kiswahili___

18. In your opinion what language do you think your students are most confident using?
(Please check only one box)

Kirundi French English Kiswahili

19. In your opinion what language do you think your students are least confident using?
(Please check only one box)

Kirundi French English Kiswahili

20. Do you think French is the ideal language for students to be learning in?

Yes No

21. What language do you most consistently use for classroom management?

Kirundi French English Kiswahili

Additional Comments (please state any information you would like to be further considered)

Appendix B: Focus Group Questions

1. How many years have you been a teacher in Burundi?
2. What is your highest level of education?
3. What province are you originally from?
4. What grades do you teach?
5. Describe your experiences teaching languages.
6. Have you ever attended teacher training workshops and if so, how many, and did they focus on language of instruction?
 - a. What support do you have in teaching second languages to your students?
 - b. Do you receive any coaching or feedback at your school?
7. Tell me your perception of student's comprehension and ability to speak in Kirundi, French, English, and Kiswahili.
8. Do you sometimes use another language if your students are not understanding the topic? If so, what language do you switch to?
9. What is the most important language in Burundi and why?
10. What types of challenges do you encounter when teaching certain languages?

Appendix C: Interview Questions for School Principals

1. What do you see as the biggest success factor for your students?
2. Do you have a goal in mind for students graduating from your school?
3. If you had the power to change policies on the language of instruction in Burundi what would you suggest to impact student learning?
4. How would you describe your teachers' confidence levels in the classroom at this school?
5. What is the biggest challenge for your teachers?
6. What factors influence teachers' language competencies?
7. How often do the teachers at this school attend any form of teacher training workshops or receive teacher professional development?
8. How often do you or someone else conduct classroom observations on your teachers?
9. Please rank the importance of Kiswahili, English, Kirundi and French in Burundi.
10. Please rank the importance of Kiswahili, English, Kirundi and French in East Africa.
11. Please rank the importance of Kiswahili, English, Kirundi and French in Africa.
12. Please rank the importance of Kiswahili, English, Kirundi and French in the world.
13. How successful are your students at developing fluency in French by the end of primary school?
14. What education level do the majority of your teachers hold?
15. Do teachers' competencies align with the needs of students?

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form (Survey)

This survey is anonymous. Your name is not recorded.

By filling out this survey you are consenting to have this data used in the following study.

Title of the study: Language Matters: What are teachers' perspectives and lived experiences of Burundi's language policy?

Name of Researcher: Leah Passauer

Purpose of the study: The purpose of this study is for my masters' capstone.

Potential risks and discomforts: There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study and no penalties should you choose not to participate. A potential benefit of this study is that it may help improve services at Village Health Works within the Education Program.

RESEARCHER'S CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or want to get more information about this study, please contact me at lpassauer@gmail.com or my advisor, Karla Giuliano Sarr, at karla.sarr@sit.edu.

IRB CONTACT INFORMATION

In an endeavor to uphold the ethical standards of all SIT proposals, this study has been reviewed and approved by an SIT Study Abroad Local Review Board or SIT Institutional Review Board. If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about your rights as a research participant or the research in general and are unable to contact the researcher please contact the Institutional Review Board at:

School for International Training

Institutional Review Board

irb@sit.edu

+1 802-258-3132

Appendix E: Participant focus group Informed Consent Form

Title of the study: Language Matters: What are teachers' perspectives and lived experiences of Burundi's language policy?

Name of Researcher: Leah Passauer

Purpose of the study: The purpose of this study is for my masters' capstone.

Study procedures: Survey is completely anonymous, focus groups and interviews will use pseudonyms to maintain anonymity.

Potential risks and discomforts: There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study and no penalties should you choose not to participate. A potential benefit of this study is that it may help improve services at Village Health Works within the Education Program.

Participation and withdrawal:

Your participation is voluntary. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. By signing the agreement, you are consenting to allow me to quote you from the interview using a pseudonym and consenting to Audio-Record the interview.

"I have read the above and I understand its contents and I agree to participate in the study. I acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older."

Participant's signature & Date _____

Researcher's signature & Date _____

RESEARCHER'S CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or want to get more information about this study, please contact me at lpassauer@gmail.com or my advisor, Karla Giuliano Sarr, at karla.sarr@sit.edu.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT – IRB CONTACT INFORMATION

In an endeavor to uphold the ethical standards of all SIT proposals, this study has been reviewed and approved by an SIT Study Abroad Local Review Board or SIT Institutional Review

Board. If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about your rights as a research participant or the research in general and are unable to contact the researcher please contact the Institutional Review Board at:

School for International Training

Institutional Review Board

1 Kipling Road, PO Box 676

Brattleboro, VT 05302-0676 USA

irb@sit.edu

+1 802-258-3132

Appendix F: Participant (Interview) Informed Consent Form

Title of the study: Language Matters: What are teachers' perspectives and lived experiences of Burundi's language policy?

Name of Researcher: Leah Passauer

Purpose of the study: The purpose of this study is for my masters' capstone.

Study procedures: Survey is completely anonymous, focus groups and interviews will use pseudonyms to maintain anonymity.

Potential risks and discomforts: There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study and no penalties should you choose not to participate. A potential benefit of this study is that it may help improve services at Village Health Works within the Education Program.

Participation and withdrawal:

Your participation is voluntary. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. By signing the agreement, you are consenting to allow me to quote you from the interview using a pseudonym and consenting to Audio-Record the interview.

"I have read the above and I understand its contents and I agree to participate in the study. I acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older."

Participant's signature & Date _____

Researcher's signature & Date _____

RESEARCHER'S CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or want to get more information about this study, please contact me at lpassauer@gmail.com or my advisor, Karla Giuliano Sarr, at karla.sarr@sit.edu.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT – IRB CONTACT INFORMATION

In an endeavor to uphold the ethical standards of all SIT proposals, this study has been reviewed and approved by an SIT Study Abroad Local Review Board or SIT Institutional Review Board. If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about your rights as a research participant or the research in general and are unable to contact the researcher please contact the Institutional Review Board at:

School for International Training
Institutional Review Board
1 Kipling Road, PO Box 676
Brattleboro, VT 05302-0676 USA
irb@sit.edu
+1 802-258-3132

Appendix G: Letter of Support



December 17, 2018

Graduate Dean Kenneth Williams
Attn: Institutional Review Board
International Education
School for International Training
SIT Graduate Institute
1 Kipling Road | PO Box 676
Brattleboro, VT 05302-0676

Dear Professor and Degree Chair Friedman and IRB Members:

I am the Executive Director of the Kigutu International Academy and oversee education programming for Village Health Works (VHW). I have read Leah Passauer's proposal for a research project to be carried out at Village Health Works in Kigutu, Burundi. I understand that she is conducting this project as part of her requirements for the Master of International Education program at the School for International Training, Vermont.

I understand that the Institutional Review Board for the use of Human Subject's in Research at the University is concerned with protecting the confidentiality, privacy, and the well-being of research participants. Further, I understand that Leah will be advised in this project by her academic advisor, Karla Sarr, who will be in regular contact with her.

I do not have concerns about the study that Leah has proposed based on my conversations with her and after reviewing her research project proposal. Village Health Works supports Leah's plan and approves of the project, including the recruitment of participants and data collection, through Village Health Work's partners.

Should you have additional questions or concerns, feel free to contact me via email at lgips@villagehealthworks.org or by phone at 202 440-1300.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Elizabeth Berry Gips".

Elizabeth Berry Gips
Executive Director, Kigutu International Academy

Appendix H: Survey Data

Survey Question	Identifier	Average	Spread of Responses			
			1	2	3	4
1. Please rank the languages that are the most important for students in Burundi?						
	Kirundi	1.43	32	10	2	2
	French	1.54	25	19	0	2
	English	1.95	24	6	10	6
	Kiswahili	2.3	20	5	8	13
2. Please rank the languages your students most commonly use at home?						
	Kirundi	1.26	41	1	1	3
	French	2.43	5	26	5	10
	English	3.3	3	4	15	24
	Kiswahili	3.08	4	7	16	19
3. Please rank the languages you think are the most important in the East African Union?						
	Kirundi	3.02	8	4	13	21
	French	2.24	11	19	10	6
	English	1.37	34	9	1	2
	Kiswahili	2.07	19	10	12	5
4. Please rank the languages you think are the most important in Africa?						
	Kirundi	3.02	9	4	10	23
	French	1.74	24	14	4	4
	English	1.5	29	12	4	1
	Kiswahili	2.26	15	11	13	7
5. Please rank languages you think are the most important in the world?						
	Kirundi	3.15	8	5	5	28
	French	1.82	20	16	8	2
	English	1.39	36	4	4	2
	Kiswahili	2.54	9	12	16	9

All questions except for number 2 are based on the following scale:

1- Most important
2 - Somewhat important
3 - Slightly important
4 - Least important

Question 2 has the following scale:

1 - Always
2 - Sometimes
3 - Rarely
4 - Never