



University  
of Glasgow

Reilly, Colin (2016) Language use and language attitudes in Malawian universities. MPhil(R) thesis.

<http://theses.gla.ac.uk/7420/>

Copyright and moral rights for this thesis are retained by the author

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge

This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the Author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the Author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

# Language Use and Language Attitudes in Malawian Universities

---

Colin Reilly

*Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy*

School of Critical Studies  
College of Arts  
University of Glasgow

## **Abstract: Language Use and Language Attitudes in Malawian Universities**

This study aims to investigate patterns of language use and language attitudes amongst students in Malawian universities. This will highlight whether language issues affect Malawians' ability to engage with tertiary education. It has been claimed that ineffective language policies in developing countries restrict people's ability to access systems such as education. As a result, this has a negative impact on their own, and their country's, development. Specifically, Malawi frequently has the lowest rates of university enrolment worldwide and is consistently ranked amongst the world's poorest countries.

Recent language policy changes within Malawi have brought the issue of language use within education to the fore, with increased debate over whether English or indigenous languages are suitable for use in education. Through targeting university students across Malawi's universities using semi-structured interviews, data was collected to illustrate aspects of the sociolinguistic situation within Malawian universities. The results reveal that both English and indigenous languages are used within the university environment, while also suggesting that issues do arise from language use within university. While students recognise both positive and negative aspects of using each language, they are generally more favourable towards the use of English as a medium of instruction within university.

# Contents

List of Figures .....	1
List of Tables .....	1
Acknowledgement .....	2
1. Introduction .....	3
1.1. Research aims .....	4
1.2. Research questions.....	5
1.3. Research relevance.....	5
1.4. Overview of Malawian context .....	7
1.4.1. Languages in Malawi .....	7
1.4.2. Language policy changes in Malawi.....	8
1.4.3. Education system in Malawi.....	9
1.4.4. Higher and further education in Malawi .....	9
1.4.5. Language-in-education policies of Malawi.....	10
1.4.6. Thesis outline.....	11
2. Literature Review .....	12
2.1. Language planning and language policies.....	12
2.2. Language and development in Africa: issues.....	13
2.2.1. Monolingual policies.....	14
2.2.2. A more multilingual approach.....	15
2.2.3. Issues in Malawi's language policies.....	16
2.2.4. Language problems in higher education in Malawi.....	18
2.3. Impact of globalisation.....	19
2.4. Education and development .....	20
2.5. Language use in African education.....	21
2.5.1. Code-switching as medium of instruction .....	22
2.5.2. Higher Education .....	23
3. Methodology .....	26
3.1. Policy review .....	26
3.2. Face to face interviews.....	27
3.2.1. Interview participants .....	27

3.2.2. Introduction and building rapport.....	29
3.2.3. University .....	30
3.2.4. Evaluating university .....	31
3.2.5. Direct questions on language use .....	31
3.2.6. Direct language attitudes statements .....	32
3.3. Data analysis.....	32
3.3.1. Quantitative analysis.....	34
3.3.2. Qualitative analysis .....	35
4. Policy review.....	36
4.1. New Education Act .....	37
4.1.1. Purpose of the New Education Act.....	37
4.1.2. Language of instruction in the New Education Act .....	39
4.2. University policies.....	42
4.2.1. University Act.....	42
4.2.2. National Council for Higher Education criteria .....	43
4.3. National Education Sector Plan 2008-2017 .....	44
4.4. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology speech .....	45
4.5. Syllabuses - content of syllabuses.....	46
4.5.1. Tertiary level .....	46
4.5.2. Comparison to primary and secondary levels.....	47
4.5.3. Rationale behind the desire for English in Malawian education .....	48
4.6. Non-alignment of language policy and other policy aims .....	50
4.6.1. Malawian policies.....	50
4.6.2. International policies .....	52
4.7. Conclusion .....	54
5. Interview results.....	57
5.1. Reported language use .....	57
5.1.1. Initial reports .....	59
5.1.2. Use of English in classes .....	61
5.1.3. Language use in formal and informal situations .....	64
5.1.4. Overall language use reports .....	65
5.1.5. Reasons for increased use of both languages .....	68
5.2. Responses to direct language attitude statements .....	74

5.2.1. New language policy .....	75
5.2.2. Using and encouraging Malawian languages .....	77
5.2.3. Chichewa as a suitable language.....	80
5.2.4. English as a suitable language.....	83
5.2.5. A mixture of languages should be used.....	85
5.2.6. English language skills.....	87
5.3. Overall positive and negative comments .....	89
5.3.1. Specific topics mentioned in positive and negative comments .....	94
5.3.2. English.....	94
5.3.3. English and globalisation .....	95
5.3.4. English and employment.....	96
5.3.5. Chichewa .....	97
5.3.6. Chichewa and globalisation.....	98
5.3.7. Chichewa and employment.....	98
5.3.8. Chichewa and the local context.....	98
5.4. Other Malawian languages .....	100
5.5. Notable complexities .....	101
5.5.1. Difficulty arising from English language skills .....	105
6. Discussion .....	109
6.1. Patterns of language use in university .....	109
6.2. Reported language use and language policy .....	113
6.3. Suitable languages for MOI .....	115
6.4. Reasons for suitability .....	117
6.5. Main findings .....	121
7. Conclusion.....	123
7.1. Future research and limitations of study .....	124
8. Bibliography .....	127
9. Appendices .....	150
9.1. Appendix 1 Interviewee characteristics.....	150
9.2. Appendix 2 Interview schedule .....	152
9.3. Appendix 3 Coding .....	157

## List of Figures

Figure 1 Coding example 1.....	32
Figure 2 Coding example 2.....	33
Figure 3 Coding example 3.....	33
Figure 4 Coding example 4.....	33
Figure 5 Coding example 5.....	35
Figure 6 Initial reported language use.....	60
Figure 7 Overall reported language use .....	67

## List of Tables

Table 1 Initial reported language use.....	59
Table 2 Overall reported language use .....	66
Table 3 Number of students providing additional language use information.....	68
Table 4 Students' answers to direct language attitude statements .....	74
Table 5 Positive and negative attitudes towards English and Chichewa .....	89
Table 6 Positive and negative attitudes towards English and Chichewa by gender.....	90
Table 7 Positive and negative attitudes towards English and Chichewa by type of university .....	91
Table 8 Positive and negative attitudes towards English and Chichewa by type of degree..	91
Table 9 Positive and negative attitudes towards English and Chichewa by stage of degree	92
Table 10 Positive and negative attitudes towards English and Chichewa by age .....	93
Table 11 Topics referred to by students discussing attitudes towards English .....	94
Table 12 Topics referred to by students discussing attitudes towards Chichewa.....	97
Table 13 Positive and negative attitudes towards other Malawian languages .....	100

## Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my supervisors Dr Wendy Anderson and Professor Jennifer Smith for their support over the course of this project. I would also like to thank Beth Ralston for giving her time and advice during the data analysis period.

I am grateful for the support given by the Historical Thesaurus Scholarship Committee, without which this project would not have been possible.

Finally, I must give my sincere thanks and gratitude to the many friends who helped me during my fieldwork in Malawi, not least to all of the students who gave up their time to participate in this project. Particularly, Ken Nambalika, George Nedi and David Odali for their continued hospitality and friendship and Michael Nzeru for so warmly welcoming me into his home.



# 1. Introduction

Language policy in Africa has been in a state of flux for a number of decades. This flux is the result of African governments seeking to implement policies which will both be locally relevant and beneficial to their nations within the global context. Across such a vast continent, the language policies adopted by specific countries differ and numerous approaches have been taken towards language policy in Africa. This includes: policies which promote former colonial languages; those which promote non-colonial global languages; those which promote majority indigenous languages; and those which promote a wider range of indigenous languages. Combinations of these differing approaches can also be found, to varying degrees of success. For many countries, policies have generally shifted between those which promote former colonial languages, to policies which also promote indigenous languages. This has a number of implications for these countries. The practicalities surrounding effective implementation of language policies within a country require sufficient amounts of planning and resources. Necessary planning efforts and resources are not always present within language policy creation in Africa, resulting in policies which do not appropriately serve the communities that they are intended to. This can lead to individuals experiencing difficulties when interacting with education, health and political services and thus inhibit their potential for social and economic development. The language policy situation within Africa has had potentially detrimental effects for the continent. This is perhaps most clearly evident within education, with high rates of illiteracy across much of Africa.

A case in point is Malawi, which has experienced numerous language policy changes both at a national level and across individual sectors such as education. The language policies in Malawi will be discussed in more detail in section 1.4.2., however the situation which is largely accepted is that English acts as the official language and Chichewa acts as the national language within the country.

Using English in an official capacity in a country in which English speakers are in the minority has an impact on citizens' ability to engage with services in the country and to access information. Within the domain of education, a recent policy has been announced in which English will be introduced as the sole medium of instruction (MOI). This has caused much debate in the country with some supporting the policy as a beneficial method to increase the number of English speakers in Malawi. Others, however, view it negatively, believing it will be an ineffectual MOI for early education and will subsequently decrease the quality of the education system in Malawi.

### **1.1. Research aims**

In this thesis I investigate language use and language attitudes amongst students in universities in Malawi, seeking to understand the sociolinguistic reality for students currently studying in Malawian universities. This will highlight the effects which language planning has had on Malawian education and thus how it has affected the country's development. It will also highlight students' attitudes towards various languages and the potential reasons for these. Students are accessed as they are individuals who are directly affected by both the official and self-imposed linguistic rules within the university environment in the country and who participate in the creation of the sociolinguistic space. Through investigating language use and language attitudes amongst university students, this thesis aims to examine whether there are any pedagogical issues which arise from language use within higher education. This will identify whether there are any language-related problems present in the Malawian tertiary education system, specifically in its approach to language use and its enforcement of language rules and policies on its students. This can shed light on the situation within the rest of Africa as, while Malawi is a small country in Sub-Saharan Africa, the path which its language-in-education policies have taken is not dissimilar to a number of other African countries.

## **1.2. Research questions**

To provide insight into aspects of the sociolinguistic situation within Malawian universities, this thesis asks the following main research questions:

- 1) What are the patterns of language use reported by students within tertiary education in Malawi across a variety of domains within university?
- 2) To what extent does this reported language use correspond with the existing language-in-education policy in Malawi?
- 3) What languages do students identify as being most suitable for use as medium of instruction at university in Malawi?
- 4) What reasons do students give for the suitability of certain languages for use as medium of instruction at university in Malawi?

## **1.3. Research relevance**

These questions, and the overall goal of this thesis, are pertinent now as the Malawian Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) in 2014 introduced the most recent change to Malawi's language-in-education policy, regarding which language should be used as medium of instruction within the education system. The various changes which have taken place will be more fully outlined in section 1.4.2. below. However, the key factor in the most recent change is that a straight-to-English and English-throughout policy was announced, to be implemented across the entire education system in Malawi. This policy replaces an earlier policy which placed more focus on the use of indigenous Malawian languages in the primary stages of education, with a gradual shift towards the use of English in senior primary years and in the secondary and tertiary stages.

Malawi is an impoverished country, with an education system that suffers from a number of issues (World Bank 2010). Education is a key factor in enabling a country to develop, with a recent growing focus amongst development practitioners on the importance of university education (Galabawa and Senkoro 2010, UNESCO 2014). This study will illustrate whether the Malawian government's language policies for education are having a detrimental effect on students' learning, or on the education system itself and thus having a detrimental effect on the country's development.

Throughout the development of language policies in Malawi there have been no sociolinguistic studies used to provide evidence or a rationale for the policies which have been introduced. While the impact of the new policy upon the education system is still largely to be felt, this is a key period in the history of language policies in Malawi. In this multilingual country, the university provides a unique space in which people from a variety of backgrounds can meet. People of varying linguistic and tribal backgrounds, and of varying socio-economic status interact in one space, at the highest level of the education system. Investigating the sociolinguistic space of the university allows the contextual reality in which the country's language policies exist to be examined. Looking into the situation within higher education at this turning point with respect to the medium of instruction will allow a review of the effectiveness of past policies and an insight into what the future may hold for languages, language attitudes and language policies in Malawi.

The situation in Malawi is one which is found across much of Africa – low-income countries with faltering education systems, which have largely adopted former colonial languages as their main language. While focusing on the specific context of Malawi, this thesis will also highlight the potential realities for higher education in other African countries in similar positions.

## 1.4. Overview of Malawian context

The newest language-in-education policy should be viewed within the context of Malawi as a country: linguistically, socially and economically. There are approximately fifteen languages spoken in Malawi, with the indigenous language Chichewa being the most widely spoken (Lewis et al 2015). English is spoken by a minority of the population with estimates of English speakers ranging from 5% (Crystal 2003) to 32% (National Statistical Office 2008). English is widely treated as the *de facto* official language with Chichewa acting as the national language.

Economically, Malawi is repeatedly listed amongst the most impoverished countries in the world (World Bank 2015). More than half of the population live below the poverty line and 90% are involved in subsistence farming (CIA 2015). Recent government corruption scandals have negatively affected the country's economy as a large amount of inter-governmental donor aid - accounting for 40% of the Malawian government's budget - was suspended.

### 1.4.1. Languages in Malawi

All of the indigenous languages which are spoken in Malawi are Bantu in origin (Kayambazinthu 1998, p370). While some discrepancies do arise in the number of languages stated as indigenous to Malawi, the following are generally agreed to be distinct, indigenous languages in the country: Chichewa; Chiyao; Chitumbuka; Chilomwe; Chinkhonde; Chisena; Chitonga; Chinyakyusa; Chilambya; Chisenga; Chisukwa; Chingoni and Chimambwe<sup>1</sup> (Kayambazinthu 1998, 2003, National Statistical Office 1998). As mentioned, the most widely spoken Malawian language is Chichewa (Lewis et al 2013), with 98% of literate Malawians being literate in Chichewa which is a substantially greater literacy rate than in any other language (National Statistical Office 2008, p40).

---

<sup>1</sup> The 'chi-' morpheme signifies 'the language of', with 'chewa', 'tumbuka' etc representing distinct tribal groups in Malawi. So, 'Chichewa' translates as 'the language of the Chewa people'.

#### 1.4.2. Language policy changes in Malawi

In pre-colonial Malawi, each indigenous language had a 'roughly equal position as dominant languages of their cultures' (Kayambazinthu 1998, p370) and there was a strong link between a language and a distinct ethnic group or tribe. The colonial administration introduced English as the main official language of administration and government (Simango 2006, p1968). During this time it was also viewed as the language of 'high culture' (Vai and White 1991, p153). Two of the major Malawian languages, Chinyanja (the former name for Chichewa) and Chitumbuka were used as semi-official languages at this time (Kayambazinthu 1998, p400). The colonialists considered introducing Chinyanja as the national language of the country. However, fears that this may have caused Malawians to unite and rise against the British meant that this consideration was short-lived (Chilora 2000, p2, Kamwendo 2005, p147).

In 1964, when Malawi achieved independence, English continued to be used as an official language, a common occurrence in many former colonial nations (Moyo 2001, p3). Batibo (2007, p13) has suggested that this may have been an attempt to unify Malawi's 'many and diverse ethnic groups'. Chinyanja and Chitumbuka also continued to maintain their official status (Moyo 2001, p3). In a Malawi Congress Party Convention in 1968, Chinyanja was elevated to both the sole indigenous official language and a national language (Malawi Congress Party 1978, p6 cited in Kayambazinthu 1998, p403) and Chitumbuka was dropped as an official language (Kayambazinthu 1998, p403). The Malawi Congress party began to call the Chinyanja language by a new name - Chichewa. In 1996 an additional five indigenous languages were given the status of official language: Chitumbuka, Chitonga, Chiyao, Chilomwe and Chisena (Moyo 2001).

### 1.4.3. Education system in Malawi

Primary school in Malawi consists of eight years, from Standard one to Standard eight. Pupils must sit and pass exams at the end of each year to reach the next year. At the end of primary school they sit their Junior Certificate of Education (JCE). The result they obtain in the JCE will determine whether they can attend secondary school.

Secondary school consists of four years, from Form one to Form four. As in primary school, a pass is required to progress to the next year. At the end of secondary school, students sit their Malawian School Certificate of Education (MSCE). A pass in this and the score they gain will determine whether they can attend university. English is a key subject for gaining an MSCE as it is the only subject which, if failed, means an automatic fail for students. Tertiary education, discussed further below, consists of four year undergraduate courses as well as a limited number of postgraduate courses.

In terms of education within the country, around 64% of the population is literate (National Statistical Office 2008). The most recent data from the World Bank gives the primary enrolment rate at 141%<sup>2</sup> with a 75% completion rate (World Bank 2013). The enrolment rate for secondary education is considerably lower at 31% and 0.81% for tertiary education.

### 1.4.4. Higher and further education in Malawi

Malawi has two public universities which receive government funding - the University of Malawi and Mzuzu University. The University of Malawi is the larger of the two, consisting of six constituent colleges - Chancellor's College, The College of Medicine, The Malawi Polytechnic, The Malawi University of Science and Technology, Bunda College of Agriculture, and the Kamuzu College of

---

<sup>2</sup> This figure being greater than 100% takes into consideration pupils who are considered 'over-age' as well as students repeating grades.

Nursing. Aside from these public institutions there are a number of private universities in the country, with varying degrees of accreditation to deliver certain courses. The major private universities are Blantyre International University, Skyway University, Catholic University of Malawi, Livingstonia University and the Adventist University of Malawi.

Due to a recent scandal, in which non-accredited institutions were awarding degrees, the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) was established in 2014. This institution oversees and accredits all higher education courses taught and examined in Malawi and has, for the first time, introduced new criteria which must be met by all university courses taught in Malawi. The NCHE was set up in response to the growing number of unaccredited private universities in the country, and sought to introduce stricter controls to ensure that higher education courses within the country are legitimate and of appropriate quality.

The issues within the education system in Malawi are evident when looking at the highest level of education in the country. As we have seen, Malawi has among the lowest rates of tertiary education in the world (World Bank 2013), with higher education institutions noted as highly inefficient (World Bank 2010). Numerous problems are present within higher education in Malawi including: poorly qualified staff; poor infrastructure; poor regulation of quality; and issues with equitable access (SMP 2012).

#### **1.4.5. Language-in-education policies of Malawi**

The Malawian education system has gone through a number of shifts in language-in-education policy, most notably affecting the primary years of education. During colonial occupation English was used as the medium of instruction along with indigenous languages (Mtenje 2013, p96). Since independence



three major changes have taken place: 1) In 1969, Chichewa was introduced as the MOI for the first four years of schooling after which English was used as the MOI (Chilora 2000, p2, Mtenje 2013, p96); 2) Then, in 1996 when Malawi introduced free primary education for the first time, this policy was changed to require that children should be taught in their mother tongue for the first four years of education, after which, as before, English would be used as MOI (Secretary for Education 1996, cited in Kayambazinthu 1998, p412); 3) Finally, in 2014, it was announced that the MOI would be English from the beginning of primary school and throughout the rest of a student's education. Issues concerning the language policies of Malawi will be discussed in more detail in Section 2.2.4., however these changes may suggest that language of instruction policies in Malawi have been ineffective. These changing policies can have an impact on the attitudes of both learners and the general public. Through understanding university students' attitudes towards various languages within education, the efficacy and appropriateness of these language policies can be reviewed. Their suitability will also be highlighted by gaining insight into students' patterns of language use within university.

#### **1.4.6. Thesis outline**

This chapter has provided the research questions and relevance of this research as well a brief introduction to the Malawian context. Chapter 2 will discuss related literature in the field of language planning within Africa. The methodological approach of this study, consisting of a policy review and interviews, will be outlined in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4 education policies which impact upon the language of instruction in Malawi will be discussed and compared. Chapter 5 presents the quantitative and qualitative results of the interviews conducted. This is followed by a discussion, in Chapter 6, of the main findings of the interviews, in relation to the policy review and the research questions. Chapter 7 provides an overall conclusion as well as suggestions for future research.

## 2. Literature Review

This chapter will provide a review of literature which is central to understanding the linguistic situation within Malawian universities. Specifically, literature will be reviewed regarding: the purpose, and importance of, language planning particularly in relation to development; approaches to language planning in Africa, with a particular focus on Malawi; global influences on language policies in Africa; the link between education and development; and language planning and use in education in Africa.

### 2.1. Language planning and language policies

Language planning ‘involves the creation and implementation of an official policy about how the languages...of a country are to be used’ (Crystal 2010, p376) and is of great importance to countries across the world (*Ibid*, Spolsky 2004). Within Sub-Saharan Africa, the majority of former colonies immediately began language planning efforts upon becoming independent states (Kaplan and Baldauf 1997). Johnson (2013) asserts that language policies are powerful and can be used both as tools of oppression and to increase social equality. Issues surrounding the inclusion of all linguistic communities within a country are key to the development of functioning democratic societies (Kelman 1971, Williams 2008) and language planning can play a crucial role within this. While language planning efforts are widespread, Crystal (2010) has suggested that there is a need for more in-depth study into the process of language planning and policy creation as currently there is no uniformly accepted method for conducting the process. Language planning involves various ‘complex motives and approaches’ (Kaplan and Baldauf 1997, p4); however, it has been suggested that sociolinguistic studies play a crucial role within the implementation of successful and beneficial language policies (Kishindo 2008, Mtenje 2013) as they provide an insight into the sociolinguistic reality of the people whom the policy affects (Romaine 2002). Community involvement and willingness to accept policy is

essential for their successful implementation (Djite 1990, p96). Kaplan and Baldauf (1997, p125) assert the following as key processes in language policy creation:

To develop a soundly based language policy, it is necessary to discover what languages are spoken in a society, what purposes those languages serve, who speaks them, where, in the geography of that community those speakers are physically located...what popular attitudes are in relation to these languages.

A lack of thorough and effective planning prior to language policy creation and implementation can result in language policies which do not accurately reflect the language practices of the communities they allegedly serve. This has been the case in a number of post-colonial nations, resulting in 'tensions in language policies and practices' within communities (Canagarajah 2005a, p194).

## **2.2. Language and development in Africa: issues**

Some (e.g. Conrad 1996) view language policy and language planning issues as being of little importance in terms of wider development issues within Africa. However, Djite (1990, p96) suggests that language planning should receive as much attention as other economic issues and should be treated as a high priority. Few African countries devote much 'serious attention' to language policies (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas 1995, p335). This may be detrimental to those countries as it has been suggested that effective languages policies have a large effect on the development process, political stability and democratic nature of a society (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas 1995, p335, Matiki 2003, p155, Williams 2011, p39).

### 2.2.1. Monolingual policies

High rates of linguistic diversity can be found across Africa, both between different countries and within countries and communities. Attitudes towards this diversity play an important, and often understated, role in the social and economic development of the continent. While multilingualism is considered, by some, to be Africa's lingua franca (Fardon and Furniss 1994) and the norm for African nations and individuals, this has historically been viewed as an impediment to development. Nations have preferred to adopt largely monolingual national and educational language policies. This is due to the 'powerful unifying force' that imposing a single national language can have on a nation's population (Kelman 1971, p30). Coulmas (1992, p141) has suggested that 'active promotion of a single vehicular language' would accelerate the growth of the economy. A diversity of languages within a nation has been thought to be a factor behind poor economic growth (Pool 1972). Popular opinion in much of early language planning efforts within Africa was that 'multilingualism usually coincides with a low level of economic development' (Coulmas 1992, p26). This has led to the belief that there is a causal relationship between multilingualism and a low-income economy. Following this belief, the majority of African countries have adopted monolingual national language policies, and for the most part, what Batibo (2014, p17) refers to as a Colonial National Language policy, using the language of their former colonisers as the main language of government. Williams (2013, p84) believes that this reflects African government's 'negative attitudes towards their own languages'.

These negative attitudes have resulted in language policies in Africa which do not accurately reflect and accommodate the vast diversity of languages, and speakers of those languages, on the continent. The monolingual policy approach represents an under-utilisation of Africa's linguistic resources and, thus, of its human capital. Williams (2011) claims that ineffective language policies are a major contributory factor to the overall underdevelopment of the continent and have resulted in Africa's 'linguistic disaster' (Negash 2011). This can be traced to the aforementioned beliefs concerning the drawbacks of embracing the vast linguistic diversity of the continent. This approach

is thought to be a root cause of many of the problems inherent within African countries. Through excluding the majority of languages in national affairs, the speakers of those languages are also excluded and unable to participate in many facets of life within their countries (Bamgbose 2000). Djite (2008) suggests that poor and ill-fitting language policies within Africa have led to a majority of its citizens being unable to effectively engage with health, education, political and economic systems within their countries. An individual's capacity to develop socially and economically is determined by their ability to freely engage in systems within the nations in which they live (Sen 1999) with Bianco (2010, p149) also arguing that an individual's ability to economically progress is inherently linked to levels of participation in public life. Expansion of this freedom to engage is viewed as both the process, and goal, of individual and national development. So, rather than linguistic diversity itself being a fundamental issue within African development, it has been this inability to implement policies which accommodate this linguistic diversity which has had a negative effect.

### **2.2.2. A more multilingual approach**

A shift in language policy in Africa, one which seeks to include speakers of all languages, would signal a more positive view of local African languages and of linguistic diversity as a tool which could be used for the continent's development, as opposed to an obstacle. Recent calls have been made to regard 'multilingualism as a resource, rather than a curse' (Batibo 2014, p19). Adopting a monolingual language policy within Africa was thought to spur economic growth, particularly when the language used is English (Appleby et al 2002, p329, Roberts 2007, p574). However Arcand and Grin (2013) find that multilingualism and the use of local African languages, and embracing linguistic diversity, can spur economic growth. Approaches towards development have moved from those which focus purely on economic development to more inclusive models of development (Ferguson 2013) and the promotion of multilingual language policies seems to coincide with this move towards more inclusive models of development. A multilingual approach, Heugh (2014) argues, is more socially just and

would allow African countries to make use of social and human capital, by allowing all citizens to engage with and participate in the developmental processes of their countries.

### **2.2.3. Issues in Malawi's language policies**

Section 1.4.2. presented an historical overview of the changes which Malawi's languages policies have gone through since colonialism until the present day. Language policies within Malawi have caused a number of issues in various domains within the country, with Moyo (2001, p1) asserting that there 'is a crucial need for language policy in Malawi to be reviewed'. Within the political domain, English is used as a key language, with members of parliament being required 'to speak and read the English language well enough to take part in the active proceedings of Parliament' (Government of Malawi 1994, p16). As a consequence, the majority of Malawians are unable to actively participate within this level of political life. Matiki (2001, 2003, 2004) has commented substantially on the negative impact which this English-only policy has on parliamentary proceedings within Malawi. He finds that it is a regular occurrence for MPs to be mocked for using incorrect English (Matiki 2001), with a number of MPs stating that they feel they do not have sufficient English language skills to actively participate in parliamentary debates (Matiki 2003). This highlights a number of issues concerning both the importance of appropriate language policies and of appropriate implementation of language policies. The necessary English language requirement which MPs must have is not effectively enforced, leading to members who have English skills insufficient to participate in Parliament. The desire to have an English-only policy is therefore perhaps not appropriate for the Malawian parliamentary context and, in this case, has highly negative consequences wherein citizens' elected officials are unable to adequately represent them. Further restricting a Malawian citizen's ability to engage with the political processes of their country is the fact that all parliamentary proceedings are published in English, effectively ostracising those who do not have sufficient English literacy skills (Matiki 2001).

Kamwendo (2004, p228) suggests that language policy within the health sector of Malawi has resulted in a 'linguistic handicap' within the interactions between medical practitioners and patients. The only official language requirement of medical staff is that they have fluency in English, despite the fact that a minority of doctor-patient interactions actually occur in English. This presents particular problems when doctors are non-Malawians or are Malawians who do not speak the majority language of the region in which they are based. The result of this is that unofficial interpreters are regularly used within the health system. As in the parliamentary system, this signals a non-alignment between language policy and the linguistic reality of the domain.

The tumultuous nature of language-in-education policies in Malawi was noted in Section 1.4.5. These policies have routinely suffered from a lack of effective implementation, teacher training and resources (Moyo 2001, Kamwendo 2003, Mtenje 2013). This is indicative of an inherent problem within language planning in low-income countries, like Malawi, in which budgetary resources are severely limited (Breton 2003, p209). The linguistic situation which results from a lack of effective implementation of language policies in schools will be further discussed in Section 4.1. The mother tongue policy introduced in 1996 also suffered from a lack of public support, as Malawians desired their children to be taught through the medium of English (Matiki 2001, Kamwendo 2008).

A review of commentary on the language policy situation in Malawi highlights the many, at times contradictory, approaches which various governments have taken towards language planning. English is noted as the national language by Grimes (1996, p305). Lewis et al (2015) state that English is the national working language and Chichewa the *de facto* language of national identity. Matiki (2001, p201, 2003, p155) writes that English and Chichewa are both official languages. Kishindo (2001, p3) and Kamwendo (2003, pp30-31) notes that Chichewa is the national language and English is the official language. Mtenje (2013) states that Chichewa is both a national language and an official language, with English acting as the main official language. Crystal (2003, p53) states that English and Chewa are official languages while Crystal (2010, p368) states that English and Nyanja are official

languages. There is a severe lack of a ‘coherent language policy’ (Kishindo 2014, *personal communication*). The reality which is accepted by the majority of Malawians is that English is the official language and Chichewa is the national language. However, this is not clearly defined in any policies. What Matiki (2001, p205) terms the ‘incoherent and contradictory language policies’ of Malawi have been little more than ‘statements made for political expediency’ (Kishindo 2014, *personal communication*), made at the whim of whoever happens to be the incumbent ruler at the time.

The issues surrounding language policies in Malawi are particularly prevalent within language-in-education policies. The fifty year period since independence has seen a continual search for a popular and effective language of instruction policy which has not yet resulted in a coherent policy (Simango 2015). The mother tongue policy of 1996, while theoretically being an effective policy to adopt to best educate school children in a multilingual environment, was not effectively implemented. One reason for the recent announcement of an English-only policy has been that Malawian education officials have blamed the low standard of education in Malawi as a circumstance mainly caused by adopting the mother tongue policy (Kishindo 2015). The new English-only policy has been described as ‘pedagogically unsound’ (Kishindo 2015, p24) and will result in the exclusion of a majority of Malawian learners (Kamwendo 2015).

#### **2.2.4. Language problems in higher education in Malawi**

It has been noted that, while a pass in English is necessary for a student to be admitted to university in Malawi, Malawian university students have been found to have inadequate English skills for pursuing tertiary level education (Kamwendo 2003). Universities sought to address this issue in the 1990s through the introduction of compulsory English language classes. This was to enable students to develop appropriate English skills to complete tertiary education. These courses continue to be taught, with some universities finding that they are still not adequate and introducing further supplementary



English courses (Blantyre International University 2015).

It can be seen that the language planning situation in Malawi is fraught with issues and Moyo (2001) and Kamwendo (2015) suggest that part of the reason for the failure of policies is a lack of sociolinguistic data informing them. A more positive and effective engagement with Malawi's linguistic diversity can only be brought about through an effective language planning process.

### **2.3. Impact of globalisation**

The issue of language policies within Africa cannot be viewed in isolation from external events. A major factor affecting the attitudes towards language and the policy decisions which are made within Africa is globalisation, which Bartlett (2013, p163) suggests is 'inextricably linked' to language use. Erling and Seargeant (2013) have highlighted that, while significant evidence points to the detrimental effect of English-medium instruction, this has had no effect on the demand, or use of English within education in Africa, due the strong desire for increased English capabilities among the African population.

The role English has globally can be viewed as the main cause of this increased desire for English, particularly amongst citizens of low-income countries. This is due to the belief that an international language is crucial for 'social, economic and industrial development' (Rea-Dickens et al, 2013, p115). The influence of English is widespread: Crystal (2010, p368) notes that English is an official language in eighty-five countries worldwide and is widely viewed as the international lingua franca.

Due to the status which English has 'as a global language and the associations it has in the public consciousness, English-language education policy has long played a role in national development initiatives' (Erling and Seargeant 2013 pp2-3). There has therefore been a tendency for countries to

adopt policies which will aim to ensure that literacy in English is achieved by the majority of its citizens (Appleby et al 2002, p342, Crystal 2003, p12). This results in what Pitman et al (2010, p3) describes as a ‘dilemma’ for developing countries ‘as they seek to position themselves in the increasingly interconnected global economic system, while at the same time maintaining a sense of national and regional identity’.

Within higher education, Dearden (2014) finds that English-medium instruction gives an institution an international image, prestige and a good reputation and that a major impetus behind adopting English-medium instruction is that it allows one to connect with a global world. Globalisation and the ability to access global knowledge and communication networks are seen by many to be beneficial things for the Global South (Bartlett 2013). However, Blommaert (2010) suggests that for the majority of citizens in the Global South, the ability to engage on a global level and benefit from globalisation will be minimal, especially for minority language speakers whom Robinson (1996) considers to be part of the Fourth World in terms of social and economic development. This is, as mentioned above, largely due to the view that English is the gateway to the international arena (Rea-Dickens et al 2013), resulting in language policies which exclude vast majorities of people.

## **2.4. Education and development**

A key area in the debates surrounding language policy in Africa is within education. Education is often seen as one of the most instrumental systems within the development of African countries (UNESCO 2010). For this reason, global primary education for all was focused on as one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (UN 2000). Effective and appropriate language-in-education policies are essential for ensuring the production of an educated and literate population. However, there is still high deprivation in education across much of Sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO 2010) and Rasool (2013) has suggested that a major reason for this lies within the language-in-education policies. Ouane and Glanz

(2010) have noted that Africa is the only continent in which children begin primary education using a foreign language. Ferguson (2013) suggests that the use of English-medium instruction throughout much of Africa is detrimental to the quality of education in the continent and Nekatibeb (2007) and Kirkpatrick (2013) note that, within a multilingual environment, it is most effective to educate children through the use of their first language. The global trend to a more inclusive model of development can only succeed if language policies in education follow an inclusive framework.

## **2.5. Language Use in African Education**

For the reasons given in Section 2.3., there is a widespread emphasis on the use and acquisition of English within education in African countries. This is despite the fact that ‘an almost unanimous community of applied linguists see the continued use of English as a medium of education in primary schools in Sub-Saharan Africa, and elsewhere, as impairing the quality of education, and hence holding back development’ (Ferguson 2013, p21). Cummins (2000, p37) notes that there are over one hundred and fifty empirical research studies that indicate a ‘positive association between additive bilingualism’ - that which seeks to add an additional language to students’ pre-existing linguistic resources - and ‘students’ linguistic, cognitive, or academic growth’. This is opposed to policies which are monolingual or operate as subtractive bilingualism – seeking to remove use of students’ existing linguistic resources and focus solely on acquisition and competence in the new language.

African language-in-education policies which are English-only are often ‘characterised more by wishful thinking than functionality’ (Heugh 2013, p110); they are ultimately policies which do not work in practice. This is perhaps caused by the futility of attempting to enforce monolingual language policies into environments in which multilingualism is the norm and is ‘embedded in the daily lives of individuals and households’ (Cabral 2013, p98). For a large number of individuals in Africa,

knowledge and use of many languages in a wide range of overlapping contexts is a common occurrence and ‘code-switching and the blending of languages are characteristic features of day-to-day conversations’ (*Ibid*). Kelman and Baldauf (1997, p236) noted that code-switching was a ‘variable which language planners rarely [took] account of in their development of policy’ but, with the ‘general fluidity and mixing of languages, cultures and identities’ quickly becoming ‘a fact of life’ (Canagarajah 2005b, pxxiii) in many places, more consideration should be given to the use of code-switching in multilingual countries.

### 2.5.1. Code-switching as medium of instruction

The prevalence and importance of code-switching is shown in a number of educational contexts within Africa with a number of studies indicating that code-switching practices regularly take place within schools. The difficulty of enforcing an English-only language of instruction policy in education in a multilingual developing country has been found in numerous countries (Annamalai 2005 for India, Bunyi 2005 for Kenya, Martin 2005 for Malaysia, Probyn 2005a for South Africa) with deviation from English usage essentially an inevitability. The use of a more familiar local language to ensure students’ understanding within an English-medium classroom setting has been found to be a common occurrence in African countries and Clegg and Afitska (2011, p74) suggest that ‘bilingual pedagogy is in *de facto* operation in African schools’, particularly in Sub-Saharan African countries. Arthur (1996) finds that primary school teachers in Botswana will regularly code-switch from English to Setswana to engage students in classroom participation. Also in Botswana, Chimbanga and Mokgwathi (2012, p21) observe the prevalence of code-switching within secondary schools, wherein the learners’ local language is employed as ‘a pedagogic resource to clarify the knowledge of the subject matters’. This is also the case in high schools in South Africa, in which code-switching is employed ‘mainly for academic purposes...such as explaining or clarifying subject content’ (Uyes 2010) and helps learners to ‘understand their lessons’ (Nangu 2006). Again, Viriri and Viriri (2013) find that code-switching

between English and Shona is common within Zimbabwean secondary schools, to increase student participation, understanding and, ultimately, to enhance students' performance within education. Brock-Utne (2010) finds this practice common within Tanzanian schools and Malekela (2010, p40) finds that within Tanzanian universities 'lecturers switch codes when Kiswahili is occasionally used to make the points clearer to students most of whom fail to comfortably follow what is taught in English'. Heugh (2013, p110) finds in Ethiopia that 'English...is also found in the universities, where it continues to be the medium of instruction in theory, but not necessarily with much success.' This practice is also found in non-Sub-Saharan countries in Africa, such as Ghana (Yevudey 2013). Likewise, code-switching as a means of aiding student comprehension occurs in universities in non-African low-income countries such as Vanuatu (Willans 2011) and East Timor (Cabral 2013). Evidence from high-income, European countries, such as Denmark, shows that code-switching within universities is not common even when the medium of instruction is not the first language of most of the student population (Vila 2015). This suggests that this practice might be particularly relevant to low-income countries in which the quality of education is generally considerably lower and the number of speakers of a non-native medium of instruction is also considerably lower.

### 2.5.2. Higher Education

While much of the developmental effort of the MDGs focused on basic primary education, recent studies have shown that increasing levels of tertiary education have a positive impact on a country's development (Obwana and Ssewanyana 2007, Oketch et al 2014). Thus, the promotion of quality higher education in Africa is now viewed as a necessary component of enhancing overall education systems, and no longer less important than primary or secondary education (Bloom et al 2006). The enrolment rates for tertiary education within Sub-Saharan Africa are the lowest in the world (*ibid*). A key component in ensuring that education has beneficial impacts in Africa does not simply lie in increasing the numbers of students in education, but ensuring that education is *quality* education

(Erling and Seargeant 2013). Yusuf and Nabeshima (2009) have commented that the low quality of higher education in Africa is slowing down development, with the World Bank (2002) suggesting that part of the reason for this is the languages used within instruction at tertiary level, which results in students being unable to access higher education or engage with it, resulting in poor student retention (Fowler 2004). Dearden (2014) finds that there is an increasing tendency to use English as the medium of instruction within higher education. Arzoz (2012) agrees, asserting that there is a reduction in the number of languages being used within university education. Vila (2015) argues that, due to this increasing worldwide adoption of English as the 'lingua academica', more attention needs to be paid to the language situation within higher education. He states that there is no reason why medium-sized, or minority languages, cannot be used within higher education.

Beukes (2015) has stated that, when compared with English, African languages are viewed as inferior and unsuitable to use for learning as they are not 'already developed' like the colonial languages (Mateene 1999). This is, however, a fallacy which is a hangover from colonial times, in which African individuals, culture and language were viewed as inferior. Djite (2008) suggests that this is an old myth and that there are a number of African scholars working in advanced scientific fields who have illustrated that African languages are capable tools for teaching at very advanced levels. The view that African languages are inferior may in fact be the very thing which contributes to their lack of development and growth. Brock-Utne (2014) suggests that adopting English as the medium of instruction within African countries, actually has a detrimental effect on local languages as, without utilising them within high levels of education, they are unable to develop new words and concepts. The advantages which are given to a language used within university education are both linguistic and social: the language is able to develop new terminology while it also gains social approval. Coleman (2010) suggests that, by denying local languages a place within the education systems, policy makers are effectively killing them. Thus, the acceptance of a language within higher education can act as an important catalyst for its acceptance in other domains (Vila 2015) and, while English retains its place

as the sole language in much of Sub-Saharan Africa, other languages will be unable to compete to fill this role (Bamgbose 2013). The language of instruction policy within university education can thus be seen as of key importance, not only to ensure the effectiveness of the courses being taught but also in the general acceptance of languages as being appropriate for use in high-level domains. Effective multilingual policies at university level could have widespread influence on the wider language policy debates within much of Africa.

This chapter has discussed the importance of language planning as well as issues which arise within language planning and policy implementation in African nations. Particular attention has been paid to the importance of globalisation as an influence on language policies and language attitudes within Africa, highlighting the pressures which a desire to engage globally put onto language planning initiatives. The importance of effective quality education for a country's development has been outlined, as well as the impact which language of instruction policies can have on the quality of education. It has been seen that Malawian language policies suffer from a severe lack of effective planning and effective implementation and are largely designed in a manner which excludes a vast number of the population, resulting in negative effects in the domains in which they operate.

## 3. Methodology

The methodology consists of two complementary stages: an initial policy review and face to face interviews<sup>3</sup>. Data was analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively as this allows generalisations to be made regarding patterns of language use and language attitudes within university while also providing scope for further depth and exploration into students' responses (Creswell and Clark 2011, p8).

### 3.1. Policy review

The policy review involved collecting evidence of policies and practices concerning language use within universities in Malawi by liaising with individuals within university management, the Ministry of Education and using the Malawi National Library Service. Policies provide a 'valuable source of data' (Curry 2009, p1448) and can provide information on the context and background in which students' language use exists (Marshall and Rossman 2006). Alongside the interviews, the policy review is an approach which provides 'robust data' (Bowen 2009, p29). Owen (2013, p11) suggests that a university's identity is created by its policies. The documents reviewed highlight the process and rationale behind Malawi's language-in-education policies. Reviewing the policies concerning languages within education enables us to establish the stances adopted towards different languages within the education sector. It will also highlight the ways in which language planning is approached within Malawi.

---

<sup>3</sup> Permission to carry out this research was obtained from the College of Arts Ethics Committee at the University of Glasgow.



## **3.2. Face to face interviews**

Conducting interviews produces data which come directly from the group being studied. It allows interview participants to present their situations, thoughts and experiences in their own words (Spernes 2012, Jones 2012). The interviews allow a one-to-one interaction with individuals who are ‘the best sources of the desired information’ (Dressler and Oths 2015, p506, Edley and Litosseliti 2010). These data then allow the researcher to gain a better understanding of the experiences of the participants and the effects these experiences have on their attitudes and behaviour (Silverman 2009, Weller 2015). By using an interview approach within this research, this provides ‘in-depth, rich data’ (Angouri 2010, p33) on the experiences that students have concerning language use at university and on their opinions regarding which languages are used. Also, by allowing students to discuss their own experiences, it provides information on the reasons behind their opinions and language practices.

Interviews took place between January and February 2015 in Blantyre in Southern Malawi. An initial pilot study was conducted on five participants. The pilot study involved four male students from public universities and one female student from a private university. In light of the pilot study, the interview schedule was refined for the main study (Bryman 2012, pp263-264). Forty interviews were conducted as part of the main study. All interviews were conducted in English, however as the interviewer has some proficiency in Chichewa, Chichewa was used with a number of participants for introductions and casual talk before the interviews started.

### **3.2.1. Interview participants**

Interview participants were all undergraduates at universities based in, and around, Blantyre. Students were selected from six different universities. 37.5% were from public universities and 62.5% from private universities. 52.5% of participants were male students and 47.5% were female students. A breakdown of interviewee characteristics is given in Appendix 1. Initially, participants were accessed

through gatekeepers, Malawians students already known to me. Gatekeepers are invaluable as they allow easier access to participants (Saunders 2006, Bryman 2012). As the gatekeepers were all my own friends, I was also able to adopt the 'friend-of-a-friend method' (Schilling 2013, p213) which is suggested to be one of the most effective methods for gaining access to a community (Milroy 1987, Tagliamonte 2006, Milroy and Gordon 2008). After initial contact with participants, they were able to introduce me to their friends who could then introduce me to their friends, which built up my sample size via a snowball effect (Schilling 2013).

The face to face interview schedule consists of a series of questions designed to make the interview semi-structured in nature. Appendix 2 provides the interview schedule which acted as the basis of the interview, with the semi-structured nature allowing flexibility within this schedule. The relaxed, conversational manner of a semi-structured interview was chosen over a more rigidly structured interview as it allows the participants scope to expand on points of discussion which they find interesting or important (Longhurst 2010). It also gives more freedom for the interviewer to probe participants' responses and develop new questions in response to the participant's answers (Bryman 2012, pp470-471). Interviews were conducted with Malawian students to ascertain (1) their experiences of engaging with tertiary education, (2) what languages are used and (3) whether any issues ever arise due to language use. The schedule is broken down into the following sections: Introduction and Building Rapport; University; Evaluating University; Direct Questions on Language Use; and Direct Language Attitude Questions. The rationale for the design of each of these sections will be discussed in more detail.

### 3.2.2. Introduction and building rapport

This introductory section is designed to establish a conversational tone in the interview, to create a relaxed atmosphere which allows participants to feel as comfortable as possible and confident in contributing their own views (Schilling 2013). This is achieved through the use of questions which focus on general hobbies and interests, facilitating a period of casual small talk between myself and the interviewees (*ibid*, Briggs 1986, p94). Engaging in small talk and asking about friends and acquaintances is the norm for the majority of Malawian conversations and meetings (SMP 2014). Questions surrounding Malawian cultural figures have been included as these elicit implicit attitudes towards language and identity (Llamas 1999) by focusing on interviewees' attitudes towards Malawian music, film and art which adopt primarily Chichewa as a medium. This shows whether interviewees have generally favourable attitudes towards the use of Chichewa. These covert questions have been included to address the issue of unreliability that arises within self-reported language use (Fisher 1993).

The final questions of this section focus on current affairs in Malawi. These serve as a locally appropriate set of questions that 'elicit passionate speech' (Schilling 2013, pp30-31) and are likely to stimulate the 'flow of speech' (Labov 2010, p22). Placing these at the start of the interview also allows the interviewee to be put at ease, as they are not complicated questions (Moser and Kalton 2004, p85). They are general interest topics which will engage interviewees (Bryman 2012, p221) and produce relaxed, comfortable speech (Schilling 2013, p94).

Steps were also taken at the beginning of, and throughout, the interview to redress the potential power imbalance within the interview situation. This was done, initially, by asking participants about their relationship with the gatekeeper who helped provide access to interviewees, and so accentuating my role as a 'friend-of-a-friend' (Schilling 2013, p197).

### 3.2.3. University

This section of the interviews begins with a more in-depth account of my own university experience. This reinforces my position as a student, learning about Malawi, rather than an expert, reducing the power imbalance and encouraging interviewee input (Schilling 2013, p182). By sharing my own experiences, the interview is more conversational and more of a mutual exchange of experiences (Oakley 1987). This also serves to emphasise the similarities between myself and the interviewee, both students. This is intended to start to overcome obvious differences between us and reduce my position as an ‘outsider’ (Levon 2013, p74).

General questions in the rest of this section seek to elicit responses regarding language use in different aspects of university life. Questions are designed to flow comfortably (Walonick 2010), topics going from general information about the course studied, to opinions on lecture, tutorials, methods of assessment, and then to the social side of university life. Questions have been constructed so as to be short (Labov 1984, p34), use simple language (Codo 2008, p168), deal with one issue at a time and not contain loaded terms (Garrett 2010, p43) or those which are culturally sensitive (Saville-Troike 2002, p107). Asking interviewees to identify specific individuals is used as a ‘method of easing comprehension’ (Codo 2008, p167). Asking about real-life, specific contexts as opposed to more abstract questions establishes a ‘referential frame’ (Briggs 1986, p51), through which interviewees are more likely to give answers relevant to ‘the information being sought’ (Codo 2008, p167, Garrett 2010, p43). Questions are asked about recent experiences, as these are the easiest for participants to recall (Eckert 2000, p81).

### **3.2.4. Evaluating university**

This section seeks to ascertain the participant's thoughts on any changes required to improve a student's university experience and reasons why people may struggle at university. Questions are phrased as indirect questions (i.e. asking about other people as opposed to the interviewee him or herself) which 'reduces the effects of social desirability bias' (Fisher 1993) and are more likely to give responses which reflect the interviewee's opinions on potentially sensitive subjects (Fisher 1998). These are also less threatening to the interviewee's face (Moser and Kalton 2004, p80). These questions are designed to provide responses with information regarding whether or not language skills affect one's ability to participate fully and successfully within tertiary education. These questions also provide information on respondents' attitudes towards the languages used within tertiary education.

### **3.2.5. Direct questions on language use**

This section of questions directly asks students about which languages are used within different contexts in university, and about their opinions towards various languages within higher education. Given the official English-only policy within tertiary education and the prestige associated with English, it was anticipated that these questions could pose a threat to participants' face. Leaving these potentially uncomfortable questions to the end of the main part of the interview maximises the chance of eliciting a cooperative response (Bryman 2012, p253). These questions are broadly based on similar language use studies conducted in Malawi, investigating health and parliamentary systems (Kamwendo 2004, Matiki 2003).

### 3.2.6. Direct language attitudes statements

This section consists of six language attitudes statements, designed to establish students' opinions on: Malawian languages generally within the university environment; the use of Chichewa at university; the use of English at university. Each statement was read to the students and they were invited to state whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement. They were then invited to elaborate further on their answers and explain their reasons for agreeing/disagreeing with the statement. Similarly to the direct questions on language use, these questions could potentially be uncomfortable for participants to answer and for this reason were placed at the end of the interview.

### 3.3. Data analysis

Each interview was recorded using two Dictaphones (one main and one backup). The audio interview data were transcribed using the Transcriber software package and interview transcripts then converted into an Excel-compatible file format for ease of coding.<sup>4</sup> Responses to direct language attitude questions were noted as either 'agree' or 'disagree'. Responses to questions regarding language use noted which language the student specified as well as the scenario the question concerned as can be seen in Figure 1 below, in which the student's response indicates that English is used by students when contacting lecturers outside of class:

Speaker	Utterance	Use	Language
Interviewer	You sort of talked about contacting lecturers outside of class. Eh what language do you use when you're doing that?		
Student #39	Uh we use English.	OStu	E

**Figure 1 Coding example 1**

---

<sup>4</sup> An explanation of the coding system used can be found in Appendix 3.

A large amount of the coding process concerned whether students' comments towards specific languages were either positive or negative as well as any comments which referred to particular wider themes. Comments were coded as 'positive' if they signalled a generally positive attitude towards the language itself or addressed the value and benefits of the language. Comments were coded as 'negative' if they signalled that a student disliked the language or highlighted a lack of value inherent within the language. Figures 2 and 3 below show a negative comment towards Chichewa and a positive comment towards English respectively:

Speaker	Utterance	Use	Language	Extra	Pos/Neg
Student #24	I don't think it's good to encourage Chichewa more.		C		Negative

Figure 2 Coding example 2

Speaker	Utterance	Use	Language	Extra	Pos/Neg
Student #10	So the more we learn English the more we get developed		E		Positive

Figure 3 Coding example 3

While some utterances were relatively straightforward in terms of being either positive or negative, others presented some issues, such as figure 4 below:

Speaker	Utterance	Use	Language	Extra	Pos/Neg
Student #10	Most students write uh poor uh assignments they write poor English				

Figure 4 Coding example 4

While this statement overall can be read as negative, in that there is a poor quality of English within students' written work there is no suggestion that the language itself is a negative thing. Rather, the

participant is saying that if a student lacks sufficient English language skills, this is a negative thing. Thus, statements such as these would not be coded as negative.

### **3.3.1. Quantitative analysis**

To ascertain whether differences in responses were significant, a chi-square analysis was applied to different sets of data. Chi-square tests are non-parametric tests which are frequently employed in applied linguistics research, and seek to analyse categorical variables (Woodrow 2014, p136). Chi-square tests are suitable to test for significance between data sets where categorical variables are present (Phakit 2015, p41). For those data sets which were significant, the contingency coefficient for the data set was calculated. This is a measure of association based on the chi-square test and gives an indication of how strong or weak the significance relationship is, i.e. does a change in the gender of participants have a large or small influence on the answers given (Gingrich 1992, p778). The value of the contingency coefficient can be between zero and one, with values close to zero indicating weak relationships, and values closer to one indicating strong relationships.



### 3.3.2. Qualitative analysis

As well as coding for utterances being positive or negative, another group was introduced to indicate if a particular major topic was referred to by a student when discussing languages. For example:

Speaker	Utterance	Use	Language	Extra	Pos/Neg
Student #4	But if you know something and understand it in English, if you see you can skip four borders you can go as far as, I don't know, as far as, I don't know China. You would still you know, you would still connect with people because you're using a universal language which everyone can understand and relate.		E	Glob	Positive

**Figure 5 Coding example 5**

This utterance has been coded to indicate that the student is talking positively about English in reference to the larger theme of globalisation.

## 4. Policy review

This chapter will review crucial policies and documents pertaining to the education sector in Malawi. The main issues and goals within the documents will be discussed and compared. Key documents will be compared both against other Malawian documents and against global policy initiatives such as those laid out by the United Nations. A general discussion of each will be followed by a summary of the main crucial points which arise. While focusing on a variety of issues within education in Malawi, the key aspect will be references to language of instruction within education at varying levels and the ways in which languages are referred to more generally.

A number of key documents will be discussed in this chapter. Perhaps of most importance is the New Education Act (Law Commission 2013) - this is the Act which has been the major cause of the most recent upheaval in Malawi's language of instruction policy. It provides legislation concerning the new language policy which, by law, all primary schools, secondary schools, and teacher training colleges must adhere to. The National Council for Higher Education's (NCHE 2014) *Standards for Accreditation of Malawi's Higher Education Institutions* will also be discussed. This provides criteria which all higher education institutions and higher education courses must meet to receive official accreditation. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology's (MoEST) *National Education Sector Plan 2008-2017 A Statement* (MoEST 2008) will be also be addressed; this details the goals and path that the education system in Malawi seeks to follow in the period 2008-2017. Additionally, a speech given earlier in 2015 by a representative of the MoEST will be summarised and its significance set out.

A number of syllabuses and course books from across the range of the education system, from primary level to tertiary level, will be compared with one another. These include Blantyre

International University's course outline for their 'Communication' compulsory courses for first and second year students (Blantyre International University 2014). The subjects taught within the course will be compared against *English: Learner's Book for Standard 8* (Malawi Institute of Education 2009), *New Secondary English Student's Book* (Longman Malawi 2007) and *The Syllabus for English for Forms 1 and 2* (Malawi Institute of Education 2013).

It will be argued that, ultimately, there remains a substantial lack of clarity surrounding language-in-education policies in Malawi, with a plethora of vague statements and seemingly conflicting ideologies prevalent in the literature reviewed here and a dearth of clear rationale surrounding major policy.

## **4.1. New Education Act**

### **4.1.1. Purpose of New Education Act**

The New Education Act replaces the Education Act of 1962, legislation created when Malawi was still a British colony and which was adopted by the newly independent country largely unchanged. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology requested a review into the 1962 Act in 2002 and in 2010 the Law Commission published their report detailing the outcome of their review. They found that the 1962 Act was now 'obsolete' and 'conspicuously in need of reform' (Law Commission 2010, p6). There was a desire that educational law should be updated to recognise the societal and national changes which had occurred in Malawi during the period of the nation's independence. The New Education Act was also intended to challenge the widespread view that a low quality of education was endemic within the education system in Malawi, with the new legislation hoping to signal an end to this negative view and aiding Malawi in achieving a high quality education system (*Ibid*). A number of national and international NGOs actively supported the passing of the Act, and engaged in a high profile public awareness campaign, producing leaflets in both English and

Chichewa informing people of the numerous benefits that the Act would bring (CSEC 2013).

While the Commission recommends ‘the adoption of the new Education Act which should incorporate...applicable international norms relating to education at all levels’ (Law Commission 2010, p6) in terms of higher education, the Act only refers to teacher training colleges. This is due to a separate University Act in Malawi which provides legislation affecting universities. The issues which arise from having these two separate Acts, and so not having an all-encompassing education act with associated guidelines and policies will be discussed in more detail in Section 4.2.

The New Education Act seeks to provide legislation ‘which will make provision for accessible, quality, relevant and inclusive education’, guided by the view that the main purpose of education is to ‘equip the citizen with knowledge and skills relevant for social and economic development of the nation’ (Law Commission 2013, p8). The New Education Act thus focuses on the need to educate Malawians both to perform a role within their own communities and nation, and to find a place within the global system. Education in Malawi is viewed as an experience which should ‘promote national unity, patriotism and...loyalty to the nation’ as well as ‘an appreciation of one’s culture’ (Law Commission 2013, p8). It is seen predominantly as a method of nation building while also aiming to train Malawians to a level which will allow them to ‘develop...understanding and skills’ which are necessary to ‘compete successfully in the modern and ever-changing world’ (*Ibid*). Specifically what these skills are is not further developed. The Act aims to promote an education system in the country which provides ‘accessible, quality, relevant and inclusive education’ (Law Commission 2013, pi), to provide equity and access to quality education for all Malawians and to remove ‘barriers to achievement’ which are detrimental to ‘equality of educational opportunity’ (*Ibid*).

This desire for equally accessible, relevant, quality education is enforced in the section of the New Education Act which focuses on the curriculum. The curriculum should be ‘relevant to the needs of

the student and society' (Law Commission 2013, p41). The curriculum should be constructed within the context not just of Malawian society but more particularly in the 'context of a rapidly changing and dynamic global economy and society' (*Ibid*).

This highlights the tension which is at the centre of understanding the conflict which exists within language use in education in Malawi. There is a struggle to balance relevant and accessible education for all Malawian pupils within the Malawi social context against the desire and need to educate Malawian citizens to be able to effectively engage with the global and international context.

#### **4.1.2. Language of instruction in the New Education Act**

The Law Commission's review of the 1962 Act emphasises the need for a clear policy on the medium of instruction within schools, as the 'law is silent on the language of instruction in schools' (Law Commission 2010, p63). Before stating the new legislation they discuss what the situation was under the 1962 Act, as follows:

At the moment, the official position is that the medium of instruction for the first four classes of primary education is Chichewa. However, in practice the medium of instruction in such classes has been Chichewa and other local languages familiar to both the teachers and students.

The Commission therefore considers that there is need to have a provision on language of instruction in schools (Law Commission 2010, p63)

They therefore recognise that lack of legal policy stipulating which language should be the medium of instruction results in a number of issues. These are:

- 1) There is no clear legal stipulation in the 1962 Education Act on which languages should be used as medium of instruction.
- 2) The official position on the medium of instruction is not consistently followed in practice.
- 3) This results in a context in which there is a multilingual medium of instruction which, while not inherently negative, has not been accommodated for in any way within the creation of policy, curriculum and textbooks, or teacher training.

What this also highlights is, even with the presence of an official position, if it is both not a legal requirement and not effectively implemented, teachers and students will likely default to a situation in which they use languages which are familiar to them.

It is the issues raised above and the discrepancy between the official position and the reality which caused the Law Commission to consider that ‘there is need to have a provision on language of instruction in schools’ (Law Commission 2010, p63). It is at this point that the issues with the new language of instruction policy in Malawi begin to emerge. While the Commission see the need to have a clear legal position on which language/s should be used in Malawi to educate its citizens, ‘the Act should leave the actual prescribing of the language to the Minister’ (*Ibid*). So, there is a recognisable need for a provision on the medium of instruction within the education system, however at this stage in time the New Education Act will not describe what that provision should be, but instead delegate that to the individual Minister of Education within the Malawian Government.

It may be the case that those within the Law Commission did not feel that the time was right to prescribe what this very key new aspect should be, or felt that the members of the Commission were not best placed to decide upon this aspect. Questioning the reasoning behind this decision is, however, made obsolete by the legislation that the Commission does put forward within the New Education Act, concerning the language of instruction:

(1) The medium of instruction in schools and colleges shall be English

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1), the Minister may, by notice published in the *Gazette* prescribe the language of instruction in schools (Law Commission 2013, p43)

Sub-section (2) retains their position that, ultimately, responsibility lies with the Minister in deciding what the medium of instruction should be. However, sub-section (1) indicates that the medium of instruction should be English. There is no other explanation given for this decision, no clear rationale for the inclusion of English within this legislation. Further, and importantly, there is no further clarification on what sub-section (1) indicates. A reasonable inference is that it indicates an overhaul of the education system, and that English should be the sole medium of instruction in all subjects in all years of primary and secondary education and within teacher training colleges.

These two sub-sections give a mandate both for the medium of instruction to be English, and for the medium of instruction to be any language decided by the Minister of Education. Backed by these new legislative powers, the Minister of Education announced in March 2014 that ‘the New Education Act mandates pupils to be taught in English from standard one’ (Kanyumba 2014 cited in Nyasa Times 5<sup>th</sup> March 2014). This policy was to be implemented in the following academic year, beginning in September 2014. This new policy only officially changed the medium of instruction policy for the initial four years of education. However, the announcement was met with divided opinion by the Malawian general public (Chiwanda 2014, Gwenge 2014), to the extent that implementation of the policy has been delayed. A symposium on the issue was held in July 2014, attended by representatives of the MoEST, at which a number of experts gave evidence which did not support the policy (Kamwendo 2015, Kishindo 2015, Miti 2015, Simango 2015). Despite this, the delay does not indicate a period of review, as the MoEST officials have stated that, as the New

Education Act has now been passed and is now law, the policy cannot be altered. The delay period is to allow for a clearer implementation plan to be constructed. What is evident from the review of Malawi's old Education Act is that there was an identifiable need for a clear, rational approach and statement on language policies in education in Malawi. The New Education Act has not produced this.

## **4.2. University policies**

### **4.2.1. University Act**

The New Education Act does not apply to universities due to the existence of the University of Malawi Act 1974<sup>5</sup> (Government of Malawi 1974). This causes a number of issues in regards to medium of instruction policy. Primarily, the University of Malawi Act makes no mention of curriculum and is solely concerned with the legislative process of establishing a university and the structure of the university. Not having an Act which encapsulates the entire education system results in the progressive stages not being viewed as one continuous process but, instead, as separate and distinct levels. This means that there is little coordination between language policies in the primary and secondary stages and those within the tertiary stage.

The medium of instruction within Malawian universities is generally accepted as English (International Association of Universities 2013). Despite this, there is a lack of official legislation. The University Act contains the issue which the Law Commission viewed within the 1962 Education Act - there is no provision for a language of instruction within the tertiary education system. The role of providing guidance regarding factors such as this has been taken up by the newly established

---

<sup>5</sup> This Act was also due to be reviewed; however, a University of Malawi Bill 2012 was rejected by Parliament and no further action has since been taken.



National Council for Higher Education: their 2014 publication lays out the criteria which must be met by universities seeking to become accredited institutions within Malawi.

#### 4.2.2. National Council for Higher Education criteria

These criteria are chosen and are implemented to ensure that the qualifications awarded to students at Malawian universities meet international standards (NCHE 2014, pvi). It is the National Council's criteria document which then has the remit for providing a medium of instruction policy within higher education in Malawi. It does not, however, do this. While reference is made to language skills within the standards in two instances, they are in the form of vague statements and far from any concrete guidance:

Students completing programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels demonstrate good communication skills in English (NCHE 2014, p15).

and

Students successfully completing an undergraduate programme demonstrate competence in written and oral communication in English (NCHE 2014, p18).

What this clearly does not do is stipulate that the medium of instruction in universities should be English, simply that students must be able to demonstrate good communication skills in English by the time they have completed their qualifications. The standards which they must achieve remain vague, it is unclear what level of English skills are indicated by 'good' and 'competence' and indeed unclear if these are the same level. It is also of interest to note that this is a condition for all courses at university level and so one of the purposes of university appears to be to improve or, at least, solidify

a student's English skills.

Due to this stipulation, and the fact that there is no mention of any Malawian languages or any other language apart from English, an assumption may be that this indicates that the medium of instruction for university courses is English. The important point to note is that this is not clearly stated.

### **4.3. National Education Sector Plan 2008-2017**

The documents discussed thus far indicate a favouring of the English language as the one that should be encouraged within the education system within Malawi. The *National Education Sector Plan 2008-2017 A Statement* is another key document which illustrates the position that the education system in Malawi is taking, both generally and with regards to language-in-education policy. Within this document education is again seen as a tool for development and as an 'instrument for empowering the poor, the weak and voiceless' (MoEST 2008, p1). It also notes that Malawian education needs to embrace the fact that students will be 'part of the global economy and international socio-economic landscape' (MoEST 2008, p2).

The plan highlights numerous problems with the education system in Malawi, noting its low quality which it says is the result of a number of issues such as poor infrastructure, poor teaching quality and low retention rates (MoEST 2008, p11). Language of instruction is not mentioned at all in either the analysis of the problems that the education system faces or in the future plans for addressing the problems. The only instance in which language is mentioned is in a discussion of adult illiteracy.

Somewhat incongruent to the other documents discussed, the importance of the role of mother tongue instruction is emphasised, seeing this as the way to tackle adult illiteracy, and being the only sensible approach to take to ensure that adult literacy programmes are 'functional' (MoEST 2008,

p6). So, at this point when the Ministry of Education was developing its ten-year plan for the future - two years prior to the first publication of a revised Education Act - there was no indication that a major overhaul to the language of instruction was either required or planned and there was a moderately favourable attitude towards the necessity of use of the mother tongue in the acquisition of literacy.

#### **4.4. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology speech**

In this speech in February 2015, at the opening of a children's library at the National Library in Blantyre, a representative from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology discussed the need for language skills as a means of obtaining an education. He stated that reading was one of the most important skills a pupil could learn, but that education and reading cannot take place without language, that 'language is not the only part of education, but there is no education without language' (Chiponda 2015). He then went on to assert that:

I believe, along with researchers, that the best way for children to learn is to learn in a familiar language, be that a local language or a foreign language. The early year education of children is best done in a familiar language, that is how they learn best at an early age, at the beginning stages of education. (Chiponda 2015)

He directly contradicts the view of his own Ministry's language-in-education policy. This speech was made at a time when the debate surrounding the new language policy was still on-going and the fact that it is apparently incongruent with the policy itself is a worrying reflection of the degree, or lack, of attention that language issues are given in the Malawian education system. It is concerning that two completely opposing positions are taken within the same Ministry. The section of the speech quoted above also captures another recurring issue in policy documents and guidelines - statements

are inherently vague, no language is explicitly mentioned by name and, while it is acknowledged that a 'familiar language' is best, this can either be 'local' or 'foreign' even though one would imagine a 'foreign language' may intuitively be less familiar to a pupil than a 'local language'.

## **4.5. Syllabuses - content of syllabuses**

### **4.5.1. Tertiary level**

The NCHE document states that it is expected that universities provide adequate support for students who are struggling at university, or whose skills are not adequate for working at university level (NCHE 2014, p36). This is realised in many universities in the form of 'Communication' courses, effectively supplementary English courses to ensure that students have the English language competency required to complete a tertiary level qualification using English as medium of instruction. The creation of these compulsory courses indicates that the universities have recognised an issue with some students' English language skills and deemed them to be insufficient for completing a course at university level.

One course which fits into this description is the 'Introduction to Writing Skills' compulsory course which is taught at Blantyre International University to all first and second year students. The course is intended to 'to assist learners develop [sic] an appreciation for academic writing skills' (Blantyre International University 2014, p1) as poor language skills have been identified, which do not adequately prepare or enable students to successfully complete assignments and engage effectively with the course material.

The course has four core objectives:

- (a) Display the English Language study skills you need to take a mainstream academic course.
- (b) Speak and write comfortably in everyday English, using and reasoning a wide [sic] of Language forms.
- (c) Use spoken and written English in academic contexts.
- (d) Demonstrate an understanding of spoken and written English in academic contexts. (Blantyre International University 2014, p1, quoted verbatim)

The focus here is on introducing students to and training them in an English which is suitable for use in an academic context. However aim (b) is also to enable students to become proficient in everyday English. The relationship between these aims is not clear.

#### 4.5.2. Comparison to primary and secondary levels

It is interesting to consider the content of these English skills courses in relation to course materials from other levels of the education system. A substantial amount of content appears to be similar to syllabuses from secondary school English courses and, to a certain degree, even primary school English courses. This appears to suggest a fundamental issue with the approach to English language teaching within the Malawian education system, namely that, were topics taught satisfactorily at the initial stages there would be no need to repeat similar courses. Topics of study within the course taught at tertiary level cover such fundamental elements as: Parts of Speech; Verbs; Adjectives; Prepositions, Conjunctions and Interjections; Adverbs; Nouns; Pronouns (Blantyre International University 2014, pp2-4). The first year course is highly introductory, and similar 'Parts of Speech' lessons can be found throughout the course book for Standard eight primary school level English classes (Malawi Institute of Education 2009). It is also found in the courses taught in secondary school

(Longman Malawi 2007). The content of the university courses may be more advanced but there is a repetition of material in all three stages of the system; the fact that this is necessary suggests that the material is not being taught effectively at the lower stages of the education system.

The second year course of the writing skills programme at Blantyre International University more closely follows an academic writing skills course, with topics on the best way to write essays and to give presentations. This also suggests that the coursework which is being submitted by students is not of an appropriate standard for a higher education course.

#### **4.5.3. Rationale behind the desire for English in Malawian education**

The desire for English language proficiency is evident in the Malawian education system, and is one half of a tension mentioned in Section 4.1.1. between the local and international. This tension is evident in the syllabus for English at secondary level in Malawi. One of the core aims of the education system in Malawi is to enable students to ‘communicate competently, effectively, and relevantly in a variety of contexts, in an appropriate local or international language’ (Malawi Institute of Education 2013, pviii). The recent and renewed focus on the English language appears to highlight a tendency to focus on the importance of the ‘international language’. This dichotomy between the ‘local’ and ‘international’ can be seen in another of the core aims: that students ‘apply the indigenous and non-indigenous knowledge and skills necessary for lifelong learning, personal advancement, employment, and the development of society’ (*Ibid*). There is a clearly marked difference between indigenous local knowledge, knowledge associated with the local context and local language/s and the non-indigenous knowledge, the international knowledge which becomes associated with the global community and the global language - English.

Regarding the local, there is a strong sense of a desire to instil a pride in being Malawian within students, to understand and appreciate symbols of Malawian nationhood, to be patriotic and desire

unity amongst all Malawians, to appreciate and respect Malawi's various cultures (Malawi Institute of Education 2013, pviii). While these points may on the one hand seem to bolster the argument for utilising Malawian languages within education, they are instead used to justify the intense passion and desire for English. English is seen to 'promote unity and facilitate communication in Malawi's multicultural society' (Malawi Institute of Education 2013, pxi). This line of reasoning is also used in the course textbooks at secondary school level: 'it is used in the business world to communicate ideas, and it unites people of different cultures' (Longman Malawi 2007, p1).

The main rationale behind the promotion of the English language in Malawi is given in the secondary school syllabus as follows:

English is the most widely used international language in the world. In Malawi, it is a second as well as the official language used to transact business in government, education, commerce, industry and the legal system. (Malawi Institute of Education 2013, pxi)

Because of this, it is stated that there is a 'need for secondary school students in Malawi to develop a high level of competence in English' (Malawi Institute of Education 2013, pxi). They need this as 'proficiency in English is essential for employment opportunities', it is a 'major tool for the dissemination of information' and it allows students to 'experience other cultures' (*Ibid*). Crucially, English proficiency is seen as a necessity as English is a 'medium of instruction and should be mastered to ensure that students understand their books and materials most of which are in English' (*Ibid*). If students do not have adequate proficiency in English, this can hamper the ability of the language to be utilised as an effective MOI (Ferguson 2003, p83) and thus have a negative effect on students' learning of other subjects. The core aim of ensuring students' English skills are adequate for being taught in English is clearly not being met. This can be seen by the aforementioned courses needed to improve university students' English skills, even after they have completed secondary education.

The way that English is discussed in secondary school textbooks also gives an insight into how students are being taught to think about the English language: for example, ‘English is an exciting and descriptive language which is spoken by millions of people in many countries around the world’ (Longman Malawi 2007, p1). Qualifying the language in this way may be seen as strange, as there is no fundamental reason why English should be any more descriptive than native Malawian languages, and the assertion that English is an ‘exciting’ language is vague and essentially meaningless. Students are encouraged to ‘speak English as often as you can’ and to learn to ‘understand why English is such a useful language to learn’ (*Ibid*). The justification of using English could have a negative impact on a student whose English skills are not highly proficient. English is associated with employment opportunities and the international world - opportunities to engage with people and cultures outside of Malawi. If there is not equal emphasis on the positive aspects of Malawian languages and English is being set up in a binary position against Malawian languages, these languages may become associated with unemployment and with a level of insularity, a lack of ability to connect to anyone or anything outside Malawi.

## **4.6. Non-alignment of language policy and other policy aims**

### **4.6.1. Malawian policies**

It has been noted that a substantial aim of the education system in Malawi is to be inclusive and enable everyone to access quality education. This goal is present in the majority of the documents discussed above. The New Education Act seeks to provide legislation which will produce ‘accessible, quality, relevant and inclusive education’ (Law Commission 2013, pi), the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology recognise secondary level education as ‘a human right’ (Malawi Institute of Education 2013, pv), and the criteria for university accreditation aim to produce courses and institutions where ‘equality of educational opportunity’ (NCHE 2014, p8) is the norm. The



importance of education being accessible to all Malawians is recognised in documents at all stages of the education system. The desire not to discriminate against anyone or deny them access to education mirrors a more general principle contained in the *Constitution of the Republic of Malawi*:

Discrimination of persons in any form is prohibited and all persons are, under any law, guaranteed equal and effective protection against discrimination on grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality, ethnic or social origin, disability, property, birth or other status. (Government of Malawi 1994, p1)

The key section here is that discrimination on the grounds of language is prohibited within the constitution of the country, and is such an important factor that it is mentioned again within the constitution: '[e]very person shall have the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of his or her choice' (Government of Malawi 1994, p3). However, the importance placed upon freedom from discrimination based on one's language and freedom to use the language one chooses is seemingly ignored when it comes to planning language policy within education. If it were the case that these aspects of the constitution were considered and, indeed, if the Ministry of Education's own core goals of creating a fair and equally accessible education system were adhered to, the more obvious outcome would be the promotion of a language policy which strove towards a multilingual approach, to accommodate the multilingual nature of the country. The fact, however, is that these elements are simply ignored and even contradicted by the language policies at play within the education system. The policy to use English within primary and secondary schools is now legal but could also be argued as being unconstitutional as it discriminates against the majority of Malawians who, at the beginning of primary school are highly likely to be using English as a second language and also likely to have little to no competency in the language.

#### 4.6.2. International policies

This situation and the general favouring of a monolingual language-in-education policy, one which uses a foreign language, English, as the main and indeed only language of education, also contradicts the education sector's frequent reference to universal initiatives such as Education for All (EFA). The Ministry's *National Education Sector Plan* explicitly refers to the Education for All initiative and relates the goals of their education sector planning to this initiative, viewing their own efforts as part of the international effort towards achieving universal education for all citizens (MoEST 2008, pi). The New Education Act also contains a section stating that the curriculum should be structured so that it 'meets the needs of education for all' (Law Commission 2013, p42). The EFA initiative recognises that, while the Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts that education is a basic and fundamental human right, a substantial number of countries have, as yet, not fulfilled their goal in ensuring all citizens have the opportunity to complete their education. The initiative is therefore a renewed attempt to realise this vision by recognising the issues in various education systems globally and developing a strategy for the most effective way to counter these issues.

When constructing policy documents and strategic plans, Malawian education officials show awareness of the existence of these initiatives and pay lip service to their importance, alleging to incorporate them into their own education planning. They are, however, highly selective in the aspects of such global initiatives they deem worthy of inclusion. The *Dakar Framework for Action*, the strategy layout and policy announcement of the Education for All initiative, references the importance of mother tongue education on at least seven occasions (UNESCO 2000 p15, p26, p28, p30, p33, p75, p76). The focuses of Education for All are to provide equitable access to education, enhance and provide basic essential numeracy and literacy skills for all, with a focus on ensuring that girls and those from vulnerable groups and ethnic minorities are provided with access to education. The focus on minorities extends to linguistic minorities as it is recognised that speakers from non-majority

languages will often be among the most ‘poor and the most disadvantaged’ (UNESCO 2000, p14). The specific framework for action for countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, which includes Malawi, stresses that it is ‘important to learn from the many examples of good practice and successful policies that have proven to be effective in the African context’, one of which is that using the mother tongue as the language of instruction is an effective approach to take (UNESCO 2000, p26). This is again noted as one of the key steps which must be taken to ‘improve the quality and relevance of education’ (UNESCO 2000, p28), particularly within pre-school education, early primary education and adult education as this will also provide learners with a deeper sense of cultural heritage and so improve their confidence and self-esteem. It sets out the case that the basic learning needs of children and adults are best met through mother tongue instruction (UNESCO 2000, p76). Within the African context it is stated that it is essential to develop a curriculum which draws upon rich and extensive indigenous practices and methods of teaching, including use of indigenous languages, while also developing a curriculum that can tie in indigenous identities and methods with new and emerging technologies (UNESCO 2000, p30). The goal behind this is to welcome in an African Renaissance in which countries in Africa have an important place in the ‘globalized economy, culture and communication in the twenty-first century’ (UNESCO 2000, p26).

So, while paying lip service to these global initiatives, the Malawian education sector chooses to ignore key messages relating to language of instruction in education and instead adopt their own, entirely contradictory, and vague, unjustified language-in-education policies. It is interesting to note that the speech discussed above, given by a representative from the MoEST made reference to researchers whose findings indicate that children learn best, in their primary years of education, in a language that they are familiar with. Such research extends at least as far back to a 1953 UNESCO publication *The Use of Vernacular Languages in Education*. Since this publication, the UNESCO position has not altered (UNESCO 2004). While there appears to be an awareness of this research amongst Malawian education officials, it is undeniably ignored when it comes to planning the

language of instruction within the education system. The Education for All initiative, which the MoEST deem themselves to be adhering to, notes that the purpose of the initiative is to enable the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as the African Charter on Humans' and People's Right, to be realised. It is perhaps only through that active promotion of inclusive multilingual language policies, which make use of indigenous languages that these various declarations can be adhered to.

#### **4.7. Conclusion**

The culmination of the policies and documents reviewed in this chapter highlight that, for the most part, the issue of language of instruction is not given enough serious attention in the Ministry of Education's strategic planning in Malawi. The existing official documents which concern language and language policies within education provide an incongruent collection of non-complementary guidance with contradictory aims and methods creating a peculiar discourse surrounding language in Malawian education.

The minimal focus that language of instruction does get within most policies and official documents is vague and largely unclear. Crucially, it is at odds with other statements contained within these documents, which on the whole creates a confusing and hypocritical policy situation within the education sector. These inherent problems focus solely on the actual creation of policy and do not even touch upon the implementation of policies. This is another area which receives little practical and logistical attention in these documents. Indeed, it is likely that one of the main issues with effective implementation is the unclear and contradictory nature of the majority of the planning documents.

When languages are mentioned, there is an overwhelming enthusiasm and push for English above

other languages - rarely are specific Malawian languages actually even mentioned by name. It is also perhaps worth considering that, as English acts as the *de facto* official language in Malawi, the working language of the Malawian government and the generally accepted language of business, all of the documents discussed here are produced in English and solely in English - none have been translated into any Malawian languages. This may suggest that there is an implicit, widespread assumption made that there is no need to translate documents as English is, perhaps the only, suitable language to use for such official texts. There is no clear and explicit substantial explanation of the reasoning behind favouring English. It may be assumed English is the blatantly obvious choice, and so does not need to be completely justified. Instead, the use of vague statements on the apparent benefits of English acts as an attempt at rationalisation.

Moving onto the next stage of this thesis, it is important to consider how a pupil's own opinion of the languages around them can be influenced and transformed by the rhetoric surrounding languages which they are exposed to within schools. As UNESCO assert, using a pupil's mother tongues gives them an appreciation for their cultures. This is one of the core aims of the education sector in Malawi. The opposite of this, not using a pupil's mother tongue and indeed using a syllabus and course materials that emphasises the necessity of a foreign language - English - may have the opposite effect. This might cause pupils to both have negative attitudes towards their cultural heritage and to have decreased self-confidence - which could be heightened in speakers of minority local languages.

Also of importance is, in the absence of a clear, concise language of instruction policy across the levels of the education system - particularly at the tertiary level - how are language rules created and enforced within education? How then are these rules enforced within the different domains in each level and who are they enforced by? Both through official structures such as lecturers and other university staff or self-regulated amongst students themselves? The following chapters will discuss

the results of the fieldwork undertaken with university students, and begin to highlight the effect that these documents have practically amongst students in university-level education.

## 5. Interview results

This chapter presents the results obtained from students' interviews. Results will be presented in three main sections: Reported Language Use; Answers to Direct Language Attitude Questions; Overall Positive and Negative Comments. In each section, quantitative data will be initially presented, followed by commentary and further explanation utilising qualitative data. A final section will highlight complexities arising within students' responses.

### 5.1. Reported language use

To obtain students' reports on the languages used across a variety of situations within the university, questions were asked as can be seen in Section 4 of Appendix 2. Questions were constructed to allow students' initial responses to be probed and further clarified. For example, the initial question 'What languages are used when students socialise outside of class?' was subsequently followed by 'Are there any other languages used?' This follow-up question allowed more detailed information to be obtained regarding language use, as it allowed students the opportunity to modify their original answer to include a wider range of languages, if applicable to the situation reported on. Upon asking the follow-up question, if students did not add languages to their original answer, this was also probed further by asking questions such as 'So there would never be any other language used?' or 'So English is the only language used?'<sup>6</sup> This also provides students with ample opportunity to give as accurate an

---

<sup>6</sup> Questions generally followed this phrasing: however, 12% of language use questions included the phrase 'most often'. E.g. 'what languages are used by lecturers in lectures' became 'what languages are used most often by lecturers in lectures'. This change of phrasing, a consequence of the relaxed tone set by the interviewer, may have resulted in students being more inclined to respond with 'English-only', if they considered English to be the most commonly used language. This is not the case for all interviews as students also responded to the 'most often' question with 'English and Chichewa'. Asking 'what languages' instead of 'what language' may have negated the use of 'most often'. While only 12% of questions were asked in this way, they were largely within the language use by lecturers within lectures situation, so may have affected the student responses for this situation. The extent to which this may have affected the responses is unclear. The overall pattern between initial responses and subsequent responses arising from further discussion remains the same and the 'lecturers within lectures' situation follows this pattern. The discussion of the language use results should be viewed tentatively

answer as possible regarding language use within university. Students' initial responses could potentially provide interesting insight into their attitudes towards languages and towards the reality they wished to present. For this reason, responses to the initial question are presented first. Then students' responses are presented to take into consideration both their initial response plus any additional comments they made regarding language use. This is followed by a brief presentation highlighting the number of students who chose to provide additional information to their initial response. Constructing questions in this manner, of initial language use question followed by a further probing question, allowed a number of points to be obtained. It provides a more detailed and accurate picture of the language use situation within university and provides interesting insights into students' attitudes towards specific languages and how they wish to present the realities of language use in university.

---

due to this slight inconsistency.



### 5.1.1. Initial reports

When first asked what languages are used in a range of different scenarios, students responded as in Table 1.

Language	Situation						
	A lecturer in a lecture	A student in a lecture	Tutor-led tutorials	Student-led tutorials	Socialising outside of class	Discussing academic work outside of class	Contacting lecturers outside of class
English Only	29 (72.5%)	33 (82.5%)	12 (71%)	4 (31%)	2 (5%)	11 (27.5%)	27 (67.5%)
Chichewa Only	0	0	0	2 (15%)	15 (37.5%)	4 (10%)	1 (2.5%)
English and Chichewa	11 (27.5%)	7 (17.5%)	5 (29%)	7 (54%)	23 (57.5%)	25 (62.5%)	12 (30%)

**Table 1 Initial reported language use**

Students reported that English was used as the only language the majority of the time by both lecturers and students within lectures, in tutor-led tutorials and when contacting lecturers outside of class. English alone is used less often than Chichewa amongst students socialising outside of class, with only 2 students reporting that this was the only language used.

No students reported that Chichewa was the only language used in lectures, nor in tutor-led tutorials. Fifteen students reported that they used Chichewa only when socialising with each other outside of class. A majority (57.5%) of students reported that they used both English and Chichewa when socialising outside of class and 62.5% reported that they use both languages when discussing

academic work outside of class. Figure 6 provides a representation of students' reported language use responses.

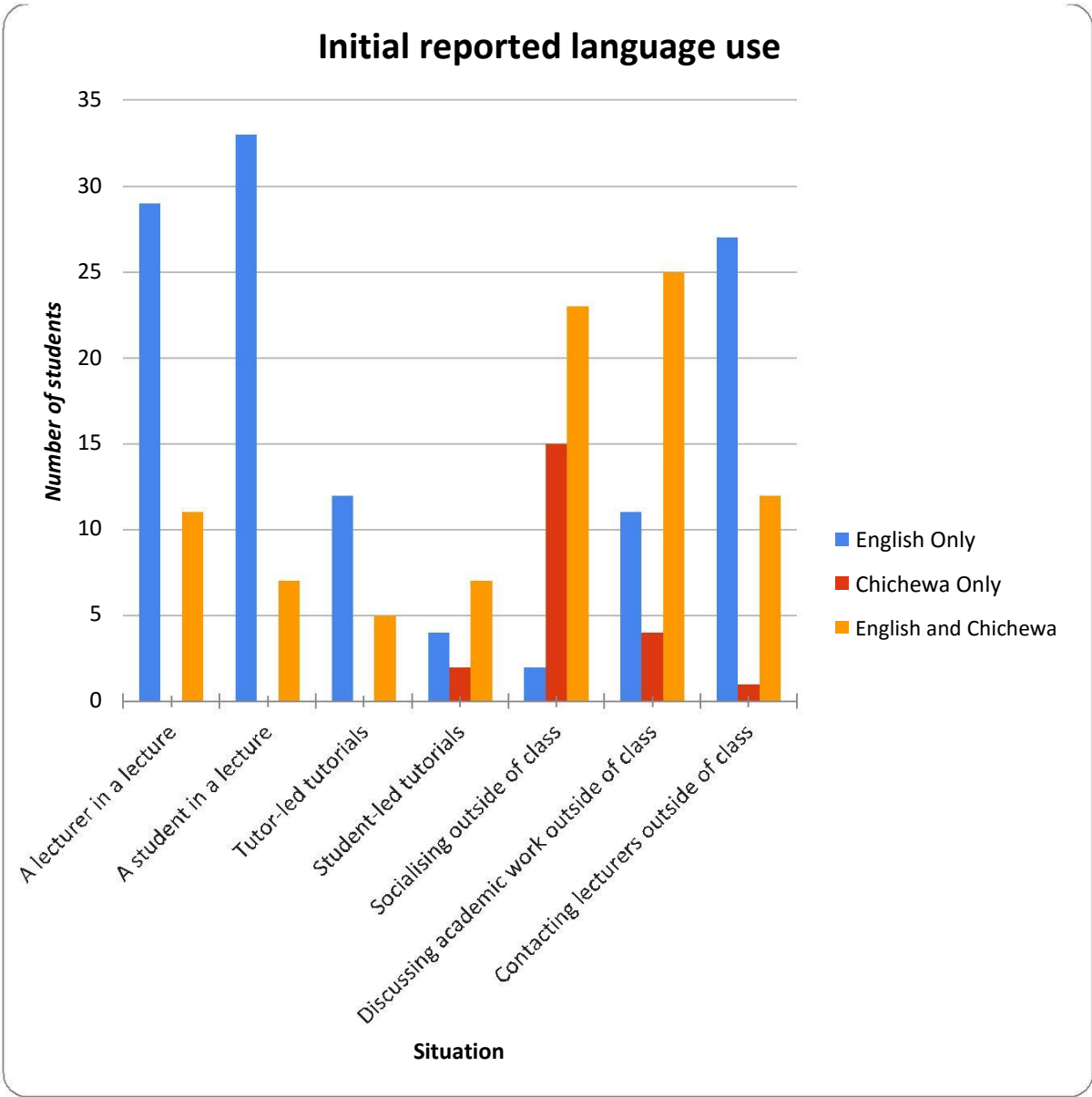


Figure 6 Initial reported language use

From this it can be seen that formal, academic situations which involve a lecturer or tutor have higher rates of English-only use, such as within lectures, contacting lecturers outside of class and tutorials with tutors. Less formal situations in which students interact with one another in the absence of academic staff, such as student-led tutorials, general socialising outside of class and discussing academic work outside of class, have lower reported rates of English-only use. These less formal situations have the highest rates of Chichewa as the only language used and also have the highest rates of using a mixture of English and Chichewa.

### 5.1.2. Use of English in classes

Reasons which students give for high rates of English use during classes fall into three main groupings:

(i) students have good English skills; (ii) knowledge is produced in English; (iii) students need to improve their English skills.

#### *i. Students have good English skills*

The first reason given is that, by the time one reaches university, a student is completely fluent in English. As one participant put it simply 'by the time you go to university you know English' (Student #40, F, 19). Another student provided slightly more detail, referring to the process of getting to university, in which one needs to pass English exams in primary and secondary school:

Yeah it's not difficult...with a university student in English, it's not difficult. You know, for someone to get to the university they've had to pass primary, they've had to pass primary, to get to university. So you know, it's not difficult for someone at the university with English. English is much okay, is much okay. (Student #14, M, 19)

Other students agreed, stating that those attending university are ‘only those who are grown up’ (Student #26, F, 21) and ‘by the time they come to the university they have had enough time of the local languages at home’ (Student #19, M, 35). So, there is consensus that after fourteen years of education in which learning English is a major factor, anyone at university is at the stage that they can use English fluently.

*ii. Knowledge is produced in English*

Another reason given for the abundant use of English during classes is that the subjects which people are being taught have not originated in Malawi, but have instead been created in English-speaking countries and created using the English language. They are ‘international ideas’ and ‘international theories’ (Student #6, M, 24). There is a perception that topics and ideas within certain fields originate in one particular place, as one student said that ‘it’s like IT, mostly it’s from UK’ (Student #10, F, 20). Another also stated that ‘the things we learn they are from Eng- they are in English’, with another further stating:

Cause like uh the things that we learn, okay you have things like theories, ideas and the likes that that that have been developed by other people and they have been communicated in English. So, using Chichewa it's like maybe you might use Chichewa, yes to communicate the same things but ‘cause of the differences in languages you might end up diluting the message or diluting the theories or the points I can say. (Student #32, M, 20)

There is a sense amongst students that the concepts and ideas which have been originally produced in certain languages are intrinsically connected to the language of production and that concepts cannot be translated to other languages while still retaining their true meaning, leading to the belief that ‘actually it’s simpler to learn in English than in our languages’ (Student #30, M, 20). This also begins

to highlight the idea that English is a language which these students view as being something foreign and which does not belong to them but, like the ideas they are taught at university, is imported from places such as the United Kingdom and the USA.

*iii. Students need to improve their English skills*

Somewhat incongruently to the suggestion that all university students are able to communicate efficiently in English, simply evidenced by the fact they have reached higher education, another reason students gave for the major use of English within classes is that one of the reasons to come to university is to improve one's English skills. This can be seen in the exchange below:

Interviewer: Eh why would you choose to use English?

Student: Um. It's what we came to school for.

Interviewer: Wh- what do you mean by that?

Student: \*laughs\* Erm. Yeah I would use English because I think that way uh I would improve my English. (Student #33, F, 22)

Irrespective of the subject area in which a student is studying, there is a desire to use university as a place to improve one's English skills. This is also seen to be necessary at times as 'most people, like, their grammar most lecturers complain about people's grammar in the assignments so I think English should be encouraged' (Student #33, F, 22). This student acknowledges that people do not have adequate English skills to write assignments while at the same time believing the solution to this to be encouraging more English usage. Another student reflects this point, stating 'because we don't speak English, we don't speak good English here so [if] we are encouraged to speak both Chichewa and English maybe we will not be interested to know how to speak English' (Student #38, F, 22). Students essentially believe that English should be used at university so that people will be encouraged to speak

English and so their English skills can improve. One participant summarises this by saying:

College is all about prep- in my opinion right, it's all about preparing you in your life after. You know, when you're in primary school they prepare you for secondary school, in secondary school they prepare you for college. That's like, let's say, it's twenty five years of your life but from there like fifty more years you are out there. You're interacting with different people whatnot so you should first start with the language that everyone is going to understand that will make your life easier. 'Cause less English more Chichewa would just make your life harder out there. You'll seem illiterate yet you know what you're doing, what you're talking about. (Student #23, F, 20)

That is, university is seen as a foundation for establishing the rest of a student's career and, as such, is a place which should provide them with a good foundation in the English language so that they are not inhibited in the course of their lives.

### **5.1.3. Language use in formal and informal situations**

The reasons for an abundance of English within class situations and Chichewa within informal social situations can also be observed in students' responses to language use questions. English is viewed as a 'corporate language' (Student #11, M, 18) which is used on 'official grounds' (Student #18, M, 23). Reasons students give for using English with lecturers is that 'they're not my friends, yeah it's kinda like respectful' (Student #8, M, 24). Using English is associated with showing staff respect, to the extent that students acknowledge they can talk to younger lecturers in Chichewa as they can interact more informally and friendlier but 'you have to approach the professors in English' because 'that's their own standard' (Student #7, M, 32). On the other hand Chichewa is viewed as 'our language' (Student #21, M, 24), unlike English which is 'a language which is not natural to [our] tongues'

(Student #17, F, 20). Just as students view Chichewa as incapable of being used for complex academic subjects, so too they view English as incapable of more casual interactions, for example students state that ‘somehow you cannot joke in maybe English, the joke will lose its taste’ (Student #27, M, 22). Chichewa is considered a more personal, emotive language as one student declared that ‘mostly I like Chichewa which makes most of people even me to uh feel...feel good when I'm sad’ (Student #12, M, 28) and another that ‘if that if eh you are chatting with someone who is very always always close to you and you are used to speak to him or her in Chichewa’ (Student #38, F, 22). This shows that English is associated with respect, formality and business, while Chichewa is more associated with friends, laughter and a sense of comfort and belonging. At university, students find that ‘with the kind of like personal like informal discussions it's mostly like Chichewa you know’ (Student #17, F, 20).

#### **5.1.4. Overall language use reports**

Table 1 and Figure 6 above indicate participants’ responses to the initial question, asking what languages are used in each of the scenarios. However as discussed in Section 5.1.1., when the follow-up question, ‘Are there any other languages used?’ was asked, students were given the opportunity to modify their initial responses. The combined answers which arose from the both the initial and follow-up language use questions are given in Table 2 below.

Language	Situation						
	A lecturer in a lecture	A student in a lecture	Tutor-led tutorials	Student-led tutorials	Socialising outside of class	Discussing academic work outside of class	Contacting lecturers outside of class
English Only	4 (10%)	8 (20%)	7 (41%)	4 (31%)	0	8 (20%)	18 (45%)
Chichewa Only	0	0	0	2 (15%)	14 (35%)	3 (7.5%)	1 (2.5%)
English and Chichewa	36 (90%)	32 (80%)	10 (59%)	7 (54%)	26 (65%)	29 (72.5%)	21 (52.5%)

**Table 2 Overall reported language use**

When students were given the opportunity to provide additional information to their initial response, the number of students reporting use of ‘English only’ within lectures goes from 72.5% for lecturers within lectures and 82.5% for students within lectures to 10% for lecturers and 20% for students. The majority of students report that both English and Chichewa are used by lecturers (90%) and students (80%) within lectures. This difference can be seen in Figure 7 below, in which ‘English only’ is now far less prominent. A chi-square analysis comparing initial responses to the responses which arose during further discussion on language use by lecturers in lectures and students in lectures yields chi-square numbers of 32.24 and 31.226 respectively. This indicates that there is a significant change in responses for languages which are used within lectures by lecturers and by students, with responses going from majority ‘English only’ to a majority of a mixture of English and Chichewa in both ( $p=0.05$ ). The contingency coefficient for these situations is 0.536 and 0.530 respectively indicating a relatively strong relationship between changes in students’ answers initially and overall answers emerging from further discussion.



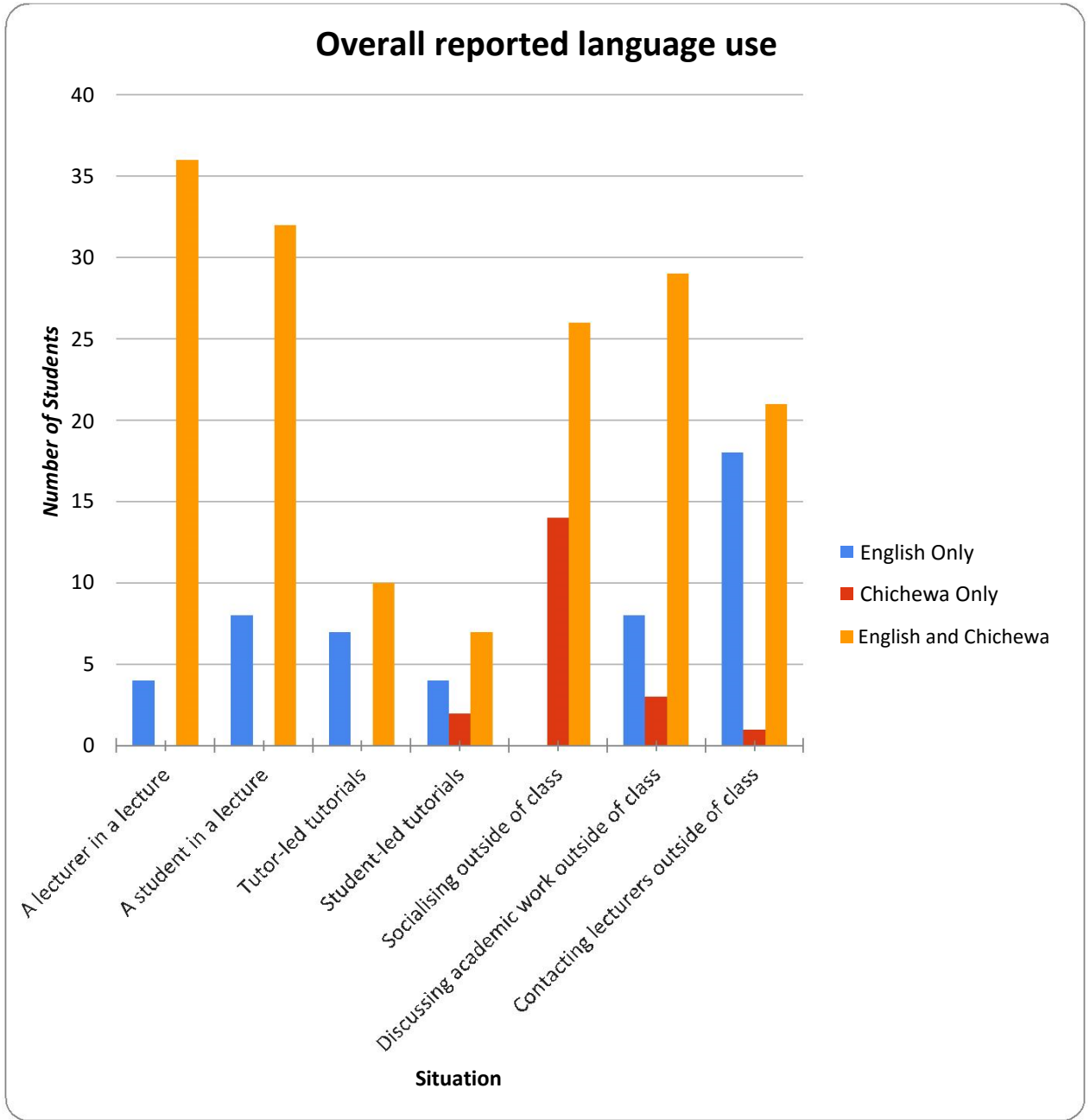


Figure 7 Overall reported language use

In comparing students' initial answers with their overall answers arising from further discussion, answers for all other situations do not change significantly after further questioning.

Gender, age, type of university, type of degree and stage of degree have no significant influence on a student's reported language use for any of the situations.

The number of students whose additional responses alter their reported language use is indicated in Table 3.

	<b>Situation</b>						
	A lecturer in a lecture	A student in a lecture	Tutor-led tutorials	Student-led tutorials	Socialising outside of class	Discussing academic work outside of class	Contacting lecturers outside of class
Number of students	25	25	2	0	3	4	9

**Table 3 Number of students providing additional language use information**

**5.1.5. Reasons for increased use of both languages**

The responses for which languages are used overall within varying contexts in university highlights other interesting points in terms of students' relationships to different languages. As mentioned above, Chichewa is deemed to be a language suitable for telling jokes. Students stated that lecturers would occasionally use Chichewa to joke with the class, with students indicating a preference towards these more relaxed, friendly lecturers. The main reason given by students for Chichewa use within classes was the fact that Chichewa is required to clarify, simplify and explain topics to students to ensure full

comprehension.

Students readily acknowledged the necessity of using Chichewa as a means of understanding lectures and classes, for a number of reasons. Some people state that it is because some students do not have adequate English skills to fully understand lecturers:

Some people are lacking behind in vocabulary so if you mix Chichewa and English at the same time they will be able to pick up some new words and what they mean. (Student #9, M, 23)

Some people are just not used to the English language so maybe they want the Chichewa language to be fit in so that they can clearly understand what is being talked about. (Student #30, M, 20)

For others, even students with excellent English language proficiency will find it easier to understand things in Chichewa, because it is by and large most students' first language. For some areas, students express the belief that it is impossible for them to understand topics solely using English:

You explain the same thing in Chichewa they will get it in maybe five minutes but the same concept will take you an hour to explain to them in English. (Student #4, M, 24)

Most people try to emphasise in Chichewa because I think it's a language they can easily understand but also they can get a picture in their head as well better than English. (Student #17, F, 20)

Some concepts cannot be understood in English not matter how much. Some concepts that no matter how much you explain them in English they won't be understood unless you mix in a

little bit of Chichewa just to simplify understanding. (Student #4, M, 24)

Chichewa is utilised as an educational tool by lecturers, when they are having difficulty explaining things to students in English, as they are aware that students will understand things clearly if Chichewa is used as the medium of instruction. Their goal is to use English as the main medium of instruction, but at times Chichewa use is inevitable:

Whenever there is a very difficult uh difficult thing the lecturer might use Chichewa. (Student #11, M, 18)

The lecturers come and teach in English but whenever there is an obstacle somewhere else that should make him go into Chichewa he goes into Chichewa then jumps again into English. (Student #11, M, 18)

They are trying to express, to explain that thing more clearly than they said that word [in Chichewa] so that for the people to understand more clearly. (Student #36, F, 22)

Students acknowledge the fact that the majority of the student population will simply find it easier to understand things when Chichewa is used rather than English:

For people to understand clearly also we can use Chichewa. (Student #30, M, 20)

Yeah in Chichewa there is a good communication if everyone i- if somebody is communicating in Chichewa we understand than any other language. (Student #38, F, 22)

Yeah I think it's easier to understand when you bring in Chichewa. (Student #23, F, 20)

I like mostly speak Chichewa cause I can understand it much better. (Student #25, F, 20)

There is a clear and substantial recognition from students that Chichewa is a necessary language to use within higher education. Compared to use of English, students find Chichewa easier to understand when learning new ideas. It is at the points when discussing the most difficult concepts or concepts that students are failing to understand that lecturers will opt to use Chichewa.

This apparent willingness to accept Chichewa as a language which is necessary for full comprehension can be contrasted with students' reports on Chichewa being used by students within lectures. Students who ask questions in Chichewa are described as 'crazy' (Student #12, M, 28) and run a high risk that other students 'will laugh or maybe will mock them, like they don't know how to speak English' (Student #9, M, 23). This causes some students to even be reluctant to contribute towards class discussions, as one student stated that if they 'make a mistake they'll laugh at me' (Student #18, M, 23). When a student asks a question in Chichewa then it is felt to be appropriate for other students to 'mock this particular person for failing to communicate' (Student #21, M, 24). So, while acknowledging that communication is made easier when lecturers use Chichewa, when students do this it is seen as a failure in communication. There is also a sense that students at university level should not be using Chichewa, as can be seen from this excerpt:

Student: When you are asking in Chichewa people will make fun of you. They will look at you as a villager and something else.

Interviewer: What sorry?

Student: As a village boy. (Student #7, M, 32)

From this, it can again be seen that Chichewa is not associated with the educational or urban space, but

with that of rural villages. This perhaps gives an indication of why students would laugh at a student speaking Chichewa in class, simply because it breaks the linguistic conventions and rules for that situation. These student attitudes are reinforced by the lecturers' actions as a large number of students mentioned situations such as the following when confronted with a student speaking Chichewa:

The lecturer tell- told the the student to to speak English...we all laughed. (Student #38, F, 22)

Other students noted that some Malawian lecturers would pretend that they did not understand Chichewa, completely ignoring students who spoke the language. This mockery when speaking in Chichewa extends to speaking English as students will be reluctant to speak at times because 'maybe they will think people will laugh at them when they make when they make a mistake...well maybe a grammatical error' (Student #9, M 23).

Somewhat incongruently, the acknowledgement that some students may ask questions in Chichewa or that they might not be able to ask questions in fluent English is sometimes wholly accepted by other students and lecturers. On the one hand, one student indicated that one should always ask a question in English as, if not, they face mockery:

So that's why you always try to ask in English because when you are asking them in Chichewa they will they can start laughing at you saying 'eh come on can't you speak English'. (Student #12, M, 28)

However, at other times students and lecturers accept the use of Chichewa within classes:

We can just understand because there are some other people, if they are not able to explain something in very clear in English, they are just told 'ah you can just say that in Chichewa' meaning that [they] make it more clear. (Student #20, F, 21)

When they try to ask in English they happen to confuse the lecturer...and the lecturer may ask 'can you just put it in Chichewa so that I can ably understand what you want'. (Student #19, M, 35)

While people are mocked for having what is deemed to be poor English skills, at the same time, people who have poor English skills are accepted as being allowed to translate questions into Chichewa. Just as students' responses to language use in different domains were not clear cut, the acceptance of the use of Chichewa by students in lectures is not straightforward. Whether it is met with disapproval and ridicule or with acceptance depends on factors such as: what is being asked; the language skills of the student asking; and the preferences of the lecturer.

## 5.2. Responses to direct language attitude statements

	Agree	Disagree
The new language-in-education policy is a good move to take <sup>7</sup>	28 (70%)	12 (30%)
Malawian languages should be used at university	9 (30%)	31 (70%)
Malawian languages should be encouraged at university	15 (38%)	25 (62%)
Chichewa is a suitable language to use at university	15 (38%)	25 (62%)
English is a suitable language to use at university	40 (100%)	0 (0%)
A mixture of languages should be used at university	24 (60%)	16 (40%)
English skills are required for success at university	30 (75%)	10 (25%)

**Table 4 Students' answers to direct language attitude statements**

<sup>7</sup> As can be seen in Section 1.5.c of Appendix 2, this question was originally asked at the beginning of the interview and not phrased in the manner given above, as it was not included with the other 'direct language attitude' statements. The wording has been modified to fit with the subsequent statements above. This has no effect on the interpretation of results as students' answers to the original question can be grouped into those that agree with the new policy and those that disagree. Presenting it in the manner above does not skew the results, but simply makes them easier to compare to the other 'direct language attitude' statements.



Table 4 shows students' responses to specific language attitude statements. All of the participants agreed that English is a suitable language to use in universities in Malawi, with 75% stating that good English skills are a necessity to successfully complete a university course. This compares with 38% of participants who thought that Chichewa is a suitable language to use at university.

While only 38% thought that Chichewa was a suitable language to use at university, 60% agreed that using both English and Chichewa in the university environment would be a beneficial arrangement. This is despite the fact that 70% also support the introduction of the new English-only language policy at lower levels of the education system.

When responses are compared by gender, age, type of university, type of degree and stage of degree there are no significant differences in students' responses to the above questions.

The next section will present qualitative data which will allow students' responses to these questions to be explored in more detail.

### **5.2.1. New language policy**

The majority of support for the introduction of the straight-to-English language policy stems from the belief that 'everywhere...people want to speak English, people want to see their kids speaking English' (Student #12, M, 28), and that there is a desire for increasing English language skills and the number of English language speakers in Malawi. The way to achieve this, for many, is to introduce English as early as possible to children as then they will build a stronger foundation in the language:

It will play a more important role to these young ones. Maybe, like, at my age they will be able to at least perform more things because their background will be brighter. (Student #26, F, 21)

For some students the new language policy was not the right step to take due to the difference between languages associated with school and languages associated with the home. They believed that students would struggle as English is not widely spoken within most homes and children beginning school who are instructed in English may be encountering English for the first time:

Most of us are not too educated so that they can be talking English to uh to their kids in their home. (Student #29, M, 25)

It was also acknowledged that one's mother tongue plays an important role in the early stage of learning, as one student states:

The family is the place where you first learn a lot of things of which the mother tongue always plays a crucial role. (Student #27, M, 22)

In opposing the new language policy, students also highlighted differences in the socio-economic background of people who spoke English and people who spoke Chichewa:

Like in Malawi I don- it's not like everyone comes from well to do families so people from remote areas they do understand well in Chichewa. (Student #31, F, 21)

Interviewer: So if you come from a well to do family, would that mean you're more likely to speak English?

Student: Yeah it's more likely (Student #31, F, 21)

It is felt, by these students, that people from wealthy families, who are more likely to speak English, will be the ones who benefit most from the new language policy. The majority of urban and especially

rural poor who ‘do not understand well in English’ are more likely to struggle.

### 5.2.2. Using and encouraging Malawian languages

The majority of students were against the use and promotion of local languages within universities precisely because they are local, with students feeling that they can serve no purpose outside of a ‘Malawian context’:

The problem with Malawian languages is as fluent as we can be in those languages, because they're our languages, they only apply in the Malawian context. (Student #4, M, 24)

Language skills in Malawian languages do not have any value outside the country. Another reason linked to this is that, as Malawi is still a low-income country it relies on the international community for support:

If if Malawi was a country which we can do all the things by ourself, that we don't need, don't rely on international things then it would be okay but now it's still Malawi we are poor we need to communicate to an international for help. So if if we say all universities should be in our local languages then there's a communication breakdown between two sides. (Student #29, M, 25)

If we could develop on our own using our own language, using our own methods but the current situation at Malawi you can't do that. We need international ideas, we need people, foreigners, to help us with a lot of things, so I think English is still cool. (Student #5, M, 22)

Relying on the international community by default means relying on the international language of English. It is suggested that if Malawi were more economically successful then more support could be

given towards local languages.

Other reasons given for not supporting local languages within the university context are that there are simply too many. The number of differing tribes which all have a unique language in Malawi are abundant and to use all of them would be 'confusing' and 'create a language chaos' (Student #20, F, 21). Many students also felt that it would be unfair to use languages which not everyone would be able to understand. This has related issues with the cost of producing material in all languages, which is deemed to be an unnecessary expenditure in the already poorly financed education system. Many students highlighted this fact, stating that 'we do not have the sufficient funds' (Student #40, F, 19) to pursue this.

Those in favour of promoting more local languages within university education, were in favour for the same main reason as those against were not, namely, the fact that the languages are suitable only within a local context:

I may want to get an experience from a local man and I I cannot ask that local man in English. I I normally can ask in Chichewa. (Student #11, M, 18)

As it is felt, by some, that Malawian languages are not suitable within the educational context, it is felt that English is not suitable within the local context, thereby making the promotion of Malawian languages necessary for Malawians.

The way mostly Malawians have been raised it's like when you go into the village and then you're just speaking English, speaking English, people take you like uh you are boasting. (Student #32, M, 20)

It's good that you eh you learn you know English but then you should also be encouraged to speak the vernacular for the sake of the locals 'cause sometimes they won't take you seriously if you go and just speaking English, speaking English they take you like ah he's boasting and they don't take anything that you do seriously. (Student #32, M, 20)

There is a distinct opposition set up here between the local context, the 'village' in which use of English is met with stigma and the university context, in which use of English is encouraged and use of Chichewa is met with stigma.

At times, students made comments suggesting tensions between living a 'Malawian life' and living an 'English life' with Malawians leading either one or the other (Student #10, F, 20). It was noted that there were Malawian students and staff who would speak English the majority of the time, some even pretending that they could not understand Chichewa, to the extent that others considered them to be 'too English' (Student #40, F, 19). These students are said to act like they are 'English people' (Student #12, M, 28). One student commented that there is a desire amongst Malawian parents for their children to become 'English actors' (Student #13, M, 21). The reality of this can be seen as another student stated that 'I haven't been brought up in my culture' but that 'I've been brought up in an English sort of way' and 'not really the Malawian way' (Student #2, F, 21). While these comments do suggest that there is a dichotomy between an English or Malawian way for Malawians to act, the reality is likely to be far more complex as can be seen from students' awareness of the advantages of using both English and Chichewa for various aspects of their lives. What is of key interest though is that students recognise the existence of an English (or global) context and a local context and they must situate and navigate themselves between these two contexts.

For students there is an association between local languages and their heritage and culture, which

is seen by some as another reason for promoting their use within university:

The mother tongue is also an element of um belonging where we also have to keep keep record with um our language our mother language where it's help us to appreciate the culture.

(Student #21, M, 24)

This identification of a link between language and culture is, at times, seen to be under threat and this is felt to be a negative thing. One student (#9, M, 23) indicated that he was Lomwe by tribe but that he did not know how to speak Chilomwe. He expressed regret at this fact, feeling that it would have been better if he had been encouraged to speak Chilomwe as now there is a danger that future generations will not and the language will die out. Another student was of the view that this was already happening at a dangerous rate. He compared the English language to the introduction of 'Western' styles of government, which destroyed traditional tribal customs, saying that because people so eagerly favoured it, 'it killed off everything so it's also the same with with English now' (Student #7, M, 32).

### 5.2.3. Chichewa as a suitable language

On the whole, students believed that Chichewa was not a suitable language to use within universities. One student suggests that this is because of the saturation which young people feel exposed to in English. The fact that it is promoted as the desirable language results in their Chichewa skills decreasing:

It's hard to represent, to present a point in Chichewa, rather than presenting it in English, because the environment we are, we're all surrounded by English stuffs, the movies we watch, the books we read, the novels you know. (Student #14, M, 19)

Another student presents a similar point, suggesting that because the language of education for most students has been English throughout their academic careers, to use Chichewa would not be very easy for them:

Unfortunately since we have been learning English for most of our academic stuff it's hard to express those things back to Chichewa so you will find English to better be a language of communication. (Student #27, M, 22)

One of the main reasons given for Chichewa being unsuitable was the lack of technical or academic terminology in the language. As mentioned in Section 5.1.1., students believed that the subjects they are taught come from English-speaking countries and so should be taught in English, that Chichewa is not adequately equipped as a language to deal with high-level intellectual topics. Technological advances are a key point regarding students' views that Chichewa is an unsuitable language with one student saying:

For example let's say in GIS [geographic information systems] a teacher comes and you are talking about things about computer and something like that and he is trying to use Chichewa he will...say computer which is English yeah so it can't sound nice. (Student #20, F, 21)

The lack of a Chichewa word for 'computer' makes this student believe that solely English should be used as he expresses distaste for code-switching or borrowing words from English into Chichewa. The lack of words for certain subjects is one of the main issues with Chichewa's unsuitability:

You have to know words which are used in law and they are very different from this local language we know. (Student #11, M, 18)

Then you have to explain someone to someone how the GPS works okay yeah and to do that in Chichewa it presents a lot of trouble. Yeah so even the most of them are like technical yeah all technical and we don't have Chichewa names here in Malawi. (Student #5, M, 22)

It depends on what you're discussing you know there are some other words that by virtue, when speaking them with Chichewa they don't sound good but when you speak them in English they sound innocent. (Student #14, M, 19)

One student even suggested that Chichewa is an inherently oral language and for this reason was not suitable for using when writing assignments:

To write now it would be very difficult because we- you cannot write in Chichewa you need to write in English. (Student #15, M, 25)

It was felt that the use of Chichewa would reduce the standards of education within the university system in the country, and reduce their international standings:

You know if someone says that Malawi universities have got the good record in science obviously people will have the hunger to actually learn there you know and obviously next they're like 'oh it's in Chichewa'. Obviously it brings confusion but also it kind of like degrades the standard itself. (Student #17, F, 20)

The issue with using Chichewa is that the accepted standard for higher level education is that English is used as the medium of instruction, and using any language apart from this is counter to this principle and degrading the standard.



However, while the majority of students suggested that Chichewa did not contain appropriate technical terms, others conceded that they did have appropriate words in the language to use in higher education:

There are some words which cannot be found in Chichewa alright...they can be found but it's hard. (Student #6, M, 24)

Even though these students acknowledge that Chichewa can be used to describe complicated technical topics, they are against it as it is too difficult.

It is important to note that, while 62% of students do not agree that Chichewa is a suitable language to use at university, overall 90% have acknowledged that it is used by lecturers to teach classes alongside English.

#### **5.2.4. English as a suitable language**

English is acknowledged by all students as being a suitable language for use at university: this is tied in with the expectations of language skills that students in higher education should have. When talking of the difficulties some students have, one participant said:

They are not writing good English that makes someone to be recognised as a stu- university students. (Student #3, M, 24)

So, having 'good English' and being a university student go hand in hand. Speaking English is one of the main goals of being a university student:

So when you you when you present your case in Chichewa it's like you're telling the lecturer

'I'm not yet ready to communicate with you in English'. (Student #29, M, 25)

It is a language which is associated with capability:

But working things in English gives confidence in others. Let's you know that the guy is able to speak, the guy is able to do this and that. (Student #18, M, 23)

I mean [if] university students like myself is failing to clarify the thing in English then I won't be trustworthy. (Student #18, M, 23)

For many participants, English essentially signifies education and value in Malawi:

Someone who talks English is more educated. (Student #24, F, 35)

Someone, we say this one knows how to speak English that person is much better than the ones that know Malawian language only. (Student #26, F, 21)

When you speak English people will regard you as educated...those people who are not educated so they don't speak English so I say those kinds of people speak Chichewa. (Student #13, M, 21)

The fact that universities are places 'where we meet at international level' (Student #26, F, 21) is also a reason for the suitability of English as language of instruction. Students frequently noted that to use any language other than English would be unfair both on students from outside Malawi and from students who were from minority language groups within Malawi. While the presence of international students was frequently used to justify using English over Chichewa, the number of international students present within Malawi is not substantial. In the academic year 2011-2012 non-Malawian

students accounted for less than 1% of the student cohort at Mzuzu University (The International Association of Universities 2013, p325).

#### 5.2.5. A mixture of languages should be used

While the majority of students did not agree that Chichewa was suitable for use in university in Malawi, when then asked if they felt a mixture of languages should be used in universities the majority agreed that this would be a beneficial thing, with most suggesting that English be used primarily, with Chichewa being used when needed. One of the reasons for this is because of the position in which university students find themselves, between the international and the local. Many desire to use their university education to obtain jobs, or continue further study, outside of Malawi; however they also must live in Malawi for the duration of their degrees:

Interviewer: Eh what why do you think that a combination of Chichewa and English should be used?

Student: Because uh we will be able to communicate with both local people and other people.  
(Student #25, F, 20)

Using both languages is necessary because this then allows communication with a broader range of people, both local and international. Some students suggest that the language situation within university is unique:

Uh actually in Malawi uh the university has got kind of its own language where we mix uh we would say we have developed our something like our own ways of communicating. (Student #5, M, 22)

We have people from different uh cultural set ups and you when you when we meet here we come out with one a hybrid sort of. (Student #19, M, 35)

And because at times it's not English and it's not, it might happen that it's not Chichewa but it's a mixture. It's a hy- it's a hybrid sort of language. (Student #19, M, 35)

The mixture of cultural backgrounds and languages, and the use of English and Chichewa results in a 'hybrid' language being spoken by students in universities. They note that the English spoken in these situations is not 'proper English' but more like 'lazy English' (Student #4, M, 24), suggesting the use of more non-standard features. Some students suggest that both languages do have a role within university education, that while the overall context of education is in English, Chichewa can serve a useful purpose:

I would usually use vernacular language like it's easier to understand them but then you still you have the context the whole context in English then you still communicate in the vernacular language. (Student #8, M, 24)

Some people are lacking behind in vocabulary so if you mix Chichewa and English at the same time they will be able to pick up some new words and what they mean. (Student #9, M 23)

While discussions could take place in Chichewa, English is the language which is used by students ultimately when writing assignments and taking exams. Various students encapsulate the roles of English and Chichewa by saying:

We learn in English...Chichewa is just there maybe for us to clearly understand. (Student #1, F, 20)

You don't learn in Chichewa you learn in English. (Student #11, M, 18)

We learn in English all the subject are in English there's no subject in Chichewa they teach in English but I think the the the they go into Chichewa because they have the the they just have to go in in in to Chichewa but English is the best is is the one which is widely used. (Student #11, M, 18)

It is clear from this that English is viewed as the language of university and, even though Chichewa is used to clarify lessons being taught in English, this is not viewed as a teaching language by most students.

#### **5.2.6. English language skills**

Most students acknowledge that English language skills are necessary for one to be successful in university. This is ultimately because all coursework is written in English. The importance placed on good language skills in English at times exceeds the importance placed on knowledge of specific subject content. Some students have experienced gaining marks for language use:

He'll [the lecturer] probably tell you the truth that the point is not really relevant but because of your presentation because of your command of the language you've been awarded marks. (Student #4, M, 24)

Yeah but on official grounds English matters when you go in English it even gives the marks to them throughout it it points a mark. (Student #18, M, 23)

Some indicated that English skills alone were not enough, but went hand in hand with understanding the subject one was studying, while others suggested that English skills were not important at all. Those students who felt that English skills were not necessary for successfully completing one's course suggested a distinction between understanding course content and having good English skills:

Cause I've seen other people who are really poor in English but then they are very successful the reason being they just...try to translate it in Chichewa and they work hard and they work hard so language is not a matter here as long as you get what the teacher is saying. (Student #10, F, 20)

So it's not about the English skill but it's um what information you present and how you have understood and how you've presented that information. (Student #21, M, 24)

Some some people knows how to speak English there but they don't understand some questions or concepts from the class...While others they do not speak good English but they understand... the concepts so that's not really it's how you understand the question or the concept not how you speak English. (Student #38, F, 22)

This, however, seems to contradict the idea that English is the only suitable language within education and it also stands counter to the views of students who are of the opinion that university students have good English skills. English is felt to be the most suitable language for university education in Malawi but it is not necessary that students have good English language skills. This also contradicts the view that advanced intellectual or technical concepts cannot be understood in Chichewa. If there is no need to have English language skills, but understanding the lecturer is the most important thing, how can students with poor language skills understand lectures when they are given through the medium of English? Also, if concepts need to be translated into Chichewa for students to properly understand

them then the use of English within lectures seems to just present an unnecessary obstacle.

### 5.3. Overall positive and negative comments

All comments which referred to English and Chichewa and signalled an attitude towards the respective language were coded as either positive or negative. This includes comments which were answers to direct language attitude questions as well as positive or negative comments which were elicited indirectly. The results for the total overall positive and negative comments towards Chichewa and English can be seen in Table 5.

	Positive	Negative
English	283 (79%)	74 (21%)
Chichewa	125 (36%)	222 (64%)

**Table 5 Positive and negative attitudes towards English and Chichewa**

Of all comments coded as either positive or negative for English, 79% were positive comments and 21% were negative. For Chichewa, 36% were positive and 64% were negative. A chi-square analysis gives a result of 135.06, which indicates there is a statistically significant difference in students' attitudes towards English and Chichewa ( $p=0.005$ ). Overall, students' attitudes toward English are generally more positive and their attitudes towards Chichewa are generally more negative. A contingency co-efficient of 0.40 indicates that there is a fairly strong relationship between the different languages and differing attitudes.



Data on positive and negative attitudes towards Chichewa and English can also be compared for a range of variables between different groups. These variables are: gender; age; type of university; type of degree; stage of degree. All groups follow the general overall pattern - English is viewed more positively and Chichewa is viewed more negatively. However, certain variables do affect the extent to which a language is viewed positively or negatively.

	English		Chichewa	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Male	143 (75%)	48 (25%)	71 (33%)	146 (67%)
Female	140 (84%)	26 (16%)	54 (42%)	76 (58%)

**Table 6 Positive and negative attitudes towards English and Chichewa by gender**

Data obtained for attitudes towards English and Chichewa compared by gender is shown in Table 6. A chi-square analysis of male and female attitudes towards English gives a chi-square number of 4.85, indicating that gender has a significant influence on attitudes towards English, with females being significantly more positive towards English than males ( $p=0.1$ ). The contingency coefficient for this is 0.116, showing that there is a weak relationship between different genders and attitudes towards English. This is true only for attitudes towards English; gender has no significant influence on attitudes towards Chichewa as there is no significant difference in views of Chichewa between men and women. Some students indicated that there was an awareness of this, with one saying ‘yeah especially girls girls uh like English a lot’ (Student #13, M, 21).

	English		Chichewa	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Public	112 (78%)	31 (22%)	47 (32%)	99 (68%)
Private	171 (80%)	43 (20%)	78 (39%)	123 (61%)

**Table 7 Positive and negative attitudes towards English and Chichewa by type of university**

Table 7 shows the attitudes towards Chichewa and English compared between students who attended a public university and students who attended a private university. This follows the same general pattern of more positive attitudes towards English and more negative attitudes towards Chichewa. There is no significant difference in attitudes towards either language depending on whether the student attends a private university or a public university. Type of university does not appear to be a factor with which attitudes towards either language can be correlated.

	English		Chichewa	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
BA	66 (82.5%)	14 (17.5%)	27 (41%)	39 (59%)
BSc.	123 (74%)	44 (26%)	58 (39%)	91 (61%)
BSocSci.	45 (87%)	7 (13%)	23 (40%)	34 (60%)
Other	49 (78%)	9 (22%)	17 (23%)	58 (77%)

**Table 8 Positive and negative attitudes towards English and Chichewa by type of degree**

Table 8 shows the attitudes towards Chichewa and English compared by type of degree. This follows

the same general pattern of more positive attitudes towards English and more negative attitudes towards Chichewa. The degree course in which the student is enrolled also has no significant effect on attitudes towards either language, as there is no significant difference between attitudes from students across these four degree types.

	English		Chichewa	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Junior	63 (85%)	11 (15%)	26 (39%)	40 (61%)
Senior	220 (78%)	63 (22%)	99 (35%)	182 (65%)

**Table 9 Positive and negative attitudes towards English and Chichewa by stage of degree**

Table 9 indicates that there is no significant difference in attitudes towards English or Chichewa between junior and senior students.

	English		Chichewa	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
18-24	225 (80%)	57 (20%)	103 (40%)	154 (60%)
25-30	16 (100%)	0	13 (48%)	14 (52%)
30+	40 (68%)	19 (32%)	19 (30%)	44 (70%)

**Table 10 Positive and negative attitudes towards English and Chichewa by age**

Table 10 indicates the influence that a student's age has on their attitude towards English and Chichewa. Regarding age, there is no significant difference in attitudes towards English for students of different ages. There are no significant differences in attitudes towards Chichewa over the three age groups. While there are no significant differences between age groups, it is of interest to note that within the 25-30 age bracket there were no negative comments towards English. This may be a result of the fact that there were fewer references to English generally within this group.

### 5.3.1. Specific topics mentioned in positive and negative comments

A portion of the responses which indicated either a positive or negative attitude towards English or Chichewa also referred to other topics.

### 5.3.2. English

Topic	Number of references to topic in relation to English (number of respondents)	
	Positive	Negative
A reference to globalisation	50 (26) <sup>8</sup>	0
A reference to a student's language skills	56 (31)	54 (20)
A reference to the new language policy	22 (15)	7 (6)
A reference to the prestige of university	7 (4)	0
A reference to employment	11 (8)	0
Other	8 (6)	7 (5)

**Table 11 Topics referred to by students discussing attitudes towards English**

Table 11 shows the number of times each topic was referred to when discussing English, for both positive and negative comments. Of all topics referred to when students mentioned attitudes towards English, students' language skills was by far the most common. This accounts for 51% of the overall comments on attitudes towards English. Positive comments on students' language skills in relation to English account for 38% of the positive comments towards English. Negative comments on students' language skills in relation to English account for 79% of negative comments towards English.

Globalisation was also a common feature of students' positive comments on English, accounting for 34% of these.

---

<sup>8</sup> Bracketed numbers indicate the number of respondents

### 5.3.3. English and globalisation

One of the main reasons why students desire English and view it positively is that it is viewed as a means of connecting with people from other countries, and of mobility. Globalisation is widely referred to by students:

Globalisation, like the whole world has become one village and the only powerful language that connects them with us is English. (Student #4, M, 24)

English is viewed as the only language which is useful within the global network, one student states that ‘the global language is English’ (Student #5, M, 22) and another that it is a ‘universal language wherever you go’ (Student #4, M, 24). This makes it useful as it is a ‘universal language which everyone can understand and relate [to]’ (Student #4, M, 24).

Many students expressed a wish to leave Malawi after the completion of their degrees, and viewed English as an essential part of this. Students highlight the fact that English is spoken in a number of countries, and if they should want to live in those countries, English is a must:

When I come to Ireland, when I come to the UK, it’s it’s going to be impossible [without English]. (Student #8, M, 24)

Right now if you go to Asia you should have to speak in English. (Student #9, M 23)

Cause even India they do speak English. In each, in each and every country. (Student #28, F, 22)

It is the belief that English is so widespread across the globe which makes it desirable to students as ‘everyone actually in this world now is using English’ (Student #11, M, 18) and if students wish to compete with people from other countries, English will be crucial.

The fact that the world is now interconnected and the students are ‘living in a global village’ (Student #21, M, 24) means they ‘want to be familiar with the international language’ (Student #18, M, 23). This is the only way that students will have the chance of ‘interacting with people outside...Malawi’ (Student #23, F, 20). English is essential as ‘the people that you meet outside you have to use the same English with them to communicate’ (Student #31, F, 21). Numerous students highlighted that fact that, were it not for their ability to speak English then they would not be ‘able to communicate with some students from abroad like [the interviewer]’ (Student #21, M, 24).

#### **5.3.4. English and employment**

Employment opportunities are another factor influencing students’ positive views of the English language, as it is a language which opens up job opportunities after university. Students view English as essential ‘when it comes to jobs and all that’ (Student #2, F, 21). Part of the reason for acquiring English is that ‘you are learning to work’ (Student #34, F, 19) at a professional level. Without acquiring English, getting a professional level job would be impossible as ‘the interview, the application everything they does is done in English’ (Student #37, F, 21). It is because ‘our university system is job oriented’ (Student #5, M, 22) that students feel the need for English to be used within university.

### 5.3.5. Chichewa

Topic	Number of references to topic in relation to Chichewa (number of respondents)	
	Positive	Negative
A reference to globalisation	1 (1)	32 (19)
A reference to a student's language skills	28 (17)	11 (10)
A reference to language rules at university	0	9 (7)
A reference to the local Malawian context	15 (13)	9 (8)
A reference to employment	0	9 (5)
A reference to translating between English and Chichewa	21 (14)	13 (4)
Other	2 (2)	9 (8)

**Table 12 Topics referred to by students discussing attitudes towards Chichewa**

Table 12 shows the number of times each topic was referred to when discussing Chichewa. The most common topic referred to when talking positively about Chichewa was a student's language skills, which accounted for 41% of the positive comments. This is followed by students discussing the necessity of translating between English and Chichewa, which accounts for 30% of all positive comments. A reference to the local Malawian context accounts for 22% of all positive comments.

Of negative comments, references to globalisation account for 34% of all negative comments.

References to students' language skills account for 12% of all negative comments. References to language rules at university, to the local Malawian context and to employment all respectively account for 10% of negative comments on Chichewa.



### 5.3.6. Chichewa and globalisation

Just as globalisation was a major theme in positive comments regarding English, it is a major theme within negative comments regarding Chichewa. While English is viewed as a language which provides access to the global community, Chichewa is one which inhibits communication with those outside of Malawi. If students only knew Chichewa ‘it’s like we will be an island’ (Student #5, M, 22) and they would fail to integrate within other countries as ‘wherever you go you cannot speak Chichewa there’ (Student #6, M, 24) and it would be ‘difficult to communicate with other people from other countries’ (Student #25, F, 20). As with comments on English, students highlighted the fact that the interview could not take place if it were in Chichewa, saying ‘if we meet with you guys, how can we communicate?’ (Student #34, F, 19).

### 5.3.7. Chichewa and employment

The lack of employment opportunities which Chichewa opens up is another reason for students’ negative attitudes towards the language. This is because Chichewa is not a working language in Malawi, ‘cause we don’t speak Chichewa you know when we’re working mostly’ (Student #23, F, 20). People who spoke Chichewa instead of English would not be able ‘to do their jobs right’ (Student #23, F, 20). After university, students ‘can’t choose the local language’ (Student #40, F, 19) as it ‘will be hard for you’ (Student #37, F, 21). For the students, Chichewa does not offer any prospects of value.

### 5.3.8. Chichewa and the local context

As discussed above, positive attitudes to Chichewa come from its local attributes, and the sense of community, cultural history and belonging associated with the language. It connects the students to their country’s past as ‘that’s the language their parents speak’ (Student #5, M, 22), it is ‘our mother

language’, that which ‘we were born in’ (Student #21, M, 24). It is recognised as a useful language within Malawi as ‘most of us understand and speak Chichewa’ (Student #37, F, 21) and it is essential for talking to ‘community members’ (Student #34, F, 19). Some students feel that it is important that ‘they shouldn’t forget Chichewa’ (Student #23, F, 20) as it is their language and part of their identity as Malawians.

However, for some students this association of Chichewa with the local context is a negative thing. The love ‘for our vernacular Chichewa’ (Student #4, M, 96) is seen to be an impediment to progress and, while it is associated with Malawi, for many it is specifically associated with poverty in rural villages. One student said that students who spoke Chichewa regularly were more likely to be ‘troublemakers’ and ‘drunks’ (Student #13, M, 21). It is the language which is used to communicate with the uneducated rural poor and not the language of progress in a modern country. Viewing Chichewa as a village language contrasts with the ways in which university is viewed in Malawi. It is imbued with a sense of prestige and respect.

A university student is looked up to as ‘a role model’ and ‘a privileged person’ (Student #4, M, 24). They become part of the ‘highest class’ (Student #5, M, 22). To be a university student makes one a ‘hero’ and helps one to ascend socially so that ‘you are not on the same wave of your friends’ (Student #11, M, 18). This is because ‘to be at university is something which is unique’ (Student #12, M, 28) and ‘in Malawi, it’s quite hard to make it to university’ (Student #16, M, 23). So, even students who have perhaps come from more rural areas, have by being at university entered a new, higher social sphere. Students frequently refer to other Malawians, mostly those within the villages as ‘the locals’ (Student #32, M, 20), and as distinct and separate from themselves.

The relationship which exists between Chichewa, the local context and indigenous knowledge and life is seen in the use of Chichewa within lectures. As a teaching aid, lecturers will ‘give examples in

normal things that happen every day’ (Student #40, F, 19). When giving these examples some students noted that lecturers will use Chichewa ‘to give an example which maybe Malawians know best by’ (Student #19, M, 21). In this way, local life and local knowledge are inherently linked with the local language.

#### 5.4. Other Malawian languages

When students discuss Malawian languages other than Chichewa, their attitudes break down as in Table 13.

	Positive (number of respondents)	Negative (number of respondents)
Malawian languages	28% (23)	72% (36)

**Table 13 Positive and negative attitudes towards other Malawian languages**

Students speak far more negatively about other Malawian languages than they do positively, with less than 30% of comments being positive in nature. There is no significant difference between students’ attitudes towards Chichewa and towards other Malawian languages. There is a similar difference between students’ attitudes towards other Malawian languages and English as there is between Chichewa and English. Section 5.2.2. outlines the major reasons behinds students’ attitudes towards other Malawian languages.

## 5.5. Notable complexities

A number of statements from students provide an insight into the complicated and, at times, seemingly conflicted relationship university students have with the languages that are spoken within university, and the languages that they feel should be being spoken. At points, students highlight what seem to be hypocritical situations when it comes to the use of Chichewa within lectures. Lecturers have acted in the following way to students:

In the case that something cannot be explained, cannot be explained and understood in English the lecturer will switch it up and probably use the vernacular language just to get the point across but at the end of the day he will also encourage you that I'm not trying to [tell you] if you cannot explain it in English you should start writing the vernacular language no that's not good advice that's not advisable. (Student #4, M, 24)

This appears to be a somewhat contradictory approach to teaching, creating negative attitudes towards languages and students' abilities. The acknowledgment is that Chichewa is necessary at times but that this is a negative thing.

This view of completely promoting English at the expense of Chichewa can also be seen in how students respond to some language use questions:

Yeah just English unless something becomes really difficult the point that we have to use Chichewa as a way out yeah but it's strictly English as well. (Student #4, M, 24)

Even students that support more use of Chichewa seem conflicted:

If they can balance up the two [languages] I think it will be much easier but they should not

encourage much Chichewa. (Student #7, M, 32)

At times some students gave entirely contradictory answers to related questions. When asked if Chichewa was a suitable language for using at university one responded:

In lectures I don't think so but maybe informally yes. (Student #9, M 23)

This indicates that he felt Chichewa was not suitable as a medium of instruction. However when asked if a mixture of languages should be used he responded:

Yes that should happen because because because some people are lacking behind in vocabulary so if you mix Chichewa and English at the same time they will be able to pick up some new words and what they mean. (Student #9, M 23)

This seems to indicate that they felt that it would be beneficial for Chichewa to be used within lectures. Another student responds similarly saying that Chichewa is 'a suitable language but not in class', followed by:

The lecturers come and teach in English but whenever there is an obstacle somewhere else that should make him go into Chichewa he goes into Chichewa then jumps again into English. (Student #11, M, 18)

Even within the process of answering one question, students would provide answers which were incongruent and which inherently did not make sense when it came to reporting language use. For example, when asked what languages are used in lectures the student below backtracks and changes his answer:

Student: This campus it's only English and Chichewa that's all.

Interviewer: Okay. Hrm. Erm and are they used the same amount in lectures? Or is one used more?

Student: No No.

Interviewer: So is one the main language

or? Student: The main language is English.

Interviewer: Mhm. Chichewa is also used?

Student: No no it's ah na- no no no it's not really. It's not really.

Interviewer: So in lectures what languages are used?

Student: It's only English that's all.

Interviewer: So Chichewa is never used in lectures?

Student: No. (Student #15, M, 25)

When suggesting that Chichewa is used in lectures, he wants to correct himself, to clarify that this is not the case. However, later this same student also said the following took place in lectures:

If maybe somebody didn't understand understood uh they can they they they can use Chichewa to you know uh to make somebody to understand. (Student #15, M, 25)

Other students echo this, appearing to give the 'official' answer first, followed by what happens in reality. When asked what languages would be used by students to ask questions during lectures, a student responded as below:

Interviewer: What language would students use to ask questions?

Student: Yeah we are strictly told to use English.

Interviewer: Okay so it's sort of a rule that you need to use English if you're asking a question?

Student: Yeah.

Interviewer: Has there ever been a time in any of your classes that someone hasn't used English, they've maybe used Chichewa or another language?

Student: Yeah of course it has always been there. (Student #20, F, 21)

Even after stating the students are instructed to use English only when asking questions and that this is the rule when communicating within class, this student states that 'of course' Chichewa is also used to ask questions.

These contradictions in reported language use are also evident in students' language attitudes, as they appear to give contradictory views on Chichewa. One student says both that 'it's simpler to learn in English than in our languages' and 'for people to understand clearly also we can use Chichewa' (Student #30, M, 20). Some students recognise that university education would be easier for some students if Chichewa was used more freely but would advocate for a different scenario, in which English is used to the detriment of these students:

It's like some would find would find it easier but then it doesn't mean it's good that is should be used. (Student #32, M, 20)

Others feel that Chichewa is not a suitable language for using at university but then do accept that it is necessary to use it. At times, students appeared unable to justify why Chichewa was not a suitable language, other than the fact that they have never associated it with education:

Student: I mean why should they use Chichewa \*laughs\*?

Interviewer: Eh well well why shouldn't they use Chichewa?

Student: Cause it's not suitable for, I really don't know how to answer that one.

Interviewer: Eh well then maybe why, if it's not suitable to use, what are the reasons that it's not suitable?

Student: B- because assignments are we don't write assignments in Chichewa.

Interviewer: So, what if you could write assignments in Chichewa?

Student: No it's not appropriate. To write an assignment in Chichewa it's never happened.

(Student #33, F, 22)

This participant is unable to give a concrete explanation as to why she feels Chichewa is unsuitable other than merely stating that it is unsuitable. However, it is interesting to note that even contemplating the use of Chichewa within the university educational environment causes this student to laugh - it is seen as an absurd and inherently incorrect notion and something which is ridiculous even to propose.

### **5.5.1. Difficulty arising from English language skills**

A large amount of comments made by students towards English focused on the fact that, at university and in life more generally, a lack of English language skills would result in one facing more difficult circumstances. Students also recognise that a lack of appropriate English language skills is an issue amongst students in universities:

You know there are certain people you can see they understand what the lecturer is trying to say but to put it down on paper or to express it on paper, it's a very big problem. (Student #2, F, 21)

Yeah English is a problem it's a really big problem. (Student #2, F, 21)

Currently you even have some students who are struggling to write eh good



assignments. (Student #3, M, 24)

There is an acute awareness that using English as the medium of instruction within university results in a portion of the student population not being able to engage effectively with their higher education.

One student highlights the fact that the expectation of university students having appropriate English skills is not the case in reality:

A college right this is a university but you find that most people really have a hard time with English. (Student #4, M, 24)

This 'hard time' results in students being unable to take an active role within classes:

Yeah that's an issue yeah that's that might be the problem. A lot of people don't know how to elegantly speak English so it becomes so hard for them to to present their ideas. (Student #16, M, 23)

Here in Malawi most students they cannot maybe they could have the ideas but then to express them in English it's kind of difficult. (Student #5, M, 22)

Students may have excellent ideas and worthwhile contributions but they cannot participate because of a lack of English skills. One student indicated that the use of English within classes means that attendance at classes for some students is completely worthless:

I know quite a number of people who who would attend class and then they would walk out of that class without even grasping an idea of what the lecturer was trying to impart. (Student #21, M, 24)

One main issue is that students have not acquired appropriate levels of English in primary or secondary school to enable them to complete tertiary education:

Sometimes even language, others struggle due to language more especially our course uh language is paramount that is grammar. So when you have poor gr- background of grammar you find it hard. (Student #19, M, 35)

Some students also suggested that lecturers' English skills at times made understanding classes difficult:

It's hard to understand her English mostly yeah English just too much I don't understand. (Student #10, F, 20)

This ranged from using too many 'strong' (Student #40, F, 19) or 'heavy' (Student #7, M, 32) words, less common more subject specific English words that students had not come across. Many students preferred lecturers who would put their lessons into 'simple English' (Student #12, M, 28) and English which is spoken 'in a straight manner' (Student #12, M, 28). Students also indicated that difficulties arose when lecturers from other countries were teaching them, as they had trouble understanding their accents. This was even said to be a problem when lecturers came from different areas of Malawi. One student suggested that:

We would prefer someone with an American accent as that is what we are used to. (Student #10, F, 20)

Despite this acknowledgement that English can, at times, act as a barrier to receiving education - one student even described English as an 'obstacle' - there is a belief that adopting any other medium of

instruction would, while allowing students to engage more effectively with their education, in the long-term be more of a disadvantage:

Because we don't speak English, we don't speak good English here so [if] we are encouraged to speak both Chichewa and English maybe we will not be interested to know how to speak English. (Student #38, F, 22)

The fact that students struggle with English is seen to show that they 'don't speak good English here'. To combat this, the belief is that students must continue to learn via the medium of English, as continued exposure and practice of using the language will increase their English skills. If students were able to also use Chichewa within the university system then, as they would find this easier, they would spend less time speaking English and their English skills would not progress, which is seen as a negative occurrence:

Cause most of the people say ah cause we are learning here [in] Chichewa then English is not that important. (Student #37, F, 21)

The desire to learn and speak English seems to outweigh the potential benefits which more openly using Chichewa would bring. This may be inherently down to students' attitudes towards each language. As one student stated, even when using Chichewa to aid comprehension this is seen as 'bringing down the level' (Student #4, M, 24) as, ultimately 'we view English as a superior language to Chichewa' (Student #5, M, 22). To Malawian students English is seen as a key and important language and 'it's a must, [you] have to use it whether you like it or not' (Student #35, F, 26).

## 6. Discussion

The main research questions which this study has sought to answer are:

- 1) What are the patterns of language use reported by students within tertiary education in Malawi across a variety of domains within university?
- 2) To what extent does this reported language use correspond with the existing language-in-education policy in Malawi?
- 3) What languages do students identify as being most suitable for use as medium of instruction at university in Malawi?
- 4) What reasons do students give for the suitability of certain languages for use as medium of instruction at university in Malawi?

These questions will be discussed individually in relation to the results from the interviews and the policy review.

### 6.1. Patterns of language use in university

Reported patterns of language use appear, in the first instance, to be largely English-only usage by both lecturers and students in formal academic situations i.e. English is used as the sole medium of instruction and the sole language used within interactions between students and academic staff. Students reported that Chichewa use was far higher in more informal situations, in situations when students were talking amongst themselves, with conversations about non-university subjects having higher rates of Chichewa usage than conversations involving university - such as discussing coursework or working on group assignments. The practice of using the former colonial European

language within formal settings and utilising the non-European language within informal settings has long been noted as occurring within low-income countries, in which a diglossia is formed between the European language, in this case English, and a majority local language, in this case Chichewa (Fishman 1968). The local languages are associated with the family and the home, with one's community, while English is associated with more 'formal, statusful and specialized domains' such as education (Fishman 1968, pp45-46). More recently, Dyers' (2008, p110) study of language use within intimate domains between South Africans showed that there was a 'strong vitality of the mother tongue within the intimate domains' and people were more likely to use their first language when speaking casually with friends and family. Spernes (2012) found a similar relationship amongst children in Kenya, where the mother tongue is not associated with the school environment, but with the family. There is a tendency, as reported by Malawian students, towards using the language of high prestige within formal domains and the vernacular language of lower prestige within informal domains (Snow 2013).

Further investigation, however, highlighted that this was not the case and that there is an abundance of code-switching within the formal academic-focused contexts. It is not simply the case that English is the only language used within this environment, but that a mixture of languages are used. The two main reasons given by students for using Chichewa as well as English were to either tell jokes within the classroom or to provide further explanation on particularly difficult subjects, to enable the students to understand with clarity. The prevalence of code-switching within multilingual educational environments, in which an English-only policy is the official approach, was discussed in Section 2.5.1. The university environment within Malawi therefore presents a similar situation to other educational environments across Africa and other low-income countries.

As noted above, the purpose of using Chichewa as well as English within the university classroom is

not solely to aid student comprehension; rather, the two languages are employed by both students and teachers when making jokes, and generally making the situation more relaxed. Chimbganda and Mokgwathi (2012, p27) suggest that within high school classrooms in Botswana, English is viewed by both teachers and students as the formal classroom language and use of Setswana will occur as a means of reducing the social distance between staff and students. The use of code-switching for humour also occurs in South African schools (Uyes 2010). This seems to be the case within Malawian universities as students noted that they would be more likely to use Chichewa when contacting lecturers outside of class whom they deemed to be friendlier. These lecturers would likely be younger and less qualified than lecturers whom students would only approach using English. Some students indicated that these lecturers, those who would joke during lectures and therefore those lecturers who would readily code-switch into Chichewa to create a more relaxed environment, were among their favourite lecturers. This supports the initial reported language use by students, wherein they suggested English would be used within formal contexts and Chichewa within less formal contexts. When lecturers seek to make lectures less formal, they would employ Chichewa to help them do this.

What the results show is that, in terms of language use within university, the situation is not simply that one language is used in a certain domain within university and another language in another. What seems to be the case is that numerous languages are employed throughout all of the domains at university for a number of reasons. The university as a space, and the individual domains within it, is what Blommaert et al (2005) term a 'dialogic place', in which multiple languages are used for various functions. The overall image which most students initially presented was that English functions as the language of education and Chichewa functions as the casual language of conversation. However, the classroom also functions as a dialogic space in which both English and Chichewa serve pedagogical and social functions.

Outside of the class, the use of English alongside Chichewa within social situations also presents interesting results. Students readily acknowledge the fact that they mix between languages when talking to one another outside class. They also acknowledge that the English they speak in less formal situations becomes relaxed and combines with Chichewa to form a 'hybrid language'. This adds further complexity to the language situation within Malawi. Many studies within Malawi indicate that English is the language of the elite and Chichewa the language of the rural masses, setting the languages up in an either-or fashion - English is used in one domain or Chichewa is used, with little focus on the use of code-switching. These studies also generally assume that there is only one type or variety within each language. The case presented by the students interviewed is that they readily engage in casual code-switching between the languages and highlights that they have different 'Englishes' in their linguistic repertoire - they possess a formal academic English while also being able to switch into and use a more informal, casual variety of English. This has been noted as occurring amongst students in Kenyan universities where there is 'a remarkable difference between *casual language* and *academic language*' (Kadeghe 2013, p69).

Students also highlight the fact that they would use different languages with different groups of people. In particular this relates to the finding that females are more positive in their attitudes towards English than males, with some students suggesting that it is more common to find females speaking English than males. Within studies of standard and non-standard varieties within one language it has been repeatedly shown that 'women...are more sensitive than men to the prestige pattern' (Labov 1972, p243). Women are regularly found to use more standard, prestige variants and fewer non-standard variants than men (Romaine 1978, Trudgill 1983, Holmes 2013). In the multilingual space which is the Malawian university this preference towards the prestige appears to extend to a situation with more than one language, with females favouring English - the prestige language - more than males.

Students also recognise that within social contexts there are hierarchies created between groups and between the languages used within the groups. There are groups with English-only speakers - these would tend to be students from wealthier backgrounds who attended more prestigious secondary schools - groups who would use a mixture of Chichewa and English, and groups who would use Chichewa only when communicating. While, in university, students use both Chichewa and English (and to a lesser extent other Malawian languages), they are aware that the appropriate language to use within a situation is determined by who they are speaking to. This suggests that students are exposed to two sets of linguistic rules, affecting how they use language within university. They must operate within both the official language rules as enforced by the university administration and the self-imposed language rules which they create and reinforce when interacting with one another.

## **6.2. Reported language use and language policy**

Of most interest when considering whether the reported language use within university coincides with the language policy is that initial reported language use seems to coincide with an English-only policy whereas the reported language use which became evident from further discussion does not. This shift in position is key to understanding students' attitudes towards the languages used within education.

Heugh (2013) found a similar occurrence when investigating language attitudes within Ethiopia, in that participants would revise their initial answers the longer she spent with them or the more relaxed they became in her presence. This could indicate that, as the official position regarding language use within university is that it is English-only, students answered according to what they either thought I wanted to hear or what they wanted to represent as being the reality.

The contrast between the reports on language use can also be seen to highlight the issue within self-reported language use. It is unreliable and there is no guarantee that participants would, or would even be able to, accurately report on their own language use (Romaine 1995, pp317-318). There is a



tendency for individuals to ‘claim use of a language or variety which commands high prestige and to deny knowledge or use of a code that is stigmatized or associated with localized interactions’ (Milroy and Gordon 2008, p211). This appears to be what the majority of students reported in the first instance, that the prestige language was the language of choice within academic situations. Within educational institutions in which policies do not permit code-switching, there is a reluctance to admit that this practice actually occurs (Arthur 1996, Willans 2011) and the students interviewed initially were reluctant to admit that code-switching took place.

The reports which students ultimately give reflects one of the Law Commission’s findings from their review of the old Education Act (Law Commission 2010), namely that, in the absence of concrete legislation which dictates what the language of instruction should be then lecturers and students will default to using languages which are familiar to them.

Difficulties arise when answering the question of whether the language use in universities coincides with the language policy for a number of reasons. This is due to both the aforementioned unreliable nature of self-reported language use which this study employed but also to other major issues within language-in-education policies as discussed in Chapter 4. While the New Education Act dictates an English-only policy within education, there are no policies which provide a clear indication of what the medium of instruction should be within higher education institutions. The assertion that ‘few African countries have given much attention to language policies’ (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas 1995, p335) is clearly relevant to the Malawian educational context, as is William’s (2013) suggestion that African governments tend to have negative attitudes towards African languages when it comes to the creation of language policies. The language-in-education policies in Malawi completely ignore any potential value which may be gained from the inclusion of one, if not more, local languages.

### 6.3. Suitable languages for MOI

Every student asked felt that English was a suitable language to use within universities in Malawi. Students' attitudes in this regard follow the growing global trend of adopting English as the medium of instruction within education systems (Dearden 2014). The positive attitudes which students have towards the use of English as medium of instruction within university and towards the English language generally are found in other African universities. Dyers (1997) found that students at the University of the Western Cape have more favourable attitudes towards English than other languages for use as the medium of instruction and Noboda (2010) found that amongst students in the University of Cape Town, 83% had positive attitudes towards English being used as the medium of instruction. Sarfo (2012) finds similar positive attitudes amongst university students in Ghana. Favouring English as the medium of instruction in countries where it is likely not the first language of most students is not unique to Africa; similar positive attitudes are found amongst students in China (Yu 2010) and Yemen (Al-Tamimi and Shuib 2009).

Students' acceptance of English as a suitable language for use within education reflects the policy decisions made by the Malawian education sector. There is widespread promotion of English as the sole appropriate language for use as medium of instruction, to the extent that Malawian languages are not even considered for potential use as media of instruction.

University students and professionals within the education sector are not unique in viewing English positively. As discussed in Section 2.3. globalisation plays a major role in attitudes towards English in Africa. Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1995) recognise a widespread desire amongst Africans to acquire English language skills, with Coleman (2010) suggesting that the English language 'undoubtedly plays a major role in various aspects of development'. Djite (2008, p178) notes that the popularisation and acceptance of former colonial languages in Africa is common and has become an

intrinsic aspect of African identity in the twenty-first century.

It has been suggested that promotion of English within African and other low-income countries has come at the expense of promotion of indigenous languages (Phillipson 1992, Opoku-Amankwa 2015). The high levels of value which are associated with the English language in a wide range of functions often leads to the belief that indigenous languages are of less value than English (Desai 2010, Aissati 2013). This then results in the idea 'that education through languages other than English will not work' (Shoba 2013, p42). This is echoed in the results of this study as significantly fewer students felt that Chichewa was a suitable language for use at university within Malawi. In the studies mentioned above (Dyers 1997, Noboda 2010, Sarfo 2012), favourable attitudes towards English as the medium of instruction generally also coincide with students viewing indigenous languages as unsuitable, as is the case in this study.

While students did not generally approve of Chichewa as being suitable for use within university education, a majority did approve of the use of both English and Chichewa together within university. Alenezi (2012) has shown that students in African universities have favourable attitudes towards code-switching. The favourable position of Malawian students towards the use of both languages contrasts with their initial reluctance to state that Chichewa is used alongside English within university classes - likely because this question came later in the interview process, by which time most students had acknowledged the use of Chichewa. This could also be indicative of the fact that, while some studies have shown favourable attitudes towards code-switching within the education sector in Africa, there is still a strongly negative attitude towards it (Ferguson 2003). Aside from Chichewa, other Malawian languages were viewed even less favourably, and as not suitable for use within the university context. This echoes the findings of Beukes (2015), who has noted that there is a particular prejudice against non-majority indigenous languages in Africa when it comes to considering their viability of use within education.

## 6.4. Reasons for suitability

The main reasons given by students for the suitability of English use within education are that English is the most commonly used international language, it provides opportunities for employment and most topics which students study have originally been progressively developed in English. Students' opinions here substantially echo the majority of the education documents produced in Malawi.

One of the main aims of education in Malawi, as stated in numerous official documents, is to enable students to prosper within the international landscape. Many students referred to the fact that they were at international universities and the National Council for Higher Education stresses the importance of universities being able to compete internationally and operate to international standards. Perhaps due to the low quality of education which officials in Malawi acknowledge is prevalent, there is a desire to view the education system in Malawi as being able to increase its quality so as to be comparable to other, more developed, countries. There is a sense, in both official documents and amongst students, of this desire for education in Malawi to be viewed as being of international quality. One of the methods of achieving this is by promoting the use of English as the medium of instruction. Graddol (2006) states that the desire for universities to become 'international' has been one of the primary forces behind the growth of English as a global language. Many students referred to the fact that their universities are international universities in stating that English must be the medium of instruction, as to use any other language would not be fair to non-Malawian students. From this we can see that there is a perceived link between university and use of the English language.

The discourse surrounding the promotion of English amongst primary and secondary school students appears to have been internalised by the university students interviewed as the comments which occur in secondary school textbooks are remarkably similar to students' comments supporting the use of English in education. English is promoted as an exciting and useful language for students to learn. It is

promoted as affording opportunities to be able to connect with the global community, and this aspect in particular appears to resonate with the students who participated in this research. Positive attitudes towards English and globalisation account for a large number of students' comments on English. In secondary school they are taught that 'English is the most widely used international language in the world' (Malawi Institute of Education 2013, pxi) and that it 'is spoken by millions of people in many countries around the world' (Longman Malawi 2007, p1). Most of the students interviewed had hopes of leaving Malawi to pursue further education or employment and viewed English as essential to achieving this goal. It has been acknowledged by Crystal (2003) and Coleman (2010) that English does indeed hold these properties as a key language within the global landscape and can provide access to international opportunities. These perceived benefits of English are widespread within African countries and are a driving factor in the desire to adopt English as a medium of instruction within education (Trudell and Schroeder 2007, Gandolfo 2009, Ammon 2012).

The Malawi Institute of Education views English as the language of employment in Malawi, a view which is also shared by students, many of whom acknowledge that without good English skills they would struggle to get a decent job after university. Students suggested that universities in Malawi are very job-oriented and, as English is the language required for use within professional employment both in Malawi and internationally, university provides a space and period of time in which students can hone their English language skills.

Another core aim of the Malawian education system is to 'promote national unity, patriotism and...loyalty to the nation' (Law Commission 2013, p8). The concept of a unified Malawian identity in a country which has many individual, distinct tribes has been promoted by Malawian governments since the country gained independence and there is a belief that the use of a single language is necessary to achieve this (Anderson 1983). The promotion of English is seen as essential to this endeavour. Students share this view, as many believe that English is suitable as a language for use in

university as it is a neutral language which is able to unite Malawians. They believe that if it were not used then tribalism may occur on university campuses, with individuals choosing to socialise only with members of their own tribe. This is echoed in the syllabus for secondary education in which it states that English is seen to ‘promote unity and facilitate communication in Malawi’s multicultural society’ (Malawi Institute of Education 2013, pxi). There is a belief amongst students that English is necessary within university as it is a language which is widely understood, whereas to employ Malawian languages would necessarily be unfair to those speakers who did not understand specific Malawian languages. There would be problems inherent in choosing one language over another. Students also recognised that issues would arise if a multilingual policy was introduced as the number of Malawian languages which would need to be used would lead to a ‘language chaos’ (Student #20, F, 21). They further recognised that all educational materials have been produced in English, stating that the cost to produce materials in local Malawian languages would be too great. This is frequently stated as a reason against introducing multilingual language policies in Africa (Breton 2003, Ssebbunga-Masembe et al 2015).

Crystal (2003) highlights that English is a major language in technological and scientific advancement and Gandolfo (2009) states that there is a widespread view in Africa that English is the only language suitable for education as local languages are not developed enough to handle advanced intellectual concepts. Ssebbunga-Masembe et al (2015) also note that, as technological advancements have generally occurred outside of Africa, there is a belief that African languages are not appropriately equipped to talk about modern technology. The core aim within Malawian education of producing students who can ‘apply the indigenous and non-indigenous knowledge and skills necessary for lifelong learning, personal advancement, employment, and the development of society’ (Malawi Institute of Education 2013, pviii) appears to affect students’ beliefs about what certain languages are able to do. There is a distinction made between indigenous Malawian knowledge and non-indigenous non-Malawian, or international, knowledge. Students then associate the international language,

English, with all non-Malawian knowledge and Malawian languages are not suitable, in their view, for using to teach or discuss this knowledge. Malawian students expressed the belief that Chichewa was ill-equipped to express international ideas and technological subjects. As discussed in Section 2.5.2. the belief that African languages are unable to function effectively as media of instruction compared to English is commonplace (Beukes 2015). The reality of this has been debated, with Djite (2008) suggesting that this is not in fact the case. Bamgbose (2013) and Coleman (2010) have stated that while African languages are not used within educational domains then this will cause them to cease to develop. Mahlalela-Thusi and Heugh (2010) have shown that when South African languages are adopted for use within education then they are able to develop appropriate terminology to deal with the required subjects and concepts being taught. While the majority of students do explicitly state Chichewa is unsuitable, their acknowledgement of Chichewa's widespread use in classes calls the reality of this into question.

While students largely stated that they viewed Chichewa as unsuitable for use, for the above reasons, they also acknowledged the fact that it is regularly used to aid student comprehension and to generally make things easier for students. This would suggest that, contrary to what the students attest, Chichewa is capable of being used as a medium of instruction at university level. Reasons for the discrepancy in students' answers have been discussed above, but what this highlights is that even if students truly felt Chichewa unsuitable for using in university, and if they wanted the sole medium of instruction to be English, this would not be effective. Chichewa appears to be needed to ensure full comprehension amongst university students.

As a result of this 60% of students in this study are supportive of a multilingual language policy which involves the use of both Chichewa and English, stating that this is what is needed. Their general view is that English should serve as the main language of instruction with Chichewa used when and if necessary.

## 6.5. Main findings

The main aim of this study was to ascertain whether problems arise due to language issues at universities in Malawi. The evidence obtained suggests that this is the case. From the qualitative discussion of students' interview responses, it seems likely that the language situation at university is having a detrimental effect on at least some students. Whether this is a minority or a majority was not clear from students' answers and the scope of the study but the fact that it is acknowledged is worrying and indicates that there is an issue with the language-in-education policy situation within higher education in Malawi. Djite's (2008) comments regarding inefficient language policies within developing African nations affecting citizens' ability to engage effectively in the education system can be seen to be realised within Malawian universities. The close relationship between effective education systems and a country's socio-economic development (see Section 2.2.1.) suggests that issues arising from language use in university could be impacting upon the development of Malawi. The nature of this study means that the extent to which a student's ability to engage with university is affected by language use can only be tentatively speculated upon. It may be that only a small proportion of students are affected. As in the MoEST strategic plans for the education sector, language issues were on the whole not treated by students as a major issue when they were directly asked about problems within the university. However, the number of students who stated that English language skills were a factor in students' performance at university, and that concern over language skills made some students reluctant to participate in class discussions suggests that it is a more serious and troubling issue than it is currently considered to be.

The quantitative and qualitative data in this study present a complex linguistic landscape both in terms of language use within universities and students' language attitudes. While there are varying degrees of support for the use of Chichewa within universities in Malawi, the reality is that Chichewa is regularly used within academic contexts at university, and code-switching is utilised as a pedagogical and social tool when lecturers are teaching and amongst students themselves.



The reality of language use in universities does not correspond to official discourse surrounding language which emanates from the Malawian Ministry of Education. There is little acknowledgement of the necessity of using Chichewa, which university students readily state. The lack of clarity and contradictory nature of policy documents concerning language use within education is also reflected in students' own opinions, which in some cases appear contradictory. The value which is placed on English and the desire for this language within education appears to have resulted in students being unable, or perhaps unwilling, to accept the potential benefits of using Chichewa within education.

The desire for English amongst students would seem to be justified. It is seen as an international language, with many benefits for its speakers. However, students' dreams of having English-only instruction do not match up to the reality of university. At times it appears that the desire for English outweighs all else, with some students asserting that English should be used even if not all students are able to understand. While this might seem contradictory, it is a commonplace opinion in much of Anglophone Africa, due to the prestige and power of English (Probyn 2005b).

## 7. Conclusion

The linguistic landscape within Malawian universities is a complex one, due in part to the unique position which the university environment has within multilingual Malawi. The demographic of the student cohort consists of individuals with different linguistic backgrounds and different language skills. Students and staff then need to draw on various aspects of their linguistic repertoires to accommodate, and negotiate, these differences. The result is that both English and Chichewa (and perhaps other Malawian languages) are regularly used and interchanged both within classes and outside of classes. The scale and nature of this study means that the rate at which Chichewa and English are used can only be tentatively speculated on. The majority of participants suggested that English was used more often within classes and that, while Chichewa was used less often, when it was used it often served a more important function of solidifying and ensuring students' understanding. Differences of opinion exist amongst students on whether or not Chichewa is appropriate to use in this capacity.

These differing opinions can again be considered, in part, a consequence of the unique position which the university, and university students, have in Malawi. The automatic prestige which is bestowed upon individuals simply by way of their being university students comes with associated expectations of how they must conduct themselves, and the languages which they use are part of this expectation. The pressures of globalisation and the tension between the global and local contexts are acutely focused within the university environment. Exposure to global culture and what students consider to be global ideas presents students with a difficult task as they navigate it and reconcile it with local reality and indigenous knowledge, between an 'English life' and a 'Malawian life'. University also acts as a transitional space between education and employment which affects students' opinions towards the languages which they speak.

The tensions which exist within university, and which exist between the languages used within university are not effectively accommodated by current language policies. It is evident that language-in-education policy as *ad hoc* adopted within universities presents issues to some students and does have an impact on students' ability to engage with the university system. This could have widespread implications both for the rest of the education system in Malawi and for language policies in other domains. The fact that use of the English language causes problems for students even at university level would suggest that to introduce English-only instruction from the beginning of primary school would have disastrous consequences for the education system in Malawi and on the generations of children being educated. If, however, the reality of the situation at university - i.e. that code-switching between English and Chichewa is regularly used as the medium of instruction - could be accepted and properly researched and resourced, then this could have major, potentially beneficial, consequences for future language-in-education policies in Malawi.

Much work remains to be done in ensuring that language policies in Malawi are more inclusive, offering equal access to all citizens. The new language-in-education policy presents a major step in the opposite direction. Inclusive, socially just policies will only result from engaged and sociolinguistically-informed study of speech communities in Malawi, and further attempts to understand language attitudes and dispel myths of inferiority surrounding African languages.

### **7.1. Future research and limitations of study**

A number of practical issues affected the fieldwork period of this study. One of the universities in which a number of interviews had been planned to take place was closed for the entirety of the fieldwork period due to strikes undertaken by both students and staff. Severe flooding in the Southern region of Malawi also had negative impacts on the interview period, with many planned interviews being cancelled. The interviews that did take place were necessarily affected by various factors.

Mainly, as interviews took place during the university day, students were able to devote varying amounts of time to the interviews, with some not allowing for as much detailed discussion as others. A further issue in the interview process was the varying English language abilities of students. A minority of interviewees appeared to struggle to conduct the interview; however this was addressed by taking more time and providing more detailed assistance when posing the questions.

This study has largely focused on the roles and tensions between Chichewa and English, with only minor discussion of other Malawian languages. The reasons for this are due both to space limitations and the fact that the majority of students interviewed were bilingual speakers of English and Chichewa, with only a minority being speakers of other Malawian languages. Expanding the research area to include universities in all regions of Malawi would enable the study to encompass a greater number of speakers of other Malawian languages.

There is much scope for future research into language use and language attitudes within Malawi. Further research into the practicalities, occasions and rates of code-switching used within teaching contexts would provide deep insight into how code-switching is used as a teaching tool in tertiary education. Closer study of this could reveal how code-switching might best be employed by university staff. The complexities discussed in Section 5.5. appear to be contradictory; however, students likely did not view them as such. Further exploration of these key ideas would allow broader understanding of students' language attitudes. While students are key informants for this area of study, a more detailed picture of language use and language attitudes within universities would emerge if university staff (both teaching and administrative) were also interviewed.

To more fully explore these apparent complexities in attitudes towards languages within universities an appropriate methodology would have to be implemented. This study relied largely on self-reported language use, effectively 'what people say that they do'. To gain a better insight into the complex

linguistic landscape, some means of also investigating natural language use – i.e. ‘what people actually do’ - is needed. Two key aspects which add to the complexity of the situation in Malawian universities are 1) the status of the university as a social space and 2) the numerous historical, political and social factors which influence those in the university. Both of these aspects affect the linguistic habits of those who study and work in Malawian universities. As noted above, one of the major sources of tensions affecting students are those arising from the effects of globalisation. Sociolinguistic studies which must account for aspects of globalisation are necessary complex as they seek to understand new, uncertain, complicated environments (Blommaert 2015a). To make sense of the complex, multilingual environments an integrated methodology in the form of a linguistic ethnography would be an appropriate and effective approach (Unamuno 2014, Blommaert 2015b).

Traditional ethnographic techniques such as participant observation could be used to gain actual language use data. This, alongside the use of recordings of participants’ speech throughout their university activities would provide a clearer picture of actual language use habits. Combining aspects of participant observation and participant recording with interviews and focus groups would provide a rich source of data. The complementary data collection methods would result in more rigorous, robust data and would also enable interesting comparisons to be made between reported language use and actual language use. In this way, individuals’ perceptions of their own linguistic identities, and the way they choose to portray those identities, can be investigated. A linguistic ethnographic approach can provide rich data from numerous perspectives to assist in bringing to light the complexity of the sociolinguistic situation in Malawian universities.

## 8. Bibliography

Aissati, A. (2013) Language Education and Nationhood in Morocco: Tensions between Unity and Diversity, between Local and Global. In Shoba, A. and Chimbutane, F. (eds.) *Bilingual Education and Language Policy in the Global South*. New York: Routledge. pp66-82.

Alenezi, A. (2012) Students' Language Attitudes Towards Using Code-Switching as a Medium of Instruction in the College of Health Science: an Exploratory Study. *The Annual Review of Education, Communication, and Language Sciences* Vol 7. pp1-22.

Al-Tamimi, A., and Shuib, M. (2009) Motivation and Attitudes towards Learning English: A Study of Petroleum Engineering Undergraduates at Hadhramout University of Sciences and Technology. *GEMA: Online Journal of Language Studies* Vol 9 (2). pp29-55.

Ammon, U. (2012) English(es) and Academic Publishing. *The Encyclopaedia of Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Anderson, B. (1983) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

Angouri, J. (2010) Combining Methods in Linguistic Research. In Litosseliti, L. (ed.) *Research Methods in Linguistics*. London: Continuum. pp29-48.

Annamalai, E. (2005) Nation-building in a Globalised World: Language Choice and Education in India. In Lin, A., and Martin P. (eds.) *Decolonisation, Globalisation: Language-in-Education Policy*

*and Practice*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. pp20-37.

Appleby, R., et al. (2002) Language in Development Constrained: Three Contexts. *TESOL Quarterly* Vol 36 (3). pp323-346.

Arcand, J. L., and Grin, F. (2013) Language in Economic Development: Is English Special and is Linguistic Fragmentation Bad?. In Erling, E., and Seargeant, P. (eds.) *English and Development: Policy, Pedagogy and Globalization*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. pp243-266.

Arthur, J. (1996) Code-switching and Collusion: Classroom Interaction in Botswana Primary Schools. *Linguistics and Education* Vol 8 (1). pp17-33.

Arzoz, X. (2012) The Transformation of Higher Education and Medium-Sized Language Communities. In Milian-Massana, A. (ed.) *Language Law and Legal Challenges in Medium-Sized Language Communities: A Comparative Perspective*. Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Autònoms. pp219-252.

Bamgbose, A. (2000) *Language and Exclusion: The Consequences of Language Policies in Africa*. London: Transaction Publishers.

Bamgbose, A. (2013) The Language Factor in Development Goals. Paper presented at 10th International Language and Development Conference. Lagoon Beach Hotel, Cape Town, 15– 17 October.

Bartlett, T. (2013) Constructing Local Voices through English as a Lingua Franca: A Study from Intercultural Development Discourse. In Erling, E., and Seargeant, P. (eds.) *English and Development:*

*Policy, Pedagogy and Globalization*. Great Britain: Multilingual Matters. pp163-182.

Batibo, H. (2007) Language Use Optimisation as a Strategy for National Development. In Coleman, H. (ed.) *Language and Development: Africa and Beyond, Proceedings of the 7th International Language and Development Conference*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. 26th-28th October 2005. Addis Ababa: British Council. pp12-21.

Batibo, M. (2014) Searching for an Optimal National Language Policy for Sustainable Development. In McIlwraith, H. (ed.) *Language Rich Africa Policy Dialogue: The Cape Town Language and Development Conference: Looking beyond 2015*. London: British Council. pp16-20.

Beukes, A. (2015) Challenges for South Africa's Medium-Sized Indigenous Languages in Higher Education and Research Environments. In Vila, F., and Bretxa, V. (eds.) *Language Policy in Higher Education: The Case of Medium-Sized Languages*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. pp132-152.

Bianco, J. (2010) Language Policy and Planning. In Hornberger, N. (ed.) *Sociolinguistics and Language Education*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Blantyre International University (2014) *Course Outline for English*. Blantyre: Blantyre International University.

Blommaert, J., et al. (2005) Polycentricity and Interactional Regimes in 'Global Neighbourhoods'. *Ethnography* Vol 6 (2). pp205-235.

Blommaert, J. (2010) *The Sociolinguistics of Globalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



Blommaert, J. (2015a) Conceptual work in the Sociolinguistics of Globalization: Two sets of comments. *The Sociolinguistics of Globalization*. 3-6 July 2015, Hong Kong. Accessible at: [https://www.academia.edu/12839215/Conceptual\\_work\\_in\\_the\\_sociolinguistics\\_of\\_globalization\\_Two\\_sets\\_of\\_comments](https://www.academia.edu/12839215/Conceptual_work_in_the_sociolinguistics_of_globalization_Two_sets_of_comments)

Blommaert, J. (2015b) Commentary: Superdiversity old and new. *Language and Communication* Vol 44. Pp82-88.

Bloom, D., et al. (2006) *Higher Education and Economic Development in Africa*. Washington: World Bank.

Bowen, G. (2009) Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method. *Qualitative Research Journal* Vol 9 (2). pp27-40.

Breton, R. (2003) Sub-Saharan Africa. In Maurais, J. (ed.) *Languages in a Globalising World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp203-217.

Briggs, C. (1986) *Learning How to Ask*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brock-Utne, B. (2010) English as the Language of Instruction or Destruction – How Do Teachers and Students in Tanzania Cope? In Brock-Utne, B., et al (eds.) *Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa - Highlights from a Project*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers. pp77-98.

Brock-Utne, B. (2014) Language as a Contributor to Post-MDG Development Perspectives in Africa. In McIlwraith, H. (ed.) *Language Rich Africa Policy Dialogue: The Cape Town Language and Development Conference: Looking beyond 2015*. London: British Council. pp114-120

Bunyi, G. (2005) Language Classroom Practices in Kenya. In Lin, A., and Martin P. (eds.) *Decolonisation, Globalisation: Language-in-Education Policy and Practice*. Clevedon: Multilingual

Matters. pp131-152.

Bryman, A. (2012) *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cabral, E. (2013) The Development of a Language Policy in a Global Age: the Case of East-Timor. In Shoba, A., and Chimbutane, F. (eds.) *Bilingual Education and Language Policy in the Global South*. New York: Routledge. pp83-103.

Canagarajah, S. (2005a) Accommodating Tensions in Language-in-Education Policies: An Afterword. In Lin, A., and Martin P. (eds.) *Decolonisation, Globalisation: Language-in-Education Policy and Practice*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. pp194-201.

Canagarajah, S. (2005b) Introduction. In Canagarajah, S. (ed.) *Reclaiming the Local in Language Policy and Practice*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. ppixiii-xxx.

Chilora, H. (2000) School Language Policy Research and Practice in Malawi. *Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) 2000 Conference*. San Antonio, Texas, USA. 8–12 March 2000.

Chimbganda, B., and Mokgwathi, T. (2012) Code-Switching in Botswana's ESL Classrooms: A Paradox of Linguistic Policy in Education. *International Journal of English Linguistics* Vol 2 (2). pp21-32.

Chiponda, P. (2015) Speech for opening of children's library, presented at Blantyre Public Library. 4th February 2015.

Chiwanda, M. (4<sup>th</sup> March 2014) *Pupils to be taught in English from STD1*. In *The Nation*. Blantyre: Malawi.

CIA (2015) *CIA World Factbook*. Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook>. Accessed September 2015.

Clegg, J., and Afitska, O. (2011) Teaching and Learning in Two Languages in African Classrooms. *Comparative Education* Vol 47 (1). pp51-77.

Codo, E. (2008) Interviews and Questionnaires. In Wei, L., and Moyer, M. (eds.) *The Blackwell Guide to Research Methods in Bilingualism and Multilingualism*. Oxford: Blackwell. pp158-176.

Coleman, H. (2010) *The English Language in Development*. British Council. Available at: <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/UK011-English-Language-Development.pdf>.

Conrad, A. (1996) The International Role of English: The State of the Discussion. In Conrad, A. et al. (eds.) *Post-Imperial English: Status Change in Former British and American Colonies, 1940-1990*. Berlin: Walter De Gruyter. pp13-37.

Coulmas, F. (1992) *Language and Economy*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Creswell, J., and Clark, V. (2011) *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*. California: Sage Publications.

Crystal, D. (2003) *English as a Global Language*. 2nd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Crystal, D. (2010) *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Language*. 3rd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

CSEC (2013) *New Education Act Flyer*. Lilongwe: CSEC.

Cummins, J. (2000) *Language, Power, and Pedagogy: Bilingual Children in the Crossfire*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.

Curry, L., et al. (2009) Qualitative and Mixed Methods Provide Unique Contributions to Outcomes Research. *Circulation* Vol 119. pp1442-1452.

Dearden, J. (2014) *English as Medium of Instruction*. London: British Council.

Desai, Z. (2010) Reflections on the LOITASA in South Africa Project: Three Years Later. In Brock-Utne, B. et al., (eds.) *Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa - Highlights from a Project*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers. pp207-217.

Djite, P. (1990) The Place of African Language in the Revival of the Francophonie Movement. *International Journal of Sociology* Vol 86 (1). pp87-102.

Djite, P. (2008) *The Sociolinguistics of Development in Africa*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Dressler, W., and Oths, K. (2015) Social Survey Methods. In Bernard, H., and Gravlee, C. (eds.) *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield. pp497-518.

Dyers, C. (1997) An Investigation into Current Attitudes towards English at the University of the Western Cape. *Per Linguam* Vol 13 (1), pp29-38.

Dyers, C. (2008) Truncated Multilingualism or Language Shift? An Examination of Language Use in Intimate Domains in a New Non-racial Working Class Township in South Africa. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* Vol 29 (2). pp120-126.

Eckert, P. (2000) *Linguistic Variation as Social Practice*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Edley, N., and Litosseliti, L. (2010) Contemplating Interviews and Focus Groups. In Litosseliti, L. (ed.) *Research Methods in Linguistics*. London: Continuum. pp155-179.

Erling, E., and Seargeant, P. (2013) Introduction: English and Development. In Erling, E., and Seargeant, P. (eds.) *English and Development: Policy, Pedagogy and Globalization*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. pp1- 20.

Fardon, R., and Furniss, G. (1994) *African Languages: Development and the State*. London: Routledge.

Ferguson, G. (2003) Classroom Code-Switching in Post-Colonial Contexts: Functions, Attitudes and Policies. *AILA Review Africa and Applied Linguistics* Vol 14. pp38-51.

Ferguson, G. (2013) English, Development and Education: Charting the Tensions. In Erling, E., and Seargeant, P. (eds.) *English and Development: Policy, Pedagogy and Globalization*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. pp21-44.

Fisher, R. (1993) Social Desirability Bias and the Validity of Indirect Questions. *Journal of Consumer Research* Vol 20. pp303-315.

Fisher, R. (1998) Removing Social Desirability Bias with Indirect Questioning: Is the Cure Worse than the Disease?. *Advances in Consumer Research* Vol 25. pp563-567.

Fishman, J. (1968) Sociolinguistics and the Language Problems of Developing Countries. In Fishman, J., et al. (eds.) *Language Problems of Developing Nations*. New York: John Wiley and Sons. pp3-26.

Fowler, M. (2004) Student Retention Problems in Higher Education in a Developing Country. *The Fifth European Conference on Organizational Knowledge, Learning and Capabilities* 2-3 April 2004 University of Innsbruck, Austria.

Galabawa, J., and Senkoro, F. (2010) Implications of Changing the Language of Instruction in Secondary and Tertiary Education in Tanzania. In Brock-Utne, B., et al (eds.) *Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa - Highlights from a Project*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers. pp145-156.

Gandolfo, A. (2009) Education-Medium and African Linguistic Rights in the Context of Globalisation. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*. Vol 3 (7). pp321-336.

Garrett, P. (2010) *Language Attitudes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ginrich, P. (1992) *Introductory Statistics for the Social Sciences*. Regina: University of Regina.

Government of Malawi (1974) *University of Malawi Act*. Lilongwe: Government of Malawi.

Government of Malawi (1994) *Constitution of the Republic of Malawi*. Lilongwe: Government of Malawi.

Graddol, D. (2006) *English Next*. UK: British Council.

- Grimes, B. (1996) *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. USA: The Summer Institute of Linguistics.
- Gwengwe, C. (10th March 2014) Letter to the Editor. In *The Nation*. Blantyre: Malawi.
- Heugh, K. (2013) Navigating Contested Space, Time and Position: Ethnographic Research in Bilingual and Trilingual Education. In Shoba, A., and Chimbutane, F. (eds.) *Bilingual Education and Language Policy in the Global South*. New York: Routledge. pp104-123.
- Heugh, K. (2014) Multilingualism, the 'African Lingua Franca' and the 'New Linguistic Dispensation'. In McIlwraith, H. (ed.) *Language Rich Africa Policy Dialogue: The Cape Town Language and Development Conference: Looking beyond 2015*. London: British Council. pp80-87.
- Holmes, J. (2013) *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics: Learning about Language 4th Edition*. New York: Routledge.
- International Association of Universities (2013) *The Guide to Higher Education in Africa*. London: Palgrave.
- Johnson, D. (2013) *Language Policy*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Jones, J. (2012). The Effect of Language Attitudes on Kenyan Stakeholder Involvement in Mother Tongue Policy Implementation. *The Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* Vol 33 (3). pp237-250.
- Kamwendo, G. (2003) Is Malawi Guilty of Spoiling the Queen's Language?. *English Today* Vol 2. pp30-33.

- Kamwendo, G. (2004) *Language Policy in Health Services: Sociolinguistic Study of a Malawian Referral Hospital*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. University of Helsinki.
- Kamwendo, G. (2005) Language Planning from Below: An Example from Northern Malawi. *Language Policy* 2005 (4). pp143-165.
- Kamwendo, G. (2015) The Straight for English Policy in Malawi: the Road not to be Taken. In Miti, L. (ed.) *The Language of Instruction Question in Malawi*. Cape Town: CASAS. pp29-40.
- Kayambazinthu, E. (1998) The Language Planning Situation in Malawi. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* Vol 19 (5&6). pp369-439.
- Kaplan, R., and Baldauf, R. (1997) *Language Planning: From Practice to Theory*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Kelman, H. (1971) Language as Aid and Barrier to Involvement in the National System. In Robin, J., and Jernbudd, B. (eds.) *Can Language Be Planned: Sociolinguistic Theory and Practice for Developing Nations*. Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii. pp21-52.
- Khadege, M. (2010) In Defence of Continued use of English as the Language of Instruction in Secondary and Tertiary Education in Tanzania. In Brock-Utne, B., et al (eds.) *Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa - Highlights from a Project*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers. pp61-76.
- Kishindo, P. (2001) Language and the Law in Malawi: A Case for the Use of Indigenous Languages in the Legal System. *Language Matters* Vol 32 (1). pp1-27.
- Kishindo, P. (2008) *Language Mapping for the Southern and Central Region of Malawi*. Blantyre: University of Malawi.



Kishindo, P. (2015) *The Bird that was not Allowed to Fly: The Case of the Mother Tongue Language-in-Education Policy in Malawi*. In Miti, L (ed.) *The Language of Instruction Question in Malawi*. Cape Town: CASAS. pp9-28.

Kirkpatrick, A. (2013) *The Lingua Franca Approach to the Teaching of English: A Possible Pathway to Genuine Multilingualism in Local Languages and English*. In McIlwraith, H. (ed.) *Multilingual Education in Africa: Lessons from the Juba Language in Education Conference*. London: British Council. pp11-16.

Labov, W. (1972) *Sociolinguistic Patterns*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Labov, W. (1984) *Field Methods of the Project on Linguistic Change and Variation*. In Baugh, J., and Sherzer, J. (eds.) *Language in Use*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall. pp28-53.

Labov, W. (2010) *Unendangered Dialect, Endangered People: the Case of African American Vernacular English*. *Transforming Anthropology* Vol 18 (1). pp15–28.

Law Commission (2010) *Report of the Law Commission on the Review of Education Act*. Lilongwe: Government of Malawi.

Law Commission (2013) *New Education Act*. Lilongwe: Government of Malawi.

Levon, E. (2013) *Ethnographic Fieldwork*. In Mallinson, C., et al (eds.) *Data Collection in Sociolinguistics: Methods and Applications*. New York: Routledge. pp69-79.

Lewis, M., et al. (2015) *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. 17th ed. Dallas, Texas: SIL

International. Available at: <http://www.ethnologue.com/>.

Llamas, C. (1999) A New Methodology: Data Elicitation for Social and Regional Language Variation Studies. *Leeds Working Papers in Linguistics and Phonetics* Vol 7. pp95–118.

Longhurst, R. (2010) Semi-Structured Interviews and Focus Groups. In Clifford, N., et al. (eds.) *Key Methods in Geography*. London: Sage. pp103-115.

Longman Malawi (2007) *New Secondary English: Student's Book 2*. Blantyre: Longman Malawi.

Mahlalela-Thusi, B., and Heugh, K. (2010) Terminology and School Books in Southern African Languages. Aren't there any? In Brock-Utne, B., et al (eds.). *Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa – Highlights from a Project*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers. pp113-133.

Malawi Institute of Education (2009) *English Learner's Book for Standard 8*. Domasi: Malawi Institute of Education.

Malawi Institute of Education (2013) *Syllabus for English: Forms 1 and 2*. Domasi: Malawi Institute of Education.

Malekela, G. (2010) English as a Medium of Instruction in Post-Primary Education in Tanzania: Is it a Fair Policy to the Learners? In Brock-Utne, B., et al. (eds.) *Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa- Highlights from a Project*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers. pp33-42.

Marshall, M., and Rossman, G. (2006) *Designing Qualitative Research*. California: Sage Publications.

Martin, P. (2005) 'Safe' Language Practices in Two Rural Schools in Malaysia: Tensions between

Policy and Practice. In Lin, A., and Martin P. (eds.) *Decolonisation, Globalisation: Language-in-Education Policy and Practice*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. pp74-97.

Mateene, K. (1999) OAU's Strategy for Linguistic Unity and Multilingual Education. *Social Dynamics* Vol 25. pp164-178.

Matiki, A. (2001) The Social Significance of English in Malawi. *World Englishes* Vol 20 (2). pp201-218.

Matiki, A. (2003) Linguistic Exclusion and the Opinions of Malawian Legislators. *Language Policy* Vol 2. pp153-177.

Milroy, L. (1987) *Language and Social Networks*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Milroy, L., and Gordon, M. (2003). *Sociolinguistics: Method and Interpretation*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Miti, L. (2015) In Search of an Inclusive Language of Instruction Policy in Malawi. In Miti, L. (ed.) *The Language of Instruction Question in Malawi*. Cape Town: CASAS, pp4-7.

MoEST (2008) *National Education Sector Plan 2008-2017 A Statement*. Lilongwe: MoEST.

Moser, C., and Kalton, G. (2004) Questionnaires. In Seale, C. (ed.) *Social Research Methods*. New York: Routledge. pp73-87.

Moyo, T. (2001) The Changing Language Policies and Reversing Language Roles in Malawi: From Colonial Times (1891 - 1964) to the Present. *Per Linguam* Vol 17 (2). pp1-11.

Mtenje, A. (2013) Developing a Language Policy in an African Country: Lessons from the Malawi Experience. In McIlwraith, H. (ed.) *Multilingual Education in Africa: Lessons from the Juba Language-in-Education Conference*. London: British Council. pp95-102.

Nangu, B. (2006) *Teaching in English and IsiXhosa: Code-Switching in Grade 11 Biology Classes at a School in Khayelitsha*. Unpublished MPhil Thesis. University of the Western Cape.

National Statistical Office. (1998) *Population and Housing Census: Analytical Report*. Available at: [http://www.nsomalawi.mw/images/stories/data\\_on\\_line/demography/census\\_98/analytical\\_report.pdf](http://www.nsomalawi.mw/images/stories/data_on_line/demography/census_98/analytical_report.pdf).

National Statistical Office. (2008) *Education and Literacy Report*. Available at: [http://www.nsomalawi.mw/images/stories/data\\_on\\_line/demography/census\\_2008/Main%20Report/ThematicReports/Education%20and%20Literacy.pdf](http://www.nsomalawi.mw/images/stories/data_on_line/demography/census_2008/Main%20Report/ThematicReports/Education%20and%20Literacy.pdf).

NCHE (2014) *Standards for Accreditation of Malawi's Higher Education Institutions*. Lilongwe: NCHE.

Negash, N. (2011) English in Africa: an Impediment or a Contributor to Development. In Coleman, H. (ed.) *Dreams and Realities, Developing Countries and the English Language*. London: British Council. pp161-184.

Nekatibeb, T. (2007) The Impact of Learning with the Mother Tongue on Academic Achievement: a Case Study of Grade Eight Students in Ethiopia. In Coleman, H. (ed.) *Language and Development: Africa and Beyond, Proceedings of the 7th International Language and Development Conference. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. 26th-28th October 2005*. Addis Ababa: British Council. pp51-61.

Noboda, G. (2010) *Language Preferences and Behaviours of Selected Students and Staff in the Faculty*

*of Humanities at the University of Cape Town, in the Context of the University's Implementation of its 2003 Language Policy and Plan: a Qualitative Study.* Cape Town: PRAESA.

Nyasa Times (2014) *Malawi Std 1 pupils to start learning in English in all subjects.* Lilongwe: Nyasa Times 5th March 2014.

Oakley, A. (1987) From Walking Wombs to Test-Tube Babies. In Stanworth, M. (ed.) *Reproductive Technologies.* Cambridge: Polity Press. pp36-56.

Obwana, M., and Ssewanyana, S. (2007) *Development Impact of Higher Education in Africa: The Case of Uganda.* Kampala: Economic Policy Research Centre.

Oketch, M., et al. (2014) *The Impact of Tertiary Education on Development.* London: DFID.

Opoku-Amankwa, K., et al. (2015) Publishing for Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual Education in Ghana - Politics and Consequences. *Language and Education* Vol 29 (1). pp1-14.

Ouane, A., and Glanz C. (2010) *Why and How Africa Should Invest in African Languages and Multilingual Education. An Evidence- and Practice- Based Policy Advocacy Brief.* Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.

Owen, T. (2013) *Qualitative Methods in Higher Education Policy Analysis: Using Interviews and Document Analysis.* Unpublished PhD Thesis. Georgia Institute of Technology.

Phakit, A. (2015). Quantitative Research and Analysis. In Paltridge, B., and Phakit, A., (eds.) *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics: A Practical Resource.* London: Bloomsbury Academic. pp27-48.

Phillipson, R. (1992) *Linguistic Imperialism.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Phillipson, R., and Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (1995) Language Rights in Post-colonial Africa. In: Phillipson, R., and Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (eds.) *Linguistic Human Rights: Overcoming Linguistic Discrimination*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter. pp335-346.
- Pitman, A., et al (2010) English as Language of Instruction in Africa: Policy, Power and Practice. In Brock-Utne, B., et al (eds.) *Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa - Highlights from a Project*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers. Pp1-10.
- Pool, J. (1972) National Development and Language Diversity. In Fishman, J. (ed.) *Advances in the Sociology of Language, Volume II (Selected Studies and Applications)*. The Hague: Mouton. pp213-230.
- Probyn, M. (2005a) Language and the Struggle to Learn: The Intersection of Classroom Realities, Language Policy, and Neo-colonial and Globalisation Discourses in South African Schools. In Lin, A., and Martin P. (eds.) *Decolonisation, Globalisation: Language-in-Education Policy and Practice*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. pp153-172.
- Probyn, M. (2005b) Learning Science through two Languages in South Africa. In Cohen, J., et al. (eds.) *ISB4: Proceedings of the 4th International Symposium on Bilingualism*. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press. pp1855-1873
- Rasool, N. (2013) The Political Economy of English Language and Development: English vs. National and Local Languages in Developing Countries. In Erling, E., and Seargeant, P. (eds.) *English and Development: Policy, Pedagogy and Globalization*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. pp45-67.
- Rea-Dickens, P., et al. (2013) The Relationship between English-Medium Instruction and Examining

and Social and Economic Development. In Erling, E., and Seargeant, P. (eds.) *English and Development: Policy, Pedagogy and Globalization*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. pp111-140.

Roberts, A. (2007) *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples Since 1900*. New York: Harper Collins.

Robinson, C. (1996) *Language Use in Rural Development: An African Perspective*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Romaine, S. (1978) Postvocalic /r/ in Scottish English: Sound Change in Progress? In Trudgill, P. (ed.) *Sociolinguistic Patterns in British English*. London: Edward Arnold. pp144-156.

Romaine, S. (1995) *Bilingualism*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Romaine, S. (2002) The Impact of Language Policy on Endangered Languages. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* Vol 4 (2). pp194-212.

Sarfo, E. (2012) Ghanaian University Students' Attitudes Towards English. *International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities* Vol 4 (1). pp86-99.

Saunders, M. (2006) Gatekeeper. In Jupp, V. (ed.) *The SAGE Dictionary of Social Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications. pp126-127.

Saville-Troike, M. (2002) *The Ethnography of Communication*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Schilling, N. (2013) Surveys and Interviews. In Podesva, R., and Sharma, D. (eds.) *Research Methods in Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp96-116.

Sen, A. (1999) *Development as Freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Shoba, A. (2013) The Formation of Language Values and Educational Language Policy Beliefs among Teacher Educators in Ghana: A Life-History Approach. In Shoba, A. and Chimbutane, F. (eds.) *Bilingual Education and Language Policy in the Global South*. New York: Routledge. pp30-48.

Silverman, D. (2009) *Doing Qualitative Research*. 3rd Edition. London: Sage Publications.

Simango, S. (2006) East Africa/Ostafrika. In Ulrich, A., et al. (eds.) *Sociolinguistics/Soziolinguistik*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter. pp1964-1971.

Simango, S. (2015) Learning English or Learning in English: Some Thoughts on the Language Question in the Malawian Classroom. In Miti, L. (ed.) *The Language of Instruction Question in Malawi*. Cape Town: CASAS, pp41-60.

SMP (2012) *Scotland-Malawi Higher and Further Education Linking*. Edinburgh: Scotland-Malawi Partnership.

SMP (2014) *Common Challenges: Shared Learning*. Edinburgh: Scotland-Malawi Partnership.

Snow, P. (2013) English in Panama. In Hopkins, T., et al. (eds.) *World Englishes Volumes I-III Set*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Spernes, K. (2012) 'I Use My Mother Tongue at Home and with Friends--Not in School!' Multilingualism and Identity in Rural Kenya. *Language Culture and Curriculum* Vol 25 (2). pp189-203.



- Spolsky, B. (2004) *Language Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ssebbunga-Masembe, C., et al. (2015) Language-in-Education Policies in Africa: Perspectives, Practices, and Implications. In Jacob, W. et al (eds.) *Indigenous Education*. UK: Springer.
- Tagliamonte, S. (2006) *Analysing Sociolinguistic Variation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Trudell, B., and Schroeder, L. (2007) Reading Methodologies for African Languages: Avoiding Linguistic and Pedagogical Imperialism. *Language, Culture and Curriculum* Vol 20 (3), pp165-280.
- Trudgill, P. (1983) *On Dialect: Social and Geographic Factors*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- UN (2000) *United Nations Millennium Declaration*. New York: UN.
- Unamuno, V. (2014) Language dispute and social change in new multilingual institutions in Chaco, Argentina. *International Journal of Multilingualism* Vol 11 (4). pp409-429.
- UNESCO (1953) *The Use of Vernacular Languages in Education*. Paris: UNESCO
- UNESCO (2000) *The Dakar Framework for Action*. France: UNESCO.
- UNESCO (2004) *EFA Global Monitoring Report: Education for all - the Quality Imperative*. Paris: UNESCO.
- UNESCO. (2010) *EFA Global Monitoring Report*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- UNESCO (2014) *Shaping the Future We Want: UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) Final Report*. Paris: UNESCO.

Uyes, D. (2010) *The Functions of Teachers' Code-Switching in Multilingual and Multicultural High School Classrooms in the Siyanda District of the Northern Cape Province*. Unpublished MPhil thesis. Stellenbosch University.

Vail, L., and White, L. (1991) Tribalism in the Political History of Malawi. In Vail, L. (ed.) *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*. California: The University of California Press. pp151-193.

Vila, F. (2015) Language Policy in Higher Education in Medium-Sized Language Communities: An Introduction. In Vila, F., and Bretxa, V. (eds.) *Language Policy in Higher Education: The Case of Medium-Sized Languages*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. pp1-14.

Viriri, E., and Viriri, M. (2013) The Prevalence of Code-Switching in Secondary Schools Where English is the Official Medium of Instruction: A Case Study of Buhera South District. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development* Vol 2 (1). pp227-234.

Walonick, D. (2010) *A Selection from Survival Statistics*. Available at:

<https://www.statpac.com/surveys/surveys.pdf>

Weller, S. (2015) Structured Interviewing and Questionnaire Construction. In Bernard, H., and Gravlee, C. (eds.) *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield. pp343-390.

Willans, F. (2011). Classroom Code-Switching in a Vanuatu Secondary School: Conflict Between Policy and Practice. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* Vol 14 (1). pp23-38.

- Williams, C. (2008) *Linguistic Minorities in Democratic Context*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Williams, E. (2011) Language policy, politics and development in Africa. In Coleman, H. (ed.) *Dreams and Realities, Developing Countries and the English Language*. London: British Council. pp39-56.
- Williams, E. (2013) Political Perspectives on Language Policies and Development in Africa. In: Erling, E., and Seargeant, P. (eds.) *English and Development: Policy, Pedagogy and Globalization*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. pp68-87.
- Woodrow, L. (2014) *Writing about Quantitative Research*. Available at:  
<http://www.palgraveconnect.com.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/pc/doi/10.1057/9780230369955.0019>
- World Bank (2002) *Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education*. Washington: World Bank.
- World Bank (2010). *The Education System in Malawi World Bank Working Paper No.182*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Bank (2013) *World Development Indicators Database*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Bank (2015) *World Development Indicators Database*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Yevudey, E. (2013) The Pedagogic Relevance of Code-Switching in the Classroom. *Ghana Journal of Linguistics* Vol 2 (2). pp1-22.

Yu, Y. (2010) *Attitudes of Learners towards English: A Case of Chinese College Students*.  
Unpublished PhD Thesis, The Ohio State University.

Yusuf, F., and Nabeshima, K. (2009) *Accelerating Catch Up: Tertiary Education for Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Washington: World Bank.

## 9. Appendices

### 9.1. Appendix 1 Interviewee characteristics

	Gender	Age	Type of university	Type of degree	Stage of degree
Student #1	Female	20	Private	BA	Senior
Student #2	Female	21	Private	BSc	Senior
Student #3	Male	24	Private	BSocSci	Senior
Student #4	Male	24	Private	BSc	Senior
Student #5	Male	22	Public	BSc	Senior
Student #6	Male	24	Private	Other	Senior
Student #7	Male	32	Private	BSocSci	Senior
Student #8	Male	24	Private	BSc	Senior
Student #9	Male	23	Private	BA	Senior
Student #10	Female	20	Private	BSc	Senior
Student #11	Male	18	Public	Other	Junior
Student #12	Male	28	Private	BSocSci	Senior
Student #13	Male	21	Public	Other	Junior
Student #14	Male	19	Public	BSc	Junior
Student #15	Male	25	Private	Other	Junior
Student #16	Male	23	Public	BA	Junior
Student #17	Female	20	Private	BA	Senior
Student #18	Male	23	Private	BA	Junior
Student #19	Male	35	Public	BA	Senior
Student #20	Female	21	Public	BSc	Senior

Student #21	Male	24	Public	BSc	Senior
Student #22	Male	19	Public	BSc	Junior
Student #23	Female	20	Public	Other	Senior
Student #24	Female	35	Private	BSocSci	Senior
Student #25	Female	30	Private	BSc	Senior
Student #26	Female	21	Private	BA	Junior
Student #27	Male	22	Public	Other	Senior
Student #28	Female	22	Private	BSc	Senior
Student #29	Male	25	Private	BSc	Senior
Student #30	Male	20	Private	Other	Junior
Student #31	Female	21	Public	BSc	Senior
Student #32	Male	20	Public	BA	Senior
Student #33	Female	22	Public	BSc	Senior
Student #34	Female	19	Private	BSocSci	Senior
Student #35	Female	26	Private	BSocSci	Senior
Student #36	Female	22	Private	BA	Senior
Student #37	Female	21	Public	BSc	Senior
Student #38	Female	22	Public	BSc	Senior
Student #39	Male	21	Public	BSc	Senior
Student #40	Female	19	Private	BSc	Junior

## 9.2. Appendix 2 Interview schedule

### A: Face to face interview.

#### 1) Introduction and building rapport.

1.1) At the beginning of the interview I will introduce myself, explain that I am doing research into the experience of university students in Malawi and how it compares to that of Scottish students, and that I will be conducting interviews with a number of Malawian students.

1.2) I will ask for permission to record the interview, explaining that I will make use of the recordings when transcribing and analysing the interview.

1.3) In the, likely, scenario that access to the interviewee has been made through a personal friend I will ask how they know that friend and how long they have known them.

1.4) I will ask a number of questions about Malawian popular culture:

1.4a) ‘Do you like listening to the Black Missionaries?’

1.4ai) If the response is no I will ask: ‘Why not?’

1.4b) ‘Do you like listening to Lucias Banda?’

1.4bi) If the response is no I will ask: ‘Why not?’

1.4c) ‘What other music do you like?’

1.4d) ‘Have you seen the film B’ella?’

1.4di) If the response is yes I will ask: ‘What did you think of it?’

1.4dii) If the response is no I will ask: ‘Do you want to see it?’

1.4e) What football team do you support?

1.4f) Do you enjoy Malawian poetry?

1.5) I will ask a series of questions about current affairs events in Malawi, in which various student groups played minor roles (organising protests etc):

1.5.a) 'How do you think the cash-gate scandal has affected Malawians?'

1.5.b) 'How do you think that President Mutharika is performing in office so far?'

1.5.c) 'Have you heard about the new language policy for primary schools?'

1.5.ci) 'Do you have any opinions about this?'

## **2) University**

2.1) I will start this section by briefly talking about my own experience of University: the courses I studied, the opportunities I had to go to Malawi.

2.2) I will ask participants to tell me more about their university career:

2.2.a) 'What course are you studying?'

2.2.b) 'Do you have a favourite lecturer?'

2.2.bi) 'Why are they your favourite?'

2.2.c) 'Are there any lecturers you do not like as much?'

2.2.ci) 'Why not?'

2.2.d) 'If you ever have any questions, how easy is it to contact lecturers outside of class?'

2.2.di) 'How formal do you need to be when contacting them?'

2.3.a) 'Do you have tutorials for your subjects?'

2.3.ai) 'What aspects of tutorials do you enjoy?'

2.3.a.ii) 'What aspects of tutorials do you not like?'



2.4.a) 'How are you assessed?'

2.4.b) 'Are there some methods of assessment you prefer to others?'

2.4.bi) 'Why is this?'

2.4.c) If the interviewee mentions that they have to do presentations, this will be probed further:

2.4di) 'Do you enjoy doing presentations?'

2.4.dii) If not I will ask: 'Do you ever have to do presentations?'. If the response is yes, question 2.4.di will then be asked

2.5a) 'Do you ever have to do group work?'

2.5.ai) 'Do you enjoy doing group work?'

2.5.a.ii) 'Are there any aspects of group work you do not enjoy?'

2.6.a) 'Is the social side of university life important to you?'

2.6.b) 'Are you in any clubs or societies?'

2.6.bi) If the answer is yes, I will ask: 'What kinds of activities do you do?'

2.6.c) 'Is it mostly people from Blantyre that you socialise with?'

2.6.ci) If the answer is yes, I will ask: 'Do you enjoy socialising with people from different regions?'

2.6.cii) If the answer is no, I will ask: 'Do you think it's good to socialise with people from different parts of Malawi?'

### **3) Evaluating university**

3.1) 'Could anything be done to improve the university experience for students in Malawi?'

3.2) 'Do you know anyone that struggles with university work?'

3.2.a) 'Why do they struggle?'

3.3) 'Do you ever need to help anyone with university work?'

3.3.a) 'What do you need to help them with?'

3.4) 'Do you think that all students are able to take part in class discussions?'

3.5) 'Do you have friends that didn't go to university?'

3.5.a) 'Why didn't they go?'

3.6) 'What skills do you think make someone successful at university in Malawi?'

#### **4) Direct questions on language use**

If, at this point, no information has been given which is at all related to language use within university, the following questions will be asked:

4.1) 'What languages are used in lectures by lecturers?'

4.1.a) 'Are there any other languages used?'

4.2) 'What languages are used in tutorials?'

4.2.a) 'Are there any other languages used?'

4.3) 'What languages are used when students socialise outside of class?'

4.3.a) 'Are there any other languages used?'

4.4) 'What languages are used when contacting lecturers outside of class?'

4.4.a) 'Are there any other languages used?'

#### **5) Direct language attitude questions**

The final section consists of a number of language attitude statements. Students are instructed to state whether they agree or disagree with each statement. Following this, students are asked to elaborate

further on the reasons for which they either agree or disagree.

5.1) 'Malawian languages should be used at university.'

5.2) 'Malawian languages should be encouraged at university.'

5.3) 'Chichewa is a suitable language to use at universities.'

5.4) 'English is a suitable language to use at universities.'

5.5) 'A mixture of languages should be used at universities.'

5.6) 'English skills are required for success at university.'

6) I will conclude the interview, I will inform interviewees that I have reached the end of my questions, and give them the opportunity to add any additional comments or ask me any questions. I will then thank them for their time.

### 9.3. Appendix 3 Coding

#### Excel Layout

Columns A-E (collapsed):	Contains information on speaker characteristics.
Column F - Speaker:	Indicates speaker.
Column G - Utterance:	Contains utterance.
Column H – Use:	Contains codes for comments on language use across contexts at university and for general comments on students, lecturers, university.
Column I – Attitude:	Contains codes for comments regarding student attitudes towards languages and which indicate possible reasons for those attitudes.
Column J – Positive/Negative:	This column indicates whether the utterance coded for in the previous two columns (H/I) is positive/negative/neutral.
Column K – Language Policy:	Contains code which indicates whether the utterance corresponds/does not correspond with the language-in-education policy, and includes any references to the policy.
Column L – N/A:	Contains all statements which remain uncoded.

## Codes

### **Speaker Characteristics**

M Male

F Female

1 18-24 years old

2 25-30 years old

3 30+ years old

Pu Attends a public university

Pr Attends a private university

S Studying for a B.Sc.

A Studying for a BA

Soc Studying for a BSocSci

Oth Studying for a diploma or other type of degree not mentioned above

J In years 1-2 of their degree

S In years 3-5 of their degree

## Use

LeLec Comment on language use by a lecturer within a lecture

LeStu Comment on language use by a student within a lecture

TuLec Comment on language use by a lecturer within a tutorial

TuStu Comment on language use by a student within a tutorial

OLec Comment on language use by a lecturer outside of class

OStu Comment on language use by a student talking to a lecturer outside of class

StStu Comment on language use by students talking with one another outside of class

AcStu Comment on language use by students discussing academic work outside of class

UniSt Comment on a student struggling at university

LecGen A general comment on lecturers at university which does not explicitly refer to language

StuGen A general comment on students at university which does not explicitly refer to language

UniGen A general comment on university which may does not explicitly refer to language

## **Language**

E A comment referring to English

C A comment referring to Chichewa

Mal A comment referring to Malawian languages generally/Malawian languages other than Chichewa

Mix A comment referring to multiple languages being used

## **Extra**

Tran A comment on translating from English into Chichewa

LangRu A comment on the rules for language use at university

LangIss A comment which indicates that issues arise amongst students due to language use at university

Glob A reference to globalisation

Loc A reference to local communities with reference to English



LangSk A reference to a student's language skills

UniPre A reference to the prestige of being a university student

Inf A reference to an informal situation

For A reference to a formal situation

Job A reference to employment

LangPol A reference to language policy in education

*-Imp* Imp is added when the comment does not explicitly reveal a language attitude but potentially reveals an implicit attitude.

e.g. If a participant likes a Malawian artist this would be coded **LocImp**.

### **Pos/Neg**

Positive A comment signalling a positive attitude

Negative A comment signalling a negative attitude