LANGUAGE IN
EDUCATION IN NIGERIA, **PHASE II**

REPORT 2022

Language in Education in Nigeria, Phase II

Report 2022

Foreword

In partnership with the Federal Ministry of Education of Nigeria, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the British Council in Nigeria, UNICEF has supported a study on Language in Education in Nigeria. The findings of this study provide further evidence for improving children's rights to education in Nigeria. They also suggest ways in which the Government of Nigeria, along with development partners and civil society, can best address systemic gaps and challenges, including the negative effects of lack of a strong policy and implementation framework of language in education.

While it is recognized that there are many ingredients to attaining quality and equitable education for all children, as espoused in SDG4, SDG target 4.5 specifically recognizes the particular importance of children's home languages as well as gender, disability, migration and forced displacement (UNESCO, 2016, p. 256). UNESCO and other experts in the field note that children taught and assessed in languages they do not speak at home are hindered in their early acquisition of reading and writing skills.

Thus, to facilitate national efforts to promote education in the first or home language of children, SDG thematic indicator 4.5.2 shows the proportion of pupils in primary education whose first or home language is the language of instruction (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2017). With the implicit call for instruction in the children's first or home language, expectations are raised that national language policies and education strategies are key for the improvement of learning outcomes.

The findings of this Phase II study, facilitated by UNICEF and initiated in 2020 with financial support from FCDO, is intended to gather evidence from a cross section of Nigerian classrooms and local stakeholders on the actual language of instruction practices and models being used in Primaries 1-3 (P1-P3), as well as the language transition strategies being implemented in P4. This study is the first largescale Nigerian study of such practices, covering eight states in all the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. The study thus represents pioneer knowledge-generation in documenting the current practices of Language in Education in Nigeria and the impact on pupils' learning outcomes. It will serve as evidence-based advocacy, and a reference tool to help the Federal and State Governments refine existing policy guidance and practices in this area.

We hope that the evidence presented in this report will influence key decisions in policy guidance on language choices in education, and that it will help to shape current and future education strategies from teacher training and deployment to textbook development, procurement, and distribution guidelines. Furthermore, the report should influence pre-service teacher training orientation and inform the design of in-service Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes as well as the design of early literacy and numeracy intervention and remedial programmes. Finally, the report

should influence parental perceptions of language of instruction. When all these are put together, they should have a positive impact on the learning outcomes of pupils in the elementary school.

Research for this study was initially conducted by an independent country-based consulting firm, Gilead Best Consulting Limited, during 2020-2021. Further analysis and redrafting of the study were completed by an individual consultant, Dr Barbara Trudell, in the first half of 2022. The report not only covers key findings from quantitative and qualitative data collected from pupils, teachers, head teachers, SUBEBs, community leaders and stakeholders in the education sector, but it also clearly highlights insightful expert conclusions and recommendations. The final report articulates future opportunities for UNICEF, Development Partners and the Ministry of Education at both Federal and State levels, to further strengthen the position of Languages in Education in Nigeria.

We are certain that the findings and recommendations of this report will enable the Federal, State, Local Governments and community actors in education, academia and civil society to fine-tune policies, programme strategies and partnerships in this critical area of the use and usefulness of language in education.

From this perspective, it could be seen that the study implications of Language in Education is enormous. What we do, or do not do, will impact directly the trajectory of learning outcomes, which is one of the education priorities in Nigeria.

We would like to recognize the technical leadership role played by the various MDAs of the Ministry of Education, the academia, NGOs and subject matter experts who provided feedback to strengthen the report.

On behalf of the Government of Nigeria and UNICEF Nigeria Country Office, we take this opportunity to reiterate our commitment to continue working together to achieve the goals and objectives of the National Policy on Education, and the ambitious targets set out in SDG4 aimed at improving universal access to inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

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We are greatly indebted to various individuals and institutions that made the completion of this study possible despite initial challenges brought about the onset of COVID-19 in the first quarter of 2020 and heightened insecurity during the same period. The study was initially conducted by an independent country-based consultancy firm named Gilead Best Consulting Limited who conducted the field data collection and initial analysis.

The Gilead Best Consulting Limited which comprised the Chief Executive Officer of the firm, Sunday I. Ukpata, an Associate Professor of Business Management; the National Team Leader of the project, Judith A. Mgbemena, a Professor of Sociolinguistics and English Studies; the Zonal Coordinator, South-East and the Chairman of the report writing committee, Innocent E. Agu, a Professor of English with specialization in English for Special Purposes; the Zonal Coordinator of South West, John O. Alabi, a Professor of Management with specialization in data analytics; the Zonal Coordinator, South-South, Justina D. Raemen, an Associate Professor of Guidance and Counselling Psychology; the Zonal Coordinator, North East Sambo Ejika PhD; the Zonal Coordinator North West and the Head of the data analytics team, Sikiru Amoo, a Professor of Mathematics and Statistics; and the Zonal Coordinator, North Central, Mrs Elizabeth M.

Momoh, an expert in Development Studies, among notable others.

Further re-analysis and re-writing of the study was completed by an independent expert consultant, Dr Barbara Trudell. Dr Trudell, who undertook part I of this research project on language and education in Nigeria in 2018, and who has also contributed to the 2021 World Bank policy paper *Loud and Clear: Effective Language Policies of Instruction for Learning*, is the author of the present version of this study.

The Federal Ministry of Education and UNICEF would like to thank these professionals who put in their best to bring the study to a successful completion.

We would also like to appreciate and acknowledge the administrative support accorded to the Gilead Best Consulting Limited field teams during the field data collection by the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), the Local Government Education Authority (LGEA), the security authorities such as the Nigerian Police and local vigilante groups, head teachers, teachers, School Based Management Committees (SBMCs), and pupils of the schools visited.

Furthermore, we acknowledge the immense technical contributions from members of the study's Steering

Contents

Acronyms & Abbreviations

BESDA	Better Education Service Delivery for All
BICS	basic interpersonal communication skills
CALP	cognitive and academic language proficiency
CBC	competency-based curriculum
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
KaLMA	Kano Literacy and Maths Accelerator
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LIE	language of the immediate environment
LSP	language supportive pedagogies
MoI	Medium of Instruction
MT	Mother tongue
NCRRD	Nigeria Centre for Reading Research and Development
NEI+	Northern Education Initiative Plus
NIPEP	Nigeria Partnership for Education Project
NPE	National Policy on Education
OBEC	Obolo Bilingual Education Centre
P	Primary (e.g. P1 means Primary 1)
PLANE	Partnership for Learning for All in Nigerian Education
RANA	Reading and Numeracy Activity
RAYL	Revitalizing Adult and Youth Literacy
SUBEBs	State Universal Basic Education Boards
TaRL	Teaching at the Right Level
TDP	Teacher Development Programme
TLMs	teaching and learning materials
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Introduction

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Language in Education in Nigeria, Phase II

ONE

In the formal education context, the role of language in effective learning is clear. When considering formal education in Africa, it is also clear that the various ways in which languages are chosen, used and supported in African classrooms largely determine the degree of effective learning.

To better understand the dynamics and impact of language of instruction choices in Nigerian classrooms, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)/UK Aid has funded a two-phase study of the issues and opportunities related to language of instruction in the country.[1] Phase I, which was facilitated by the British Council and carried out in 2018, explored the links between the current Nigerian language policy context and student learning outcomes. This was done by means of an extensive literature review as well as a series of interviews of Nigerian linguists, policymakers, educationists and implementers of internationally funded education programme interventions in the country (Trudell 2018). Phase II, facilitated by UNICEF and initiated in 2020, is intended to gather evidence from Nigerian classrooms and local stakeholders on the actual language of instruction practices and models being used in classes P1-P3, as well as the language transition strategies being implemented in P4.

Guided by seven research questions set by the programme's Technical Steering Committee, a corpus of qualitative and quantitative field data was gathered and analysed in 2021 by the consultant firm, Gilead Best Consulting Ltd (Gilead 2021). Data was gathered from Bauchi, Benue, Imo, Kano, Osun, Rivers, Sokoto, and Taraba States, with a focus on P1, P3 and P4. Qualitative data was drawn from focus group discussions with government education staff, teachers, parents and pupils, as well as classroom observations in each of the eight states. Quantitative data was drawn from analysis of interviews of classroom teachers, head teachers and staff of the relevant State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs).

1.1. The research questions

This report draws on selected field data from the Gilead research (including focus group interview data, teacher assessments of pupil proficiency, and

What elements of these transition models have enabled them to grow into models?

- Is there a threshold level of L1 literacy skills and L2 oral language skills, required for introducing literacy instruction in L2 in Nigeria for successful literacy outcomes in both languages? If so, what is the threshold level?

- What are the perceived costs and benefits of L1 medium of instruction to children and parents in comparison to other language medium of instruction (e.g. Second language – English)? This gives rise to another question. What transition models are used?

- In what ways can the transition models be replicable in other contexts? If not, why and what sort of adjustments could make these models replicable in other contexts?

- Where has the L1 to L2 transition process in primary grades been documented? What models have emerged from successful classroom practice even in other countries?

1.2. Key terms and context

The findings of this report are embedded in Nigeria's national context of language and education. An introduction to that context, and to some key terms used in it, is provided below.

Language transition

In multilingual societies such as Nigeria, national language in education policy is expected to take into account the reality that not all early learners master the language in which the larger formal education system is delivered. In response, language transition models are often mandated in order to assist the learner to move from one medium of instruction (MoI) to another.

The most common language transition models[2] are:

- early-exit transition, in which the learner's L1 (first or home language) is the MoI in lower primary grades (typically through P2 or P3), after which a non-L1 language becomes the MoI throughout the remainder of their formal education;

- late-exit transition, in which the learner's L1 is the MoI until late in upper primary (typically P6), at which point a non-L1 language becomes the

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classroom observation data), as well as other current research and literature in the field of language of instruction and language transition, to provide responses to the seven research questions that shape Phase II of the language study. The research questions are the following:

- In a context where First Language (L1) medium is used only for teaching reading and the L1 subject, how does the transitioning model differ from the context where L1-medium is used for all the subjects in the curriculum?

- What role could language supportive strategies, including code-switching, play in facilitating transition? How could such approaches be modified from their current practice in Nigerian classrooms?

- What are the driving factors of the success or failure of existing language transition models?

MoI throughout the remainder of their formal education.

The logic of language transition programming is that it uses and supports the L1 fluency of the young learner, while at the same time moving the learner towards fluency in the L2 as language of instruction the latter being assumed to provide what the learner needs to succeed in the following years of formal schooling. This logic has been challenged, notably by Odugu and Lemieux (2019), who argue that the very notion of language transition undermines the perceived value of the L1. Odugu and Lemieux point to abrupt language in education policy changes in Rwanda and Ghana in the last four years, in which a supportive stance towards the L1 medium of instruction was reversed. The authors argue that:

> *It is the indigenous contra foreign/Western tension and concomitant linguistic hierarchy that the instrumentality of transitional multilingualism fuels in ways that discourage NLB [native language-based]-MLE, a reality borne out in policy reversals in Ghana and Rwanda (Odugu and Limieux 2019: 271).*

The authors maintain that the very idea that linguistic skills and knowledge can transfer across languages actually disincentivizes NLB-MLE, "because it endorses the supposed inferiority of [non-dominant languages]" (ibid.). In other words, if the same linguistic capital is available in both the L1 and the L2, and given the substantially greater prestige of the L2, why bother with the L1?

These authors' perspective on language transition programming would find some agreement among those who advocate the maintenance or additive model of language use, which features the full use of the L1 as MoI throughout the primary grades, with non-L1 languages being brought in alongside the L1 in the later primary grades (Hornberger 2011).

The remaining language-use model relevant to the Nigerian context is the immersion (or submersion) model, in which a non-L1 is the MoI from the very beginning of formal schooling, and no use is made of the L1 in the classroom at all. Immersion is the term used where the L1 is a majority language; submersion is the term typically used when the L1 is a minority language (Baker 2001: 194).

Dual language-medium learning

Dual language-medium learning programmes are intended to provide a context in which pupils can use their L1 for learning content, as well as build capacity in an L2 (in this context, any language that is not the L1) through its use in learning content. This may be done in various intentional and structured ways. As an example, the Department of Basic Education of South Africa promotes dual medium of instruction as "the use of two media (languages) of instruction by a teacher in a lesson, switching from one medium (language) to the other, on a 50:50 ratio" (DBE 2010).

In Nigeria, the Kano Literacy and Maths Accelerator (KaLMA) pilot project for P4-P6 pupils also relies on a dual-language approach, in which Hausa is used as a bridge to building foundational language skills in English.[3] KaLMA was launched in 2019 by the Kano State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), the British Council, Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) Africa and FCDO. Early results of the programme indicated an increase in pupils' reading ability in Hausa, numeracy skills and English language skills.

Language supportive pedagogy

Language supportive pedagogy (LSP) strategies tap into the pupil's entire inventory of language competencies in intentional ways to assist their learning in a language they are yet to master (Clegg 2021: 164). LSP is recommended where the L2 is the medium of instruction throughout primary; but it is also intended to address the evident failure of early-exit language transition programming to prepare the young learner for L2-medium learning in the upper primary grades and beyond (Erling, Clegg, Rubagumya and Reilly 2021: 7). The primary aim of LSP is "to reduce the demands of an unfamiliar L2 on learners and thus allow and encourage them to deploy as many of their cognitive resources as possible towards learning new concepts" (ibid. p. 12). LSP strategies include specially adapted subject textbooks and other classroom resources, as well as teacher capacity-building for using the textbooks and providing appropriate

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learning support to pupils. LSP can be seen as an application of a broader translanguaging approach in the classroom (see below); but its strategic application to specific linguistic and pedagogical challenges give it substantial utility to primary-level learning in the African classroom.

Translanguaging versus code-switching

A clear understanding of the distinction between translanguaging and code-switching is fundamental to understanding language practices in Nigerian classrooms.

Translanguaging has been defined broadly as "the deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages" (Otheguy, García, and Reid 2015, quoted in Vallejo and Dooly 2020: 6). The narrative around translanguaging refers to the transformational possibilities that could exist in embracing plurilingualism in the classroom and society. Vallejo and Dooly (ibid. p. 3) express the hope that this narrative will:

> encourage educational agents to reflect on how they can transform these emergent approaches into pedagogical practice (in both formal and informal learning situations), and hopefully generate innovative educational advances in the field.

Flores (2014) sees strong potential in the translanguaging discourse for articulating and advancing a political agenda related to minority language communities.

Critics of the translanguaging discourse point to the nebulous nature of its use as a term. Rubinstein (2018: 85) quotes Jaspers' view that the term translanguaging is being used to account for a range of ideas, from

> all speakers' innate linguistic instinct, to bilinguals' spontaneous language use, to everyday cognitive processes, to a bilingual pedagogy, and to a theory of language and education [while also referring to] transformative, socially critical processes (Jaspers 2017:3, quoted in Rubinstein 2018:85).

Li Wei (2018:9) agrees, arguing that "the growing body

of work gives the impression that any practice that is slightly non-conventional could be described in terms of Translanguaging".

Code-switching is a generalized sociolinguistic phenomenon that occurs in multi-language communication contexts. The term refers to the switching back and forth between languages in any communicative context. As a classroom practice, code-switching is "rarely institutionally endorsed or pedagogically underpinned" (Akbar and Taqi 2020: 55). The Phase I study of this research project found that code-switching in the Nigerian classroom is a matter of serious concern for leaders in Nigerian language education, who maintain that it has a negative impact on L1 and L2 language fluencies as well as L2-medium examination performance (Trudell 2018: 25).

At the practical level, code-switching and translanguaging can become confused. Li Wei (2018:9) observes:

> There is considerable confusion as to whether Translanguaging could be an all-encompassing term for diverse multilingual and multimodal practices, replacing terms such as code-switching, code-mixing, code-meshing, and crossing.

From a linguistic perspective, however, code-switching and translanguaging are very different. Code-switching is described as the behaviour of "bilinguals alternating between two linguistic systems" (Akbar and Taqi 2020: 55), whereas translanguaging is based on the idea that bilinguals are using one unified linguistic repertoire in order to make meaning (ibid).

From a classroom-based point of view, code-switching can be described as one-off, impromptu language behaviour of teachers and pupils, practised when none of the individual language options are adequate in themselves to teach and learn subject content. Translanguaging describes a broader, theoretically supported approach to teaching in multi-language context (García, Johnson and Seltzer 2016; Celic and Seltzer 2013).

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A brief overview of language and education policy in Nigeria

Nigeria's National Policy on Education (NPE; Federal Republic of Nigeria 2013) contains some key references to government-mandated language in education practices. These include:

- The language policy for early childhood development and education: "Government will ensure that the language medium of instruction is principally the mother tongue or language of the immediate community" (p. 6).
- The language policy for the early primary grades: "The medium of instruction in the primary school shall be the language of immediate environment for the first three years in monolingual communities. During this period, English shall be taught as a subject" (p. 8).
- The language policy for upper primary grades: "From the fourth year, English shall progressively be used as medium of instruction and the language of immediate environment and French and Arabic shall be taught as subjects" (p. 8).

It is noteworthy that specific references to the use of Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, or "major Nigerian languages" as languages of instruction, found in earlier policy versions, do not appear in the 2013 version (Trudell 2018).

The challenges of interpreting and implementing some NPE statements are well recognized. The reference to "monolingual communities" in particular raises questions about how such communities are identified, as well as what the language policy might be for multilingual communities. Evidence from both the Phase I and Phase II studies of this research project indicates that the NPE language provision is not being considered by educators to apply only to monolingual communities.

Further uncertainty exists around the notion of language of the immediate community or language of the immediate environment. Although both terms are used in the 2013 NPE, specifics are lacking regarding how such languages are to be identified in a given environment or community. As Ochoma

(2015: 3) notes, "the language of the environment is by implication, the mother-tongue (MT) or the language spoken by the people of the community." However, Ochoma also notes that this begs the question: how is this language identified in multilingual environments? According to Albaugh (2014: 267), the (Nigerian) government recognizes twenty-seven minority local languages in education. However, any actual relationship between such languages and the notion of "language of the immediate environment/ community" is unclear.

The 2021 USAID language of instruction profile for Nigeria observes that:

> In its 2018-2022 strategic plan, the Federal Ministry of Education acknowledged confusion around the use of languages, particularly in education, and outlined its intention to establish a comprehensive, clear National Language Policy (USAID 2021: 6).

The USAID profile notes that the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) was to lead in the production and implementation of a new national language policy; this process is described as being underway, though slowed by budget constraints.

Language practices in Nigerian primary schools

Data from the Phase I (Trudell 2018) and Phase II studies of this research project indicates that language practices in Nigerian primary schools follow a few key patterns:

- The use of a Nigerian language of instruction from the early grades, with English featuring increasingly in the higher primary grades in classroom teaching and learning. This practice roughly follows the early-exit model of language transition. It is compliant with the National Policy on Education to some extent, although the feasibility of transitioning to English as the MoI in P4 is doubtful in many classrooms due to limited pupil English proficiency by P4. In this practice, the distinction between the Nigerian language choices made in monolingual and multilingual communities is unclear.
- The use of a Nigerian language of instruction

throughout the primary grades, with English taught as a subject throughout. This late-exit language transition approach is uncommon in Nigeria; it is currently being practised by the Obolo Bilingual Education Centre (OBEC) programme in Rivers State, with encouraging results (see section 2.2.2 below).

- Extensive code-switching between the Nigerian language of the students and English, on an "as needed" basis. Code-switching is a common teacher practice when the teaching and learning resources are in English but the language proficiencies of the pupils do not allow effective learning in that language. In this context, the teachers are responding to the classroom reality that neither the local Nigerian language nor English are adequate languages of instruction by themselves.

The Phase I study found that "in place of an early-exit transition from mother-tongue medium in P1-P3 to English in P4-6, both languages are being mixed throughout all six primary grades" (Trudell 2018: 25). In interviews on the subject, linguists and education policy makers suggested that:

> *being able to use both languages as pedagogical resources could be a benefit; however, all the groups felt that [code-switching] is generally both a result and a cause of poor English acquisition (ibid.)*

The Nigerian classroom practice of code-switching has been inaccurately described as "dual language medium instruction," though it lacks the structural and resource-based support of the dual-medium

Being able to use both languages as pedagogical resources could be a benefit; however, all the groups felt that [code-switching] is generally both a result and a cause of poor English acquisition (ibid.).

learning approach.

- The use of English as the MoI from the early grades, with no special attention to accommodating the home language of the learners. This practice follows the submersion model. Some schools, most notably private schools, follow this practice, though it is not supported in the National Policy on Education.

Reading programme interventions in Nigeria

A number of internationally-funded reading programme interventions have taken place in Nigeria in the last decade. Table 1 lists a number of early-grade reading or literacy programme interventions in operation over the past decade, as reported by USAID (2021) and Trudell (2018). These reading programme interventions have not typically aimed at supporting a given language transition model, though language transition in reading is a focus for a few of them.

Table 1. Internationally-funded programme interventions in Nigeria related to reading (USAID 2021 and Trudell 2018)

Programmes (in alphabetical order)	Focus	Language (if targeted)	Funder; international implementer	Dates
Better Education Service Delivery for All (BESDA)	Nationwide; literacy, out-of-school children		World Bank and Government of Nigeria	2017-2022
Kano Literacy and Mathematics Accelerator (KaLMA)	Kano State	Hausa and English	FCDO, British Council and TaRL Africa	2019-2021
Nigeria Centre for Reading Research and Development (NCRRD)	Nation-wide; early grade reading		USAID; Florida State University	2017-2020
Nigeria Partnership for Education Project (NIPEP)	Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, and Sokoto States; reading, out-of-school children	Hausa, English	Global Partnership for Education, World Bank	2015-2020

Northern Education Initiative Plus (NEI+)	Bauchi and Sokoto States; reading	Hausa and English	USAID; Creative Associates	2015-2021
Partnership for Learning for All in Nigerian Education (PLANE)	Kano, Kaduna, and Jigawa States, adding Borno and Yobe States; education quality	Hausa and English	FCDO; DAI, FHI360, UNICEF	2019-2028
Reading and Numeracy Activity (RANA); part of Girls Education Programme Phase 3	Katsina and Zamfara States; early grade reading	Hausa	DfID (now FCDO); UNICEF	2015-2020
Revitalizing Adult and Youth Literacy (RAYL)	36 states; literacy programming	English, Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba	UNESCO	2011-2016; 2018-ongoing
Teacher Development Programme (TDP)	5 states; teacher capacity-building	English	DfID (now FCDO); Mott MacDonald	2013-2018
Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) Nigeria	5 states; reading and mathematics	English, Hausa	Pratham	2018-2023

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Responding to Phase II research questions

The Phase II research questions guiding this report may be helpfully grouped in three categories: those that deal with L1 language of instruction issues; those that deal with L1-L2 language transition issues; and those that deal with L2 language of instruction issues. In this report, therefore, the questions are addressed in the following order.

L1 language of instruction questions

- (RQ 5) What are the perceived costs and benefits of first language (L1) medium of instruction to children and parents in comparison to other language medium of instruction (e.g. second language – English)? [4]
- (RQ 1) In a context where L1 medium is used only for teaching reading and the L1 subject, how does the transitioning model differ from the context where L1-medium is used for all the subjects in the curriculum?

L1-L2 language transition questions

- (RQ 7) Where has the L1 to L2 transition process in primary grades been documented? What models have emerged from successful classroom practice even in other countries?

- (RQ 3) What are the driving factors of success or failure of existing language transition models? What elements of these transition models have enabled them to grow into models?
- (RQ 6) In what ways can the transition models be replicable in other contexts? If not, why and what sort of adjustments could make these models replicable in other contexts?
- (RQ 2) What role could language supportive strategies, including code switching, play in facilitating transition? How could such approaches be modified from their current practice in Nigerian classrooms?

L2 (i.e. non-L1) language of instruction question

- (RQ 4) Is there threshold level of L1 literacy skills and L2 oral language skills required for introducing literacy instruction in L2 in

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Nigeria for successful literacy outcomes in both languages? If so, what is the threshold level?

2.1. Research questions on L1 language of instruction

2.1.1. (RQ 5) What are the perceived costs and benefits of first language (L1) medium of instruction to children and parents in comparison to other language medium of instruction (e.g. second language – English)?

The perceived costs and benefits of L1-medium learning for Nigerian parents may – or may not – match the empirical realities. Research in the field is abundant and clear: using a language medium that the child speaks results in better learning outcomes than using a language medium that the child does not speak or understand well. Despite this empirical evidence, however, a number of beliefs about language and formal education can cloud the issue for parents and children in the African context:

- Beliefs about the necessary features of effective formal education, which for Anglophone African parents often include the use of English as the sole or main medium of instruction. Maximum exposure to English – and the earlier in the child's career the better – is seen as the best way for the child to succeed in the formal education system (Trudell, Young and Nyaga 2015: 142).
- A related belief that indigenous African languages are an inadequate means of describing modern concepts, making the use of non-indigenous languages of instruction - English in this case – a practical necessity (Breton 2003: 211-12). This view is strengthened by the fact that teaching and learning materials, when available, are nearly always found only in the international language; African-language textbooks are so rare as to be nearly non-existent. This is certainly the case in the Nigerian classrooms under study.[5]

- The notion that a child can engage successfully with curriculum content with only a very limited level of fluency in English. Here the confusion is between social language skills (also called basic interpersonal communication skills, or BICS) and a level of cognitive and academic language proficiency (CALP) that allows the child to use the language for gaining new knowledge (Cummins 1979). Research shows that gaining academic language proficiency in a second language can take 7 years or more of schooling (Collier 1995).

The presence of these beliefs among Nigerian parents was documented in the Phase I study:

In much of the country the prestige of English, and parents' beliefs about how their children will gain English fluency, trump policy. As one education consultant noted, "All the research shows that the language policy's approach is better, but the sentiment on the ground is not that" (Trudell 2018: 29).

However, Gilead study (2021) data from focus group discussions with Nigerian parents indicates that they see both costs and benefits to the use of the L1 as medium of instruction in early-grade classrooms. Differences by state were limited and difficult to track, but the range of perspectives is described below. It is interesting that the value of L1-medium learning is indeed recognized by the parents in these discussions, perhaps more certainly than might have been expected from the Phase I interview data quoted above.

- A clear benefit for the parents is that the pupils understand the L1 in the classroom, as it is "the language of society".[6] They note that when the child can neither ask nor answer a question in English, that child is not benefiting much from the class.
- Another perceived benefit of L1-medium teaching and learning has to do with avoiding a delay in learning. Using a non-L1 in the early grades is seen to delay the child's learning, compared to using the same language that is used at home.[7]
- A broader perspective expressed had to do with

national-level development. The impact of L1-medium learning in other countries is perceived as being "fruitful", and the belief is that it would improve the capacity of Nigeria's children as well.[8]

- One cost mentioned was the literal financial cost of developing strong materials support for such classroom learning in the large range of Nigerian languages. Since the L1 is used in P1-P3 instead of English, textbook costs are less; from P4-P6, English-language textbooks must be bought.[9] The comment is revealing; it indicates that the P1-P3 teacher is mediating English-language textbook knowledge to the pupils, rather than the pupils themselves using textbooks.
- One language-related cost mentioned was that a child who learns in his or her L1 then has "an accent" when learning English in P4.[10] The perception is that not only does the child pronounce English badly, but also has more difficulty reading and writing English. The belief is that this is more of a problem for the child who uses the L1 in early primary and then transitions to English-medium instruction, than for the child whose schooling experience is delivered in English from the start.
- Another perceived cost affects children of households where LIE is not spoken. One parent noted that a child has to "use Hausa in school, but then his parents speak to him in English at home – or Igbo. It's too much for the child".[11]
- One parent queried whether the child was learning the right lesson content in an L1-mediated syllabus, as opposed to an English-mediated syllabus.[12] There was some perception that the curricula are not the same from one language to the other.
- Many of these negative perceptions among parents are ill-informed or faulty, but that they exist is undeniable. It is also worth noting that the role of language in successful transition to the English-language secondary school context was not mentioned at all by the parents.

In at least one case, teachers who are charged with implementing the NPE's language provisions in the classroom expressed concern that parents are

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undercutting the L1-medium policy when they teach their pre-school children English at home; those parents then look for English-medium schools in which to enrol their children as well.[13]

2.1.2. (RQ 1) In a context where L1 medium is used only for teaching reading and the L1 subject, how does the transitioning model differ from the context where L1-medium is used for all the subjects in the curriculum?

Local language-medium reading interventions in otherwise L2-medium classrooms have a long history in education practice in Africa. Given the centrality of literacy skills to formal learning, and given also the low likelihood of national curricula supporting more extended use of the L1 as the medium of instruction in the primary grades, programme interventions focusing solely on L1 reading instruction have become common in international education.[14] The focus

of international education donors on early-grade reading, especially since 2010, has further normalized this approach to assisting populations that are educationally low-resourced (Gove and Cvelich 2010; Kim, Boyle, Zuilkowski and Nakamura 2016).

While an L1-medium early-grade reading focus does help to provide primary-grade children with important skills in the language they understand, the approach is less effective in improving long-term educational outcomes. When it is combined with an early-exit language transition model, the impact of a reading-only intervention in the local language is limited indeed. Table 2 compares some features of the two models, L1-medium reading instruction and L1-medium use across the curriculum, as applied in early-exit and late-exit language transition programmes.

In the context of the research question, the two models in the first column (early-exit language transition) can be usefully compared in terms of their implications for transition to the L2. As can be seen, limiting the use of L1 to reading instruction produces positive gains in reading skills and builds a positive learning environment in the L1-medium class. No impact is generally seen on learning in other subjects, however. Using the L1 across the curriculum has a positive impact on learning in all the subjects, as well as reading skills. The main transition-related challenge to this latter model is the limited time for learning L2 as a subject. There is also evidence that the learning gains seen in early-exit transition diminish considerably by the end of the primary grades. So the transition challenges for the L1-medium reading-only model are greater than those of the L1-across-the-curriculum early-exit transition model. This is because the L1 has only been used to build reading skills and not to learn subject content, pupil learning outcomes overall are not strong. It seems clear, in fact, that the L1-medium reading model is not really a transition model at all.

Given these realities of the L1-medium early-grade reading programming, is there still a rationale for implementing such programming? The answer is yes, although the outcomes attained in such programming may not facilitate all the learning and language transition goals that one might wish. In terms of skills acquisition, the L1-medium reading programme pupil

Table 2. Use of L1 and transition programme types (Trudell, Piper and Ralaingita forthcoming)

	Early exit (P3 or P4)	Late exit (end of primary)
L1 for reading instruction	Advantages: Good reading skills gained Good affective outcomes in early grades Good community acceptance Disadvantages: No evidence of strong long-term academic outcomes No impact on L2 learning	Advantages: Good reading skills gained Long-term L1 language arts development is possible Disadvantages: Comprehension does not necessarily transfer to L2 subjects
L1 across curriculum	Advantages: Good early-grades content learning Good affective outcomes in early grades Disadvantages: Not enough L2 learning for strong transition Research evidence: learning gains diminish by P5	Advantages: Good content learning Time for strong L2 learning Research evidence: leads to successful transition to L2-medium secondary school Disadvantages: Substantial policy and curricular support needed

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> **Based on findings from classes observed and opinions of head teachers, it is deduced that the application of reading as a subject is not embedded in the school curriculum with the exception of donor-driven intervention . . . in Kano, Bauchi and Sokoto and community-based educational projects (OBEC in Andoni, Rivers State) (Gilead 2021: 30).**

> **Re-introducing reading as subject across the country will improve learning outcomes of pupils. As it is practised in Osun State, extra lessons are being taken by the teachers for the pupils whose parents can afford little fees after the school activities from Monday to Thursday, where class teachers teach those pupils reading skills (ibid. p. 28).**

can develop reading and writing skills in a language that the pupil understands, which may be enough to put the child well ahead of his or her peers in comparable L2-medium learning environments.[15]

Such local-language medium programmes can also serve to convince parents and community members of the value of learning in the local language. Indeed, community acceptance and enthusiasm for programmes that teach children to read and write in the local language is known to be high in Africa – regardless of any obvious assessment outcomes. As an example, an L1-medium early-grade reading programme was launched in 2021 by ZOA Uganda and the Ugandan Ministry of Education and Sports, in the Pokot language community of Amudat District in eastern Uganda. The programme met with great enthusiasm among the parents and the community at large; a public launch of the newly-published P1 Pokot primer was held in the community in December 2021, accompanied by great fanfare. Programme staff have noted that, since the trial Pokot-language reading classes began in early 2022, parents have been coming and seating [sic] in the classrooms when the lessons are going on.

Parents have commented that the children are now the ones teaching them to say the names of the months and years when they get back home... . The parents are saying that the children are helping revive some of what they had stopped using many years ago as Pokot... . The children can't stop talking about what they have learned from school to their parents.[16]

This type of community response is a well-known phnomenon in local-language reading programming, and is evidence of the strong affirmation of ethnolinguistic identity that comes with the introduction of a local African language into the formal education system.

To investigate the learning and affective outcomes that accompany early-grade reading programming, the Kenyan NGO, BTL Kenya, commissioned a qualitative evaluation of a pilot L1-medium reading programme it had been implementing in 18 schools in the Pokomo, Duruma and Digo language communities of Kenya (Wangia 2021). A rapid reading assessment

> A child's reading skills are important to the success in school as they will allow them to access the breadth of the curriculum and improve their communication and language skills. The resultant effect of introducing Reading as a subject is seen in the learning outcome of the pupils. I, therefore, urge the Government across the state to introduce reading as subject in basic primary levels (ibid. p. 30).

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carried out among the learners in these schools yielded an average score of 68 per cent (Wangia 2021: 9), which rates as "meets expectations" according to the government's new competency based curriculum (CBC). No comparison data was available from schools not in the programme, but the universal keenness for the pilot projects to continue speaks to at least some level of effectiveness compared to other schools in the area. Wangia reports that the community stakeholders interviewed were unanimously pleased with the programme:

- The school principals "find the [L1-medium reading] programme very useful and are in full support of it" (Wangia 2021: 10).
- The parents interviewed "have seen marked changes in the learners who are becoming more inquisitive about the indigenous languages and are able to engage their parents in the lessons they are learning. They no longer see the learning of mother tongue as a threat to learning English as previously perceived" (ibid.).
- The PTA members expressed support of the programme, "which they say is helping the learners to become more interactive. It is also helping the indigenous languages to be

recognized and to grow. ... They strongly would like the programme to continue" (ibid. p.11).
- The county education officials "are happy with [the pilot programme] and in total support because the materials are aligned to CBC and to the MoE language policy" (ibid.).

Results of this kind help to explain the prevalence of L1-medium early-grade reading programming among education NGOs in Africa. The goals of such programmes and their implementers are not aligned so much with effective language transition in the upper primary grades, or success in secondary schools; they are primarily about facilitating learning success of some kind in the early grades through the acquisition of reading and writing skills in the L1.

In the context of Nigeria, both the L1-for-reading-only model and the L1-across-the-curriculum model can be found (in some form) in classrooms today. The 2013 NPE specifies the use of LIE as the medium of instruction across the curriculum through P3 (though only in monolingual contexts); this appears to be the accepted practice in all of the classrooms examined in the Gilead (2021) study, though with substantial

code-switching between LIE and English. At the same time, many of the internationally-funded educational interventions that have been implemented in the past decade (Table 1; see also Trudell 2018: 17-19) have focused on early-grade reading instruction, in LIE and/or English, with no provision for LIE use in subjects other than the L1 subject (where reading instruction is generally sited, in a national curriculum that lacks a reading subject).

Other than the intervention programmes, and the late-exit transition OBEC programme in Rivers State, the Gilead study found no primary schools that teach reading as a subject in either LIE or English. The report observed:

> based on findings from classes observed and opinions of Head teachers, it is deduced that the application of Reading as a subject is not embedded in the school curriculum with the exception of donor-driven intervention...in Kano, Bauchi and Sokoto and community-based educational projects (OBEC in Andoni, Rivers State) (Gilead 2021: 30).

However, interviewees in the Gilead study were enthusiastic about instituting reading as a regular curriculum subject in the primary years. One head teacher in Osun State argued that:

> Re-introducing reading as subject across the country will improve learning outcomes of pupils. As it is practised in Osun State, extra lessons are being taken by the teachers for the pupils whose parents can afford little fees after the school activities from Monday to Thursday, where class teachers teach those pupils reading skills (ibid. p. 28).

A teacher working in one of the reading intervention programmes in Sokoto State observed:

> A child's reading skills are important to the success in school as they will allow them to access the breadth of the curriculum and improve their communication and language skills. The resultant effect of introducing Reading as a subject is seen in the learning outcome of the pupils. I, therefore, urge the Government across the state to introduce reading as subject in basic primary levels (ibid. p. 30).

So referring back to Table 2, the Nigerian classroom outcomes map as follows:

- Where reading is being taught in the L1, the outcomes map roughly to the L1-reading, early-exit quadrant of Table 2. The advantages of reading skills acquisition and good affective outcomes in the classroom may be obvious; however, any longer-term integration of this knowledge into the curriculum is uncertain, as is any impact on L2-medium learning.
- The use of the L1 across the curriculum, although it is mandated by the NPE 2013 language provisions, is significantly compromised by the teacher practice of constant code-switching between English and the L1, throughout the primary grades. Thus, the advantages noted in the L1-across-the-curriculum, early-exit quadrant of Table 2 – effective content learning and good affective outcomes – are compromised in most Nigerian classrooms.

2.2. Research questions on language transition

2.2.1. (RQ 7) Where has the L1 to L2 transition process in primary grades been documented? What models have emerged from successful classroom practice even in other countries?

The effectiveness of any model of L1-L2 transition depends on several programme features. One of them is how strongly developed and supported the L1 is, in both written and oral forms. Another has to do with the age and cognitive development of the learner at the point of language transition, and a third has to do with the kind of material support and resources available to maintain learning in and about the two languages. Language transition models and practices vary widely along these lines.

In a recent study on language transition programmes in Africa, Schroeder, Mercado and Trudell (2021) provide important insight into this research question. In an effort to identify the curricular features that are most likely to lead to successful long-term learning outcomes, the authors evaluated research studies on multilingual education programmes in Africa for

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reasonable evidence of a long-term effect on children's learning. Of the 50 MLE programmes in Africa that had enough documentation to be evaluated, nine were found to have adequate evidence to be able to judge whether they were "effective" – "effectiveness" being determined based on the rate at which the learners were able to successfully transition to (L2-medium) secondary school.

In addition, from the literature on language education, the authors identified seven MLE programme features that are known to help lead to educational success for the learner (Schroeder et al 2021: 35-36):

- A minimum of six years of L1-medium instruction
- L1 medium of instruction across the curriculum
- At least one year of formal teacher training, or at least three weeks of in-service training plus coaching for the teachers
- Textbooks in L1 for all subjects, except the L2 acquisition subject

- Reading taught as a subject, in the L1, for at least four years
- Systematic oral L2 skills development for all subjects
- Use of the L1 for subject examinations

The authors then assessed the nine programmes that had adequate documented evidence, looking at documented learning outcomes as well as the presence of any of the seven features above.

Of the nine programmes assessed in this way, four were assessed as "effective" and five as "ineffective", in terms of the learners' successful transitioning to (L2-medium) secondary school (ibid. p. 36). The four programmes determined to be effective by this criterion were:

- Ethiopia's late-exit transition programme (transitioning at six to eight years);
- Mali's Bambara-language pédagogie convergente programming;

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- Nigeria's experimental Yoruba-language late-exit transition programme;
- Burkina Faso's écoles bilingues.

The most prominent feature that all four effective programmes had in common was the practice of L1-medium instruction across the curriculum for the entirety of primary school (ibid. p. 50). The five programmes considered "ineffective" by this criterion had many of the same programme features as the "effective" ones listed above, but they lacked the key features of late-exit, that is, L1-medium instruction, across the curriculum.

(Significantly, one of the four effective programmes was sited in Nigeria: The Yoruba-medium Ife Education Project of 1970-1978 [Fafunwa, Macauley and Sokoya 1989]. The Ife project demonstrated that strong, effective bilingual education programming is indeed feasible in Nigeria, if supported by both national education policy and the formal education system.)

Documentation of language transition practices in Nigerian primary school classrooms today is ongoing

Pupils' lack of mastery of English requires the use of their mother tongues well into the upper primary grades. So whether from preference, necessity or the desire to follow national policy, most primary-grade teachers routinely practice an informal form of code-switching in the classroom: speaking in English insofar as possible, and using the local language to clarify and explain English-language textbook content to the students (Trudell 2018: 32).

and extensive, including Bamgbose (2016); Amajuoyi and Ekott (2016); Hardman et al. (2008); Anota and Onyeke (2016); Ndimele (2012); and Okwonko (2014). Of primary concern in many of these sources is that, despite the provisions of the 2013 NPE, "transition" per se between L1 medium and L2 medium of instruction in P4 is not actually what is taking place in Nigerian primary schools. Instead,

Pupils' lack of mastery of English requires the use of their mother tongues well into the upper primary grades. So whether from preference, necessity or the desire to follow national policy, most primary-grade teachers routinely practice an informal form of code-switching in the classroom: speaking in English insofar as possible, and using the local language to clarify and explain English-language textbook content to the students (Trudell 2018: 32).

The Gilead study of teacher practice in the Nigerian classroom confirms this perspective. The Gilead research data on teachers' classroom behaviours indicates that primary-grade teachers routinely use a Nigerian language of instruction as well as English, and that code-switching is the primary means used for including both languages of instruction. As one teacher from Imo State explained:

We use English as well to teach [the children] in P1-P3. We introduce the ideas in English, and then break it down in the local language. ...We never speak only English, even though P6.[17]

Another teacher explained the rationale for including the L1 this way:

[Using English in the primary grades] is not actually helping...the pupils find it difficult. But when you break it down in the mother tongue, then they understand.[18]

The practice of code-switching covers all of primary grades and all subjects, from P1 to P6. Gilead data on code-switching by subject (basic science and technology, English language, mathematics, and religion, national values and others) indicates that code-switching is slightly more common in the English language subject, but that it routinely occurs

Table 3. Teacher satisfaction with pupil performance on literacy and numeracy tasks when given assignments in LIE, English, and both languages: eight states of Nigeria (Gilead 2021:133)

Language in which assignment was given	Percentage of teachers satisfied with pupil performance
LIE	71.1 – 83.6
English	20.0 - 66.1
LIE and English	60.8 - 75.5

Table 4. Teacher satisfaction with P1, P3 and P4 pupils' expression in literacy and numeracy tasks in English and LIE: average of all states and 5 states with the most diverse levels of satisfaction (based on data in Gilead 2021:137)

	% satisfaction in English	% satisfaction in LIE
Average (8 states)	54.3 - 59.5	40.5 - 45.9
Benue State	21.2 - 41.8	58.2 - 78.8
Osun State	16.2 - 20.3	79.7 - 83.8
Kano State	70.6 - 79.2	20.8 - 29.4
Sokoto State	65.6 - 86.7	13.3 - 34.4
Taraba State	80.8 - 86.7	13.3 - 19.2

in all of the subjects and across all of the states studied (Gilead 2021: 108-122).

Are these teachers aware that this practice is not compliant with the 2013 NPE language policy provisions? There are some indications that they are;[19] but overall, the teacher perspective seems to be that they are using the only means at their disposal to ensure that the L1-speaking pupils gain some kind of understanding of the L2 subject content – and that this matters more than compliance with the "letter of the law" in the NPE.

Focus group discussions in seven of the eight targeted states did indicate teachers' extensive use of the language of the immediate environment (LIE) in the P1, P3 and P4 classrooms – and throughout the primary grades, not just in P1-P3. The Gilead study also notes that in Imo (Igbo LIE), Sokoto (Hausa LIE), Rivers (no LIE specified), Taraba (Hausa LIE) and Kano (Hausa LIE) States, teachers reported using LIE more than English in the classroom. In Benue (Idoma LIE) and Bauchi (Hausa LIE) States, teachers estimated their use of LIE and English to be about the same (Gilead 2021: 166-173).[20]

Teachers reported that using LIE in the classroom, alongside English, results in greater pupil understanding than when they use English alone.[21] The perception here seems to be that English

is actually the ideal language of instruction for primary-grade learning, but that using LIE to some degree is necessary if the children are to learn the subject content.[22] The reported lack of teaching and learning materials in any language other than English, throughout the primary grades,[23] is an additional reason for this sense that English is actually the appropriate language for formal education.

Notwithstanding, teachers' perceptions are that the proficiency of P1, P3 and P4 children in literacy and numeracy tasks is higher when those tasks are carried out in LIE than when they are carried out in English (Gilead 2021: 132-135). Primary class teachers were asked to describe their level of satisfaction with pupils' performance in literacy and numeracy when assigned in the two languages. The level of teacher satisfaction with P1, P3 and P4 pupils' responses to assignments that had been given in LIE ranged from 71.1 per cent to 83.6 per cent across the eight states. Teacher satisfaction with pupil responses when assignments were given in English ranged from 20.0 per cent to 66.1per cent. Where pupil assignments were given in both LIE and English, teacher satisfaction with pupil response ranged from 60.8 per cent to 75.5 per cent (see Table 3).

These figures indicate that the more LIE is used, the better the pupils are at understanding and responding to what teachers want from them. This evidence is

supported by Gilead study data on pupil performance in literacy and numeracy tasks in English and in LIE (Gilead 2021: 138-141); the data seems to show that between 45.5 and 46.0 per cent of P4 children "demonstrate high-level of proficiency in literacy and numeracy skills in attending to complex scenarios" (p. 138) in English, vs. 65.4 per cent who demonstrate such proficiency when using LIE.[24]

Interestingly, data on teacher satisfaction with pupils' verbal expression of their understanding of concepts taught in class indicates that, overall, teachers were somewhat more satisfied with pupil expression in English than in LIE (see Table 4). This greater teacher satisfaction could have to do with the fact that English is the language of curriculum and textbook content, so that pupils' ability to use the appropriate English-language terminology is seen positively.

However, it can be seen in Table 3 that the average degree of teacher satisfaction in the two languages masks some strongly diverse levels of teacher satisfaction in five of the eight states – Benue and Osun States showing much stronger teacher satisfaction with pupil expression in LIE, while Kano, Sokoto and Taraba States showed much stronger teacher satisfaction with pupil expression in English.[25] The state-by-state teacher attitudes and expectations, as demonstrated in this strong difference in satisfaction with pupil language use, are not clear from the Gilead study.

2.2.2. (RQ 3) What are the driving factors of success or failure of existing language transition models? What elements of these transition models have enabled them to grow into models?

The three most relevant language transition models in the African primary education context are the early-exit transition, late-exit transition and maintenance (or additive) models (see definitions in section 1.2 above). The present section uses Heugh's (2011) analysis of language in education models to describe the trends and features of these common language transition models, models that have featured in formal education in Africa since independence. Although Heugh's analysis is more than a decade old, it remains highly relevant to the African educational context.

Heugh argues that the primary difference between the transition models and the maintenance/additive model has to do with the programme goal where language is concerned:

> [Transition models] have the same end goal/ objective as subtractive bilingual models – a single target language at the end of school; and the target is the second language (Heugh 2011: 114).

So, whether L1-medium of instruction ceases in P4 or is carried through all the primary grades, the aim of the transition model is that the pupil be able to learn effectively in the L2. Maintenance models, in contrast, are oriented towards maximum support for the use of the pupil's L1 as MoI, as well as building competency in the L2.

Early-exit transition

The early-exit transition model (use of an L1 MoI in the early primary years, followed by a transition to a non-L1 MoI by P3 or P4 for the remainder of formal education) is currently the most congenial to African government language policymakers. Heugh (pp. 117-118) describes a historical "convergence" in language in education policy in Africa, towards an early-exit transitional model of education. She observes that language in education practice in colonial francophone and Lusophony Africa typically featured an L2-only medium policy, whereas the extensive involvement of missionaries in the education activity in colonial Anglophone Africa tended to influence language policy towards their own priority on local languages of instruction. Since independence, both practices have given way in much of Africa to a national policy of early-exit transition from L1 medium of instruction to a non L1 medium of instruction.

Major drivers of the successful policy-level acceptance of the early-exit transition model across Africa have to do with the recognition of widespread lack of fluency in the non-L1 medium of instruction among young children, especially in rural Africa; the desire to demonstrate some level of policy support for the unique identities of African language communities (and their voters); and the fact that the model itself is a widespread policy model across the global South. It is also worth noting that the internationally-funded

> Once the treated students revert back to English instruction there is a steep fall and convergence in test scores with the control group...[which] points to the fact that local language instruction for only three years may be too little for individuals if sustainable gains in student learning is the objective (Laitin et al. 2019: 29).

early grade reading programmes that have become common over the past decade tend to focus on use of the L1 in the lower primary grades (particularly P1 and P2).

The early-exit model also results in notably better early-primary pupil learning outcomes than does L2-medium programming, as well as decreased attrition. Laitin, Ramachandran and Walter (2019) found that students in Cameroon who were taught in their L1 were 22 per cent more likely to still be in school in P3, and 14 per cent more likely to still be in school in P5.

However, the Laitin et al. research also shows that learning gains achieved in the early-exit model are not necessarily sustained through the upper primary grades:

> once the treated students revert back to English instruction there is a steep fall and convergence in test scores with the control group...[which] points to the fact that local language instruction for only three

years may be too little for individuals if sustainable gains in student learning is the objective (Laitin et al. 2019: 29).

So one driver of failure for the early-exit transition model is its pedagogical inadequacy for delivering consistently strong learning outcomes in the L2 by the end of the primary grades.

But for the most part, where this model fails in Africa is at the implementation stage. In the Nigerian context, Aaron (2018: 167) notes that a major challenge to L1-supportive education policy is "the lack of an established pedagogy of bilingual education". Early-exit policy statements are not generally supported with L1 teaching and assessment strategies, resourcing, teaching and learning materials, or teacher capacity for implementing L1-medium instruction. So, although the 2013 NPE language provisions for the primary grades endorse an early-exit transition programme, the technical, material and infrastructural support for such programming is lacking.

Another relevant driver of failure for the model, across Africa, is the lack of official sanctions for any defiance of the early-exit policy at local, provincial or national levels (Trudell and Piper 2014). Where local education stakeholders routinely ignore the NPE's mandate for early-exit transition in Nigerian primary schools, and where private schools advertise a language of instruction that flouts the policy, there are no means of forcing compliance.

Teacher opinion on the value of early-exit transition programming, as reported by the Gilead study (2021: 85), shows strong teacher support for the model in Sokoto State (72 per cent), strong non-support for it in Rivers State (92 per cent), and moderate support or non-support for it in the remaining states. The strength of support or non-support by state is

Table 5. Teacher opinion on the value of the early-exit transition model, by state (figures from Gilead 2021: 85)

State	Bauchi	Benue	Imo	Kano	Osun	Rivers	Sokoto	Taraba
Agreed or strongly agreed	43 (63%)	58 (63%)	38	59 (60%)	31	8	65 (72%)	48 (60%)
Disagreed or strongly dis-agreed	25	34	54 (59%)	39	53 (63%)	66 (92%)	25	32

> Early formal instruction in an L2 may not be as effective as a later period of intensive formal instruction, when pupils are in the later primary grades and have already developed proficiency in their L1 (Gilead 2021: 89).

indicated in Table 5: the numbers of respondents in the two categories are indicated by state, as well the opinion held by most teachers in the states by percentage of the state's respondents.

The strong support for the model among Sokoto State teachers could be related to the strong support of the state government for L1-medium learning (Gilead 2021:27). Strong non-support for the model by teachers in Rivers State is almost certainly related to the strength of the OBEC late-exit transition model being implemented there.

The Gilead study indicated general teacher support for the early-exit model (Gilead 2021: 86):

- pupils who are provided with substantial amount of mother-tongue (L1) for language of learning and teaching are able to learn and improve their skills faster in contrast to students who are transitioned quickly into English (L2) (Teacher, Bauchi State)
- in a context where children are not exposed to an L2 outside of an academic environment, introducing additional languages later, after L1

proficiency is established can be a more efficient instructional approach to learning the L2 than starting early. (Head teacher, Kano State)

Interestingly, however, a teacher in the OBEC late-exit programme in Rivers State critiqued the early-exit transition model as inadequate, stating that "initial early exit transition does not deliver strong academic benefits. It does not enable learners to learn successfully" (Gilead 2021:86). One teacher in Imo State also noted that:

> early formal instruction in an L2 may not be as effective as a later period of intensive formal instruction, when pupils are in the later primary grades and have already developed proficiency in their L1 (Gilead 2021: 89).

Late-exit transition

The late-exit transition model is much less commonly found in African national education policy or practice. At present, it is most notably found in Ethiopia's national education policy, which allows for L1-medium learning through up to P8 (Nakamura, Areaya and Meagher 2020:17); and also in Tanzania's language in education policy, which mandates the use of Swahili as the medium of instruction through the primary grades. In the Tanzanian case, Swahili is not the L1 for a significant percentage of the Tanzanian population (Mosha 2012; Rubagumya 2007; Trudell 2016); but as a prominent language of wider communication in the country, it is considered more likely to be understood by Tanzanian children than a European language of instruction such as English.

The establishment of a national late-exit transition policy generally signals serious political intent to

Table 6. Pupils proficiency assessment in literacy and numeracy, using LIE and English: Average percentage and percentage of Rivers State (OBEC) pupils

Assessed as proficient in literacy and numeracy	Average percentage of pupils, 8 states	Percentage of Rivers State (OBEC) pupils
LIE: P3	66.7	85.9
LIE: P4	65.4	84.9[30]
English: P3	45.7	64.3
English: P4	46.0	66.1

implement the policy, and that political intent is a strong driver of the policy's success. Certainly in Ethiopia, such intent has infused national education planning since the policy's establishment in 1994 (Trudell 2016: 32). The policy not only provides for L1-medium learning through up to P8; it also "allows for every language in the country to become a medium of instruction" (Ambatchew 2010: 200). This policy is widely considered to be the most progressive language in education policy in Africa, though Bogale (2009) notes that "as is the case in many other countries, implementation is not always aligned with actual policy" (Bogale 2009: 1089-1090).

In Burkina Faso, the five-year écoles bilingues are another example of late-exit transition programming being carried out in government schools as well as some private schools, as an alternative to the écoles classiques (the normal government primary schools).[27] Originally sponsored by L'Oeuvre suisse d'entraide ouvrière (Swiss Labor Assistance; OSEO) and the Ministère de l'Enseignement de Base et de l'Alphabétisation (Ministry of Basic Education and Literacy; MEBA), the programme is currently implemented in 10 languages of the country. The effectiveness and efficiency of L1-medium teaching allows the écoles bilingues programme to cover the normal 6-year primary curriculum in only five years (Trudell 2012: 372).

Obstacles to the success of late-exit transition have to do with the high level of investment needed to actually implement the policy (Heugh et al 2007: 8), the need for qualified and trained teachers for the

local languages and the L2, a generally inadequate understanding of how and when students should transition from the L1 to the L2, and the influence of stakeholders who advocate a stronger focus on L2-medium learning (Nakamura, Areaya and Meagher 2020). Issues such as which local languages will be chosen for national-level programme implementation can also be highly contentious. All of these obstacles can contribute to failed implementation.

The OBEC programme in Rivers State is the best example of late-exit transition programming in Nigeria today (Aaron 2018; Gilead 2021:18). The programme began with the establishment of the Obolo Language Committee by a group of Obolo teachers in 1978, under the auspices of Professor Kay Williamson of the Rivers Readers Project (Kari 2002:8); the aim of the language committee was to find a way to teach in Obolo in the local schools. OBEC was founded on the conviction that: (1) the teaching of Obolo should "continue all through primary education (rather than only in primary 1-3 as implied in the NPE" (Aaron 2018: 181); and (2) the language should not only be taught as a subject, but also used as the medium of instruction.

The OBEC model is unusual for late-exit programmes in that it intends to cover the nine years of Universal Basic Education, i.e. from lower primary through the three years of Junior Secondary School (JSS). Aaron, the technical director of OBEC, notes that:

> In the present system of Universal Basic Education, where "basic" extends to JSS 3, with the first official (external) examination at this point, it makes good sense to have Obolo as a medium of instruction up to that time (ibid. p.180).

This strategy is a direct result of stakeholder input; Aaron indicates that at the early stages of programme planning:

> Most people in my focus groups indicated that it would be desirable for Obolo to be used as a medium of instruction all through primary school, and a good number felt Obolo should be used beyond primary and into Junior Secondary School (JSS) or onward (ibid.).

In the present system of Universal Basic Education, where "basic" extends to JSS 3, with the first official (external) examination at this point, it makes good sense to have Obolo as a medium of instruction up to that time (ibid. p.180).

Table 7. Teacher opinion on the value of the late-exit transition model, by state (figures from Gilead 2021: 88)

State	Bauchi	Benue	Imo	Kano	Osun	Rivers	Sokoto	Taraba
Agreed or strongly agreed	15	25	27	52 (58%)	30	83 (88%)	38	18
Disagreed or strongly dis-agreed	65 (81%)	75 (75%)	63 (70%)	37	63 (68%)	11	45 (54%)	57 (76%)

The OBEC programme teachers and stakeholders indicate that the learning outcomes of the programme are higher than those of schools in surrounding areas (Gilead 2021: 89; Aaron 2018: 161). OBEC teachers contend that their students demonstrate an unusually strong ability to writing test.[28] Gilead (2021) study data support this contention: the percentage of OBEC pupils[29] assessed as proficient in literacy and numeracy in LIE was the highest of the eight states, for both P3 and P4 (p. 141); the percentage of OBEC pupils assessed as proficient in literacy and numeracy in English was the second-highest (in P3) and highest (P4) of the eight states (p. 139). In all cases, OBEC pupil performance was assessed to be at least 29 per cent above the average performance over the eight states. (see Table 6).

The primary drivers of success for OBEC have had to do with the strong political and financial support the programme enjoys from the Obolo community, the relatively small size of the language community being served, and the ongoing commitment of an experienced bilingual education consultant (Dr Aaron herself) to the programme's success. Teacher interviewees from the OBEC late-exit transition programme strongly support the model, based on their experience with the programme and the outcomes they observe (Gilead 2021: 89):

- This transitioning has affected the students of Obolo community where students from this environs [sic] are used to emerging first whenever the state government organises primary school competition across the twenty-three LGAs. (Interview respondent)
- The main goal of the late-exit model of transitioning is to facilitate understanding of all core content subjects while maintaining use of the students [sic] native language, allowing a greater transitional period during which students acquire the second language at a slower pace. (Teachers)

- It would be of great importance if Nigerian language is also emphasized and taught right from our primary schools (both private and public) up to tertiary institutions because it has been proven that native languages spur national development. (P4 teacher)

These views about the programme, along with the programme goal of using Obolo as the LoI through P9, give rise to the question of whether the OBEC programme is actually a late-exit transition programme or a maintenance programme. At this time, the transition to English-medium required of students entering secondary school puts OBEC into the late-exit category; if and as the programme continues to expand into JSS, this question could be revisited. The above OBEC interviewees certainly convey a readiness to support Obolo as the language of secondary and even tertiary education in the area.

The support expressed by OBEC teachers for this programme model is apparently not shared by teachers in other regions of the country (Gilead 2021: 88). Gilead interview data indicates that teacher opinion on the value of late-exit language transition was quite divided across the eight states (Table 7), with a much stronger opposition to this model than was expressed regarding the early-exit model (Table 5). (As in Table 5, the numbers of respondents in the two categories are indicated by state, as well the stronger teacher opinion by percentage of the state's respondents.)

The highest support for the late-exit model by far was in Rivers State (88 per cent), where the OBEC late-exit programme is being implemented. Highest non-support for the model was expressed in Imo (70 per cent), Benue (75 per cent), Taraba (76 per cent) and Bauchi (81 per cent) states. Moderate support or non-support featured in the remaining two states.

Maintenance

The maintenance (or additive) language model is largely focused on building skills and enhancing learning in the L1, throughout the primary years. The goal of this model is "high-level proficiency in the first language plus high-level proficiency in the second language" (Heugh 2011: 115). The additive aspect of the maintenance model has to do with gradually adding the L2 as a medium of instruction along with the L1, but without any diminishment of the centrality of the L1 for learning. Alidou and Brocke Utne (2011:168), assessing Mali's move towards a maintenance model in the pédagogie convergente programme, observe that:

> the maintenance of mother tongues (Bambara, Fulfulde, Sonrai, Tamajeq and Dogon) throughout the primary school years allows children to develop adequate literacy skills in their mother tongue or familiar language. With effective teaching, they can more easily transfer literacy skills developed in the familiar language into the acquisition of and development of literacy and academic skills in the official language used as language of instruction.

Another example of the maintenance model in Africa is that used among Afrikaans – and English-speaking students in South Africa, in which the L1 is the medium of instruction throughout the primary grades, and the L1 and the L2 are both used as MoI throughout the secondary grades. The model was instituted decades ago, but the practice – and its impact on learning outcomes for these learners – has remained. Heugh notes:

> During the first half of the twentieth century, the use of mother-tongue education in primary schools for speakers of Afrikaans and English and the widespread occurrence, especially in rural areas, of dual medium (simultaneous use of Afrikaans and English as media of instruction across the curriculum) for secondary schools achieved the highest levels of bilingualism the country has yet experienced. This was an example of additive bilingual education (Heugh 2011: 152).

The primary drivers of success for the maintenance model include strong political support for its implementation. The maintenance model essentially implements the policy position that the L1 is well developed enough, and important enough, to be used as the vehicle of the entire national curriculum for primary school. Its distinction from a "mother tongue/L1 education" model – most common where the L1 is a majority language – is the recognition that a language other than the L1 is also important to the student's academic and societal future.

The obstacles to the maintenance model are similarly political in nature, but also have to do with the policy and financial investment needed to implement the model. This model is rare in Africa, for just these reasons. As noted above, the possibility of the OBEC programme morphing into a maintenance programme is being discussed, but there is no indication that it is currently such a programme.

2.2.3. (RQ 6) In what ways can the transition models be replicable in other contexts? If not, why and what sort of adjustments could make these models replicable in other contexts?

The replication of language transition models from context to context has largely to do with the replicability of the policy-related, financial, social, linguistic and curricular conditions that are necessary to a given model's implementation. These are the same conditions that determine the sustainability and success of language transition models in their original implementation.

On the policy level, Trudell (2021; see also World Bank 2021: 24) argues that national language in education policy, whatever its content, tends to thrive under certain conditions:
- where the policy is seen as reflecting an existing radical new national direction, as in Ethiopia's 1994 constitutional language provisions, or South Africa's post-apartheid language in education policy of 1997;
- where it reflects a strong stance related to national identity;
- where the state is strong enough to provide resourcing for the policy, and to align other policies to support it; and
- where local appropriation of the policy aligns

with national policy, even if the national policy is not enforced.

Language policy that does not reflect the aspirations and identity of the nation's political leaders is vulnerable to frequent changes and inadequate implementation. In addition, where language policy does not resonate with local aspirations and beliefs about language, local support and implementation are likely to be negligible. Any plan to replicate a successful language transition model from one context to another must take into account these policy features of the target context.

In addition, language transition policy decisions have to align with, or at least be seen as feasible for, the realities of existing state policies and structures, including education budget allocation. This speaks to the importance of strong political backing for such policies, including support from the Ministry of Finance. National policy failure where language of instruction is concerned can often be traced to the lack of broad alignment and buy-in for the programme across the various government structures. This could be due either to a lack of thorough planning and mobilization around given language of instruction policy decisions, or to an underlying resistance to those decisions in the broader education structure. Where individual provinces or states within a nation hold the primary responsibility and resources for education policy and provision, programme alignment with the prevailing policy at those levels must be ensured.

On the sociolinguistic level, the replicability of language transition models has to do with an accurate understanding of the language attitudes and aspirations of local stakeholders in the target context, as well as any beliefs they may hold regarding language and schooling (Trudell 2021; Trudell et al 2015). Community-level mobilization can then take those attitudes, aspirations and beliefs on board and build awareness of the potential of the language transition model. A broader linking of the language transition model with the overall language policy and aspirations of the state is also crucial to the replicability of a given language transition model from one context to another.

Curricular considerations are also important in replicating a language transition model from one context to another. Alignment of the national curriculum with the requirements of the desired model is essential. Language transition programming plays out within the education policies and expectations of the nation; and where such programming is successful, it invariably supports, and is supported by, the curriculum.

In the Nigerian context as studied in Gilead (2021: 93-127), the language behaviour that has been most widely replicated in primary-grade classrooms is that of impromptu code-switching between LIE and English. Despite the fact that code-switching does not feature in official policy as such, and notwithstanding the general disapproval of the practice among Nigerian linguists, educators and programme implementers (Trudell 2018: 25), it flourishes in primary classrooms across Nigeria.

Because code-switching practices involve the use of both LIE and English in the primary classroom, they support national-level aspirations about English as well as national-level appreciation of the local languages. Code-switching also facilitates some level of compliance with the language provisions of the NPE, in contexts where the language competencies necessary for full compliance with the NPE do not exist. The primary drawback of the practice is its failure to deliver strong learning or language acquisition outcomes.

2.2.4. (RQ 2) What role could language supportive strategies, including code, switching play in facilitating transition? How could such approaches be modified from their current practice in Nigerian classrooms?

As described above, language supportive pedagogies (LSP) are "multilingual strategies that have been developed and implemented to support the learning of content and languages" in the classroom (Erling et al 2021: 11). LSP practice "takes in to account that learners need additional linguistic and cognitive support when working through a second language" (Erling et al 2012:12; see also Clegg and Simpson

2016), because they may not have the L2 fluency or vocabulary needed for learning academic content. LSP strategies include specially-designed bilingual textbooks, classroom resources, and teacher education.

The concept of translanguaging is highly relevant to LSP. Translanguaging theorists argue that multilingual learners have one cognitive system for the use of all the languages they speak:

> [T]ranslanguaging views speakers' languages as part of a single unitary system on which they draw selectively and strategically to navigate communicative contexts (Erling et al 2021: 12).

LSP involves drawing on that language system in intentional ways, to allow the pupil to learn both language and content at the same time.

As noted in section 1.2, code-switching is conceptually and practically very different from translanguaging. Code-switching is not inherently a pedagogical strategy; rather, it is a sociolinguistic practice of using more than one language or speech form in an unplanned way that is consistent with the linguistic rules of each language. Deficiency-based code-switching happens when speakers, or their hearers, are unable to express themselves well enough in one of the languages being used (Crystal 2010); this is what is happening in the primary classrooms of Nigeria, even though code-switching as a classroom practice is not institutionally or pedagogically encouraged (Akbar and Taqi 2020: 55; Trudell 2018).

[T]ranslanguaging views speakers' languages as part of a single unitary system on which they draw selectively and strategically to navigate communicative contexts (Erling et al 2021: 12).

Over 90 per cent of respondent head teachers and teachers... posited that teaching and learning, as well as transition in the medium of instruction in basic education in Nigeria can only be achieved through language supportive strategies like code-switching (ibid. p.23).

The question then arises: is the practice of classroom code-switching in the Nigerian context an LSP? It certainly appears to be used that way, whether or not the practice precisely fits the definition of LSP. The Gilead study found that code-switching is extensively used in the Nigerian primary-grade classrooms studied. In a small sample reported, teachers were observed to code-switch between LIE and English between 9 and 23 times in a 40-minute period (Gilead 2021: 104), although the raw data reported indicate that this number is almost certainly low.[31] English and mathematics were observed to be the subjects in which code-switching took place most often, across the primary grades (ibid. p.105).

The Gilead study found that code-switching is endorsed by teachers as an important classroom teaching and learning strategy for the majority of Nigerian primary pupils, who do not understand English well enough to use it as a medium of instruction. In a national context where the language of textbooks is exclusively English, teacher training is carried out in English, and examinations are conducted in English, the reality of low pupil fluency in English calls for some kind of language mediation in the classroom and for Nigerian teachers, that mediation consists of code-switching between English and LIE. The Gilead study notes that

> Over 90 per cent of respondent head teachers and teachers... posited that teaching and learning, as

> Teachers are seen as the mediators of language choice in the classroom . . . and their code-switching practices are interpreted to reflect their own lack of English fluency at least as much as the lack of fluency among the pupils (ibid. p.31).

well as transition in the medium of instruction in basic education in Nigeria can only be achieved through language supportive strategies like code-switching (ibid. p.23).

Teachers' comments on code-switching, as recorded in the Gilead study (ibid. pp.21-23), included the following:

- The learners' capabilities are not the same, some can understand things easily while for others it's very difficult and you have to make them understand. With this [situation on your hand], the application of code switching will create room for understanding among the students. (Teacher, Taraba State)
- For me, code switching in most cases happens automatically, and the learners do not find anything wrong with it. (Teacher, Taraba State)
- I personally was compelled to switch to Tiv language for teaching in the classroom by a sense of helplessness of the inability to make pupils understand the subject matter by using English [solely]. (Teacher, Benue State)
- I switch often but that depends largely on the subject and topic. Sometimes you get difficult comprehension passages that talk about complex situation [sic]. You will need to use the language of immediate environment to explain those concepts to the pupils. (Teacher, Rivers State)
- You see, when pupils seem lost, you just have no choice but to use Hausa and Luri. And again even when they give correct answers, I find myself explaining in Hausa and Luri for the benefit of those who might not have the correct

answers. (Teacher, Bauchi State)
- I want them to learn to express themselves in English. But when it comes to difficult words, sometimes I explain them in siSwati. (P3 teacher, Sokoto State)

These teacher perspectives on code-switching stand in stark contrast to the views of the Nigerian linguists, educators, policymakers and programme implementers interviewed for the Phase I study. One major challenge of code-switching that these language and education leaders articulated relates to the NPE expectations that the Nigerian student will learn not only Standard Nigerian English, but also Arabic, French and "a Nigerian language". It was argued that "attainment of such language fluency is not being facilitated by code-switching behaviours" (Trudell 2018: 30). One educator described the language-learning outcomes of code-switching in the Hausa-speaking northern regions as "corrupted Hausa, useless English" (ibid.). Another major challenge of code-switching mentioned by this group is that it does not provide the pupil with the tools needed to succeed at English-medium examinations. The support of being able to use one's L1 as needed in the classroom is unavailable when examinations are given.

An additional concern expressed by interviewees in the Phase 1 study was the likelihood that teachers are using code-switching to cover for their own lack of English fluency:

Teachers are seen as the mediators of language choice in the classroom... and their code-switching practices are interpreted to reflect their own lack of English fluency at least as much as the lack of fluency among the pupils (ibid. p.31).

The educationist group specifically argued that code-switching is related to confusion and inadequate language knowledge among students and teachers with limited English, especially when the switch between languages is not done in a deliberate fashion (ibid. p.30). This concern regarding lack of teacher fluency in English was borne out to some extent in the Gilead study, in which the study's interviews of teachers in Kano State[32] demonstrated that they were not comfortable responding to the interview

questions in English. Instead, the questions were translated into Hausa for them, and their answers were translated into English for the interviewer.

Given this disagreement between the classroom practitioners interviewed in the Gilead study and the language and education leaders interviewed in the Phase I study, it is clear that code-switching can confer both potential benefits and potential harm where pupil learning outcomes are concerned. These factors, both positive and negative, indicate that code-switching is an important site for further investigation and modification where language supportive pedagogy is concerned.

2.3. Research question on L2 language of instruction

2.3.1. (RQ 4) Is there a threshold level of L1 literacy skills and L2 oral language skills, required for introducing literacy instruction in L2 in Nigeria for successful literacy outcomes in both languages? If so, what is the threshold level?

This question is helpfully addressed in a recent language transition study report by Nakamura, Bonilla, Mekonnen, Tefera, Gebrekidan and Turner (2019). The study, which focused on Ethiopia's national MLE programme, aimed to "empirically determine optimal 'readiness' for English literacy acquisition in the multilingual educational contexts of Ethiopia" (Nakamura et al 2019:33). The study found that:

> the relationship between MT reading scores and English is not linear. In other words, if you introduce English literacy below the MT decoding threshold levels, a child is unlikely to benefit as much in terms of English reading proficiency as if English literacy instruction is introduced above these MT threshold levels (ibid.; my emphasis).

This threshold of L1 decoding ability needed for optimum literacy learning in English appears to depend on the L1, possibly due to orthographic differences between the two languages (ibid. p. 34). However, these findings provide a strong empirical basis for delaying the start of English-medium reading

> The relationship between MT reading scores and English is not linear. In other words, if you introduce English literacy below the MT decoding threshold levels, a child is unlikely to benefit as much in terms of English reading proficiency as if English literacy instruction is introduced above these MT threshold levels (ibid.; my emphasis).

instruction until the learner is a fluent reader in his or her own language.

The levels of oral English competencies required for acquiring optimum English reading skills did not show the same variation by language, in the Nakamura et al study; but it was clear that strong L1 reading skills alone, without oral English fluency, do not yield adequate English reading skills. Though the study was not able to identify a specific number of English words known, or a specific proficiency level in English, the report does point to earlier research indicating that an understanding of at least 95-99per cent of the words in an English text is required for overall text comprehension (ibid. p.35).

The role of oral L2 vocabulary acquisition in L2 reading comprehension has been studied in other contexts as well. Nation (2006) addresses the question of how much unknown vocabulary can be tolerated in a text before it interferes with comprehension. Nation's data indicated that the reader must understand 98per cent of the words in a text in order to have adequate text comprehension (p. 61). Nation also refers to Kurnia's (2003) similar study on comprehension of English-language, non-fiction text, which found that a 98per cent coverage of the words in such text allowed for adequate text comprehension.

Given the importance of L2 vocabulary for L2 reading comprehension, studies of how long it takes young learners to gain L2 vocabulary are also revealing. Nation and Waring (2012:2) found that children add about 1000 word families (each "family" consisting of the base word plus derivations and inflections) per year to their L1 repertoire, up to about 20,000 word families by the age of 20 years old. Thus, a five-year-old child beginning school will have a vocabulary of around 4000 to 5000 word families in his or her home language. Learning a foreign language does not proceed so rapidly: "a realistic target for children learning a foreign language might be around 500 words a year, given good learning conditions" (ibid.).

Applying this data to the Nigerian context, it could be assumed that most young children beginning school have very little or no exposure to English; even where their parents have some degree of fluency in the language, the home language would be what the young child is learning. Using Nation and Waring's findings, those children will enter the classroom with a vocabulary of 4000-5000 word families in their home languages, and perhaps up to 1000 word families in English. By P3, their L1 vocabulary could be up to 8000 word families (at 1000 word families gained per year), while their English vocabulary by the end of P3 might be as much as 2500 word families. In the succeeding years, even as their English language proficiency grows, the discrepancy between these learners' L1 vocabulary levels and their L2 vocabulary levels remains. These very different L1 and English

language fluency levels among Nigerian primary-grade learners help to explain the nearly universal use of code-switching in the classroom.

These findings about the acquisition of L2 fluency speak to the importance of controlling the vocabulary of L2 texts that English language learners are expected to understand; they also highlight the danger of assumptions about the utility of standard English-language textbooks for Nigerian students who have less than full fluency in the language.

So, to answer the research question, successful literacy acquisition in English requires: (1) gaining adequate L1 literacy skills before English-language reading instruction is begun, which in African language contexts generally takes about two years of well organized, programmed L1-medium reading instruction; and (2) enough oral English language acquisition (especially vocabulary-building) to help learners make sense of the L2 text they are decoding. In ideal programmatic practice, this would mean L1-medium reading instruction for at least the first two years of primary school, along with instruction on oral English that focuses on English grammar, conversation skills, and targeted vocabulary development. Year 3 could see the introduction of written English in the English subject, along with a continued L1 language arts subject through the primary years. If English language text is to be a central part of the child's learning, once they have learned to decode written English, the content of such text must be controlled so as not to exceed the language fluency of the learner.

The presence of such threshold levels in Nigeria was mentioned in the Gilead study, though no details were given:

> Findings from the analysis of data from the interview of SUBEB staff indicate that there are prescribed threshold levels of L1 literacy skills and L2 oral skills for determining literacy outcomes. However, the threshold, which is determined by the SUBEB in the various states vary [sic] (Gilead 2021:27).[33]

The Gilead study further found that "there is evidence of establishment of parameters of assessing the threshold levels but there is no evidence of its utilization" (ibid.).[34]

Findings from the analysis of data from the interview of SUBEB staff indicate that there are prescribed threshold levels of L1 literacy skills and L2 oral skills for determining literacy outcomes. However, the threshold, which is determined by the SUBEB in the various states vary [sic] (Gilead 2021:27).

Discussions

THREE

Findings on the seven research questions that frame this study prompt a number of thoughts about language transition in Nigerian classrooms. This section focuses on discussing these thoughts to make sense out of them.

3.1. Early-exit transition programming, the NPE language provisions, and teacher practice

The NPE language provisions are understood to mandate an early-exit transition model that is most commonly practised in Africa: that is, LIE medium of instruction through P3, with the international language (English, in Nigeria) taught as a subject; and transition to the international language as medium of instruction in P4. The rate at which the language transition is made in P4 is not spelled out in detail; according to the early-exit model, the use of the L2 should be gradually increased over the year, with textbooks and teacher practice supporting that gradual transition from LIE. In reality, the practice is to move directly from the L1 into an L2 as medium of instruction from one year to the next, with the expectation that teacher and pupils will be able to function adequately enough in the L2 to do so.

The data gathered from teachers in the Gilead study indicates that most of them (those who are not involved in implementing an explicitly different transition model, e.g. the OBEC late-exit model in Rivers State) support the early-exit transition model, and that they see themselves complying for the most part with the NPE language transition provisions.

However, the teachers and their pupils face some significant obstacles to successful implementation of this model. What are the obstacles?
- learning resources limited to the English language, even in the early primary grades;
- pupils' lack of English fluency, which blocks the teacher's ability to use English-language

resources and also hinders pupil success in the English-language examinations;

- teachers' variable fluency in English, which aggravates the learning situation even further.

In the face of these language challenges in the primary grades, teachers report that they resort to code-switching as a strategy for the communication and learning of curriculum content. The Gilead data acknowledges the regular and frequent use of the code-switching strategy among teachers and pupils, and not only in the early primary grades. In upper primary, where the transition to English medium of instruction is supposed to have happened, classroom fluency in English remains limited enough to require ongoing code-switching.

This strategy for teaching and learning curriculum content is yielding limited success. Gilead data (see Table 2) indicates teacher satisfaction with pupils' literacy and numeracy competencies, using English as the medium of instruction, to be as low as 20per cent. Teacher satisfaction with pupil performance in LIE is much higher – up to 83.6per cent, by the assessment of the Gilead study. It would appear that children may in fact be gaining these competencies in LIE; but since the language of textbooks and examinations is English, the classroom value of their LIE-based competencies is limited.

So it is clear that code-switching is seen as a necessary teaching strategy in the primary grades. This practice is not yielding strong learning outcomes; but on the other hand, teachers believe that forgoing code-switching would lower pupil learning outcomes even further.

How might a more thorough implementation of the early-exit transition model, as mandated in the NPE, yield stronger pupil learning? Closely following the model would involve the following features in P1-P3: (1) the availability of textbooks in LIE for all subjects; (2) all examinations in those years carried out in LIE (except for English subject examinations); (3) a strong English language learning syllabus, designed for the early grades and focused on oral English competencies (including the development of subject vocabulary); and (4) the establishment and implementation of a strong L1-subject syllabus, including both oral language development and reading instruction in LIE, to be taught across the three years of early primary.

Once the pupils move to P4, other programme features would become important, including: (1) ongoing development of language skills in LIE, in the context of the L1 subject; (2) the development of cognitive and academic language proficiency in English through a continued language learning syllabus, not simply relying on the use of the language as medium of instruction; and (3) the use of LSP strategies, including teacher training and pupil resources, that continue to build the learner's ability to learn through the L2-medium.

Effective implementation of this model would also require that teachers be allocated according to their own fluency in LIE; they would also have to have gained good literacy skills in both LIE and English. Upper primary grades teachers would need to be trained in the explicit support activities involved in LSP.

The presence of all of these features would strengthen implementation of the early-exit model considerably. Pupil performance would improve significantly, and the pupil would have some measure of preparation for transition to English-medium instruction in P4.

3.2. Late-exit transition: From proof of concept to an alternative model for learning

As earlier mentioned, the Obolo-language late-exit transition programme carried out by OBEC shows remarkable signs of success and sustainability. Pupils in OBEC are now in the upper primary grades. Curriculum for JSS is also in preparation, as are the necessary educational support mechanisms for it (e.g. teaching and learning materials, teacher preparation, testing protocols, etc.). Pupil learning has been assessed as superior to that of most primary schools in the country. The OBEC teachers and staff express both knowledge and enthusiasm about the implementation of this model in the Obolo language community, and OBEC's financial resourcing is largely provided by the Obolo community itself.

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OBEC has established a real-time proof of concept for the late-exit model of minority language-medium learning in Nigeria. The programme demonstrates the potential of the model for achieving strong learning outcomes in primary school, and also the crucial role of committed programme staff as well as the broader language community in a programme of this kind.
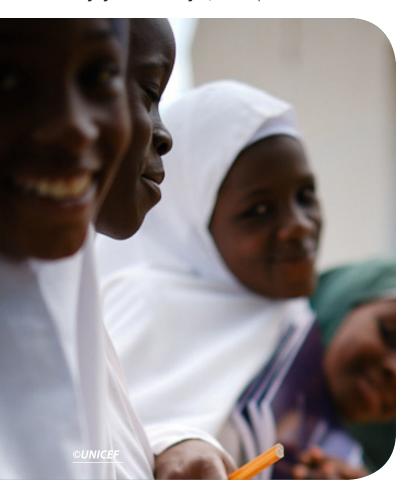
Could the OBEC programme be the first of more late-exit transition programmes in Nigerian languages? It seems possible, particularly given the strong sense of cohesion in many Nigerian language communities and the positive response shown by the state and federal education authorities to the OBEC programme. However, the central requirements for further late-exit programmes would include strong personal commitment to each programme by the staff and the local language community, as well as linguistic and educational expertise that is focused in a long-term way on the language, the curriculum and the community.

Given this programme's remarkable development so far, its support and documentation are crucial not only by its implementers, but by Nigerian educationists in the region and at national levels as well. In many ways, OBEC is "going it alone" as a language in education model; this makes its successes more impressive, but also challenging to achieve, maintain and replicate.

3.3. Language-supportive pedagogy: Transforming classroom practice

As described earlier in this report, language-supportive pedagogy (LSP) consists of strategies for helping to meet the challenge of the mismatch between the language demands of the L2 curriculum, textbooks and teacher talk and the pupils' own linguistic repertoires. These strategies focus on using the pupils' entire inventory of language competencies in intentional ways, to enhance both content learning and L2 language acquisition. Pilot work on LSP in Rwanda, described by Milligan, Clegg and Tikly (2016), included the development of textbooks featuring easier English, the inclusion of Kinyarwanda text to assist in the pupils' learning, and teacher-led activities that would encourage bilingual learning. Assessment of the pilot indicated that these strategies made a substantial difference in pupil learning.

In Nigerian classrooms, code-switching represents teachers' intuitive, individual attempts to tackle this same obstacle to learning. Overall this strategy is not highly regarded by professionals in the field, nor has it been found to be highly effective for promoting pupil learning, for a range of reasons also described above. But what if this improvised use of two languages of instruction in the Nigerian classroom were to be standardized, resourced, and included in a broader set of LSP strategies, such as those described above,

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> The medium of instruction in the primary school shall be the language of immediate environment for the first three years in monolingual communities. During this period, English shall be taught as a subject... . From the fourth year, English shall progressively be used as medium of instruction and the language of immediate environment and French and Arabic shall be taught as subjects (2013: 8).

providing a stronger and more effective means of supporting student learning?

Moving from an informal, improvised code-switching approach to a more intentional and structured strategy for supporting language and content learning would require backing and resourcing from Nigerian education authorities. Teacher capacity-building in LSP strategies, and an understanding of how such strategies are both similar to and different from code-switching strategies, would be a central task. The development of teaching and learning resources for LSP would also be important.

The prevalence of code-switching behaviours in classrooms across Nigeria indicates that the language mismatch problem is a serious obstacle to learning. A focus on standardizing, formalizing and resourcing this improvised attempt to help pupils learn could transform the primary-grade classroom into places of effective learning – of both subject content and the L2.

3.4. LIE versus L1: How big a problem?

As noted above, the 2013 NPE guidance on language of instruction in the primary grades indicates that:

> The medium of instruction in the primary school shall be the language of immediate environment for the first three years in monolingual communities. During this period, English shall be taught as a subject... . From the fourth year, English shall progressively be used as medium of instruction and the language of immediate environment and French and Arabic shall be taught as subjects (2013: 8).

In monolingual communities, the guidance on LoI in the lower primary grades is fairly easy to follow, since the choice of LIE does not pose a problem. However, in a more multilingual area (which describes a large portion of the populated areas of Nigeria), the questions arise: Do these language provisions still hold? And how is LIE determined?[35] The NPE itself gives no guidance on how this might be done; and for better or worse, the removal of Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba from the NPE as privileged languages of instruction has thrown the choice wide open for

parents, communities and education authorities. In this environment, it is no surprise if some communities opt for English-medium instruction for their children, instead of consenting to a Nigerian language of instruction which is not their own.

The Gilead study did not give significant attention to this issue, but presumably the burden of navigating this language of instruction choice falls on the code-switching teacher who is trying to find a means of communicating English-medium curriculum content to pupils of one or more L1. It seems clear that any serious attempt to strengthen language in education policy and practice in Nigerian primary classrooms must take on this issue of LIE choice in multilingual classrooms, and find a way to make it work for Nigerian learners of diverse language backgrounds.

3.5. Reading instruction and the Nigerian curriculum

Research around the world indicates that strong literacy skills – both reading and writing – underpin successful learning in the formal education system. In the last decade, many large international education resource providers, including UNICEF, FCDO, the World Bank, USAID, the Gates Foundation and more, have intensified their focus on support for reading programming in the early grades of formal schooling. Development programme implementers such as the British Council, SIL, Save the Children, RTI, FHI360, AIR, Creative Associates, Chemonics and many others are carrying out ground-breaking research and programming around the acquisition and maintenance of both L1 and non-L1 literacy skills by pupils in Africa and elsewhere.

As reading research and programme activity have expanded, much is being learned about the modalities of reading and writing in communities of the global South. One of the key learning points, for both funders and implementers of reading programming, is the central role of language of instruction in effective literacy learning.

Nigeria's policy support for local language-medium instruction allows early-grade pupils to use their home languages (or a Nigerian LIE) for learning. However, what is still missing is a clear recognition

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of the crucial role of reading instruction in Nigerian languages for effective learning outcomes. As of the writing of the Phase 1 study, NERDC was working with national stakeholders and international education programmes in Nigeria to develop a national reading framework (Trudell 2018: 19). As this effort moves forward, it should provide guidelines for reading pedagogy and build teachers' capacity to teach reading. It is hard to overstate the value of this and other activities that build strong reading pedagogy for primary-grade learners. At the same time, it must be emphasized that learning to read and understand written text must be done in a language that the pupil actually understands.

3.6. Reading programme interventions: What is being learned

Some early-grade reading interventions have been carried out in Nigeria by international funders and programme implementers since 2010. At least 10 early grade reading assessments (EGRAs) have been carried out since 2010, five of them in English and five in Hausa (Trudell 2018:14).

These projects have generated enormous amounts of new knowledge for programme support and delivery. They have also strengthened state- and local-level capacity in early-grade reading programming. Most of the reading interventions (and the Nigerian-language EGRA assessments) have focused on the Hausa-speaking language community; still, some gains are evident from these programme interventions beyond Hausa-medium reading. In the case of NEI Plus, the results of collaboration with the NERDC and the National Commission for Colleges of Education to develop a national reading framework could be very helpful for pupils across the nation. As another example, the scaffolding method for supporting student learning, used in some programme interventions (Gilead 2021: 18), could be adopted on a wider scale to help improve pupil learning outcomes. The broader integration of this type of best practice into national practice and policy would be beneficial.

Recommendations

FOUR

The findings of this report suggest the following recommendations for follow-up action on language transition in Nigeria.

4.1. Clarity of policy on language and learning

4.1.1. Ensure that national policy on language and learning addresses the concerns of parents for their children's adequate mastery of English, as well as the central role of the L1 in learning at the primary grade level.

4.1.2. Establish a national policy stance on the identification and choice of "language of the immediate environment/community" in multilingual classrooms.

4.1.3. Ensure the establishment of a national education policy that supports the crucial role of reading instruction in Nigerian languages for effective learning outcomes.

4.2. Teaching and learning materials for the primary grades

4.2.1. Identify and assess the teaching and learning materials (TLMs) available for primary-grade pupils, in Nigerian languages and in English. Assess the materials for the range of subjects they cover, their appropriateness for the grade level intended (including the level of difficulty of the language), and their adequacy for delivering the subject content. Look especially for any reading instructional materials. Revise and improve TLMs as indicated by the assessment.

4.2.2. Identify and assess any textbook series and resources being used for English language learning in the primary grades. Assess the adequacy and appropriateness of any English-subject curriculum available, for building cognitive and academic proficiency in the English language among Nigerian

primary grade learners. Revise and improve English language subject materials as indicated by the assessment.

4.3. Curriculum assessment

4.3.1. Identify and assess any English language-learning curriculum that exists for primary-grade pupils, for its ability to build an adequate level of cognitive and academic proficiency in English to support language transition in upper primary.

4.3.2. Identify the curriculum mechanisms in place for building reading and writing skills among primary grade pupils. If none exist, develop them and train teachers in their use. Ensure that Nigerian-language reading and writing skills are targeted in the curriculum, as well as English skills.

4.4. Primary-grade teacher capacity-building

4.4.1. Identify and assess any existing standards for oral and written English-language proficiency, and for written proficiency in LIE, for primary-grade teachers. Strengthen these standards if needed, and establish means for the teachers to meet the standards.

4.4.2. Ensure that lower primary-grade teachers in particular are fluent speakers, readers and writers of LIE that is in use where they are assigned.

4.4.3. Build teacher support and capacity for L1-medium instruction, especially in the lower primary grades, including the provision of L1 textbooks as noted in recommendation 4.2.1 above and teacher capacity to use them.

4.5. Programme support and collaboration: early-exit transition

4.5.1. Strengthen material and policy support for early-exit transition programming. Build on existing positive national policy support and teacher buy-in for the model, and work towards the following: (1) the availability of textbooks in LIE for all subjects; (2) all examinations in P1-P3 carried out in LIE; (3) a strong English language learning curriculum, designed for the early grades and focused on oral English competencies (including the development

of school-based vocabulary); (4) a strong syllabus for reading instruction in LIE, to be taught across the three years of early primary; (5) ongoing development of language skills in LIE through upper primary, as part of the L1 subject curriculum.

4.5.2. Build understanding and support among parents and communities, for the use of LIE as medium of instruction in the early grades. Develop a communication strategy for parents and communities, that provides a clear rationale for this model. Emphasize the value of learning in a language that the pupil understands in the early primary grades, and its role in the pupil's success in later grades where English is the medium of instruction.

4.5.3. Investigate and assess possible language supportive pedagogy strategies for upper primary grades in the early-exit transition programmes, that will continue to build the learner's facility with the L2 and the skills needed to learn through L2-medium. LSP strategies could include teacher training for LSP, pupil textbooks and other resources. (See recommendation 4.7 below.)

4.6. Programme support and collaboration: Late-exit language transition

4.6.1. Engage with stakeholders and staff of the OBEC pilot late-exit transition programme on how such a programme could be supported, documented and possibly replicated elsewhere in Nigeria. Commit to documenting what is happening in the OBEC pilot, including how community support for the programme has come about. Carefully choose a few other communities for replication, and give explicit attention to building community support for a late-exit programme.

4.6.2. Consider how a late-exit language transition model could be included in the language provisions of the NPE.

4.7. Language supportive pedagogy

4.7.1. Establish a pilot programme for LSP that is based on what has been learned in LSP programmes in other countries of sub-Saharan Africa, to build expertise

in, and support for, its introduction into the upper primary grades of early-exit language transition programming.

4.7.2. Carry out a broader process for intentionally moving current classroom code-switching practices to more formalized and supported LSP practices; include teacher engagement and training, coaching and monitoring processes.

4.8. Reading instruction

4.8.1. Invest resources into an increased curricular focus on reading instruction, in Nigerian languages as well as in English (at the appropriate grade levels). Such focus would include policy-level action, curriculum revision, reading TLM development and teacher capacity-building for reading instruction.

4.8.2. Set up mechanisms for intentional learning from the experience of early-grade reading instruction interventions in Nigeria, and for applying the knowledge gained to supporting and implementing reading instructional programming in all Nigerian schools.

4.9. Nigerian languages of instruction

4.9.1. Facilitate a discussion with policy makers and community representatives, on how to negotiate the number of LIE that can realistically be supported in local primary education.

4.9.2. Develop a school language mapping protocol that can be used to determine the languages most viable for use as LIE in a given region or state.

4.9.3. Give attention to modifying the 2013 NPE, to clarify the Nigerian language choices available in early primary grades.

Some suggested research questions to follow up

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FIVE

Given the research findings described above, Nigeria could be the proving ground for some important new language in education initiatives. NPE provisions support the use of Nigerian languages of instruction in P1-P3; most primary-aged children appear to have such limited English fluency that they need L1-medium instruction of some kind, and the Gilead data indicates a certain level of community acceptance of local language use in the classroom as well. Equally important is the widespread corps of primary-grade teachers who regularly navigate key issues around language and instruction.

A few potential initiatives are outlined below, framed as research questions.

5.1. What are the best learning outcomes that the early-exit language transition model can provide? How could that be done?

This move to develop and implement the most effective early-exit programme possible should be based on the specific recommendations made in sections 4.5 and 4.8 above, and specifically:

- assisting teachers to move from L1/L2 code-switching to L1-medium teaching and learning, from P1-P3, in all subjects;
- developing L1-medium subject textbooks for P1-P3, in accordance with the NPE;
- piloting language supportive pedagogy

strategies from P4-P6;
- establishing reading in the local language as a curriculum subject, beginning in P1; and
- putting an English as a second language curriculum in place from P1-P6, emphasizing oral English in the early grades.

5.2. Could late-exit language transition be a viable option in Nigeria?

The Yoruba-language Ife Primary Education Research Project of 1970-1976 (Fafunwa et al 1989), and the current Obolo-language Obolo Bilingual Education Centre described above are both viable models for late-exit programming in Nigeria. Testing to see whether late-exit programming could be established more broadly in Nigeria might begin with a careful

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study of what has made these two programmes successful, and what pitfalls they experienced or are experiencing. The next step would involve finding a few other communities that are interested in such a programme,[36] and ensuring state and federal level support for these new programmes. Strategies for replicating the two programmes mentioned, and avoiding the pitfalls they have faced, could then be developed and tried in the context of one or more other language communities. Time would need to be built into these new late-exit programmes, to allow for multi-year results to be evident.

5.3. How thoroughly can L1-medium reading instructional programming be implemented across the country, to reach the most children?

Acting on this question will have several components.

- At the policy level, early-grade reading needs to be featured prominently in the "Nigerian language" subject of the national curriculum for P1-P3.

- The appropriate national framework/curriculum needs to be established for reading in Nigerian languages.
- At the implementation level, reading instruction programming should be developed and rolled out in multiple languages, state by state, with the following features:
  - teaching and learning materials development in the target languages for P1-P3;
  - teacher capacity-building for using those materials to teach reading and writing; and
  - development of the needed coaching and monitoring support needed for programmes to function successfully.

The choice of languages for this programme would need to be supported by means of school language mapping in the target areas, mobilization of the communities that speak the target languages, and establishment or review of the orthographies of the target languages to ensure that learning to read in them is relatively easy for the lower primary children.

Conclusion

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The language transition realities in Nigerian primary schools hold both challenges and opportunities. Though there are many obstacles to successful primary-grade learning in Nigerian languages and English, the potential for effective language transition programme implementation and support certainly exists. With assistance from technical experts, and programmatic support from international allies in education, Nigeria's education leaders can make the changes needed for stronger, more effective language transition programmes in every primary school in the country.

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1. The study was funded as part of the FCDO/UK Aid's GEP3 programme.
2. The Gilead 2021 study also references two general learning strategies used extensively as language transition models: the Teaching at the Right Level approach, and scaffolding. However, these two learning strategies, while they can provide a facilitative environment for language transition as well as other learning objectives, are not themselves language transition models. For that reason, they are not included in this report.
3. Kano Literacy and Mathematics Accelerator (KaLMA) | British Council; Low-tech home-based learning support for children in Kano State, Nigeria - The Education and Development Forum (UKFIET).
4. Research question 5 as posed in the ToR also includes a second question: "What transition models are used?" This question is answered in the larger context of the four language transition questions.
5. The problem also extends beyond the eight states studied. In a survey on language of instruction in Zamfara State, 93 of the 100 teachers surveyed reported not having the necessary materials for teaching in the local languages (Ibrahim and Gwandu 2016, in USAID 2021: 6).
6. Gilead audio file: FGD Sokoto.wma; Gilead video file: Rivers State.3gpp.
7. Gilead audio file: FGD Beneue(C&B).wma [sic
8. Gilead video file: BAUCHI- INTERACTION WITH PARENTS.
9. Gilead audio file: FGD Sokoto (teacher).wma.
10. Gilead audio file: FGD Beneue(C&B).wma.
11. Gilead audio file: FGD Sokoto (teacher).wma [content mis-labelled]
12. Ibid.
13. Gilead audio file: IMO STATE.
14. The exclusive focus on literacy instruction in the local language also has roots in education interventions by NGOs and missions over many decades. Where populations were highly monolingual and had no experience of formal schooling at
15. Trudell's (2012) study of the centre á passerelle programme in Burkina Faso found that children who had taken the nine

month programme were routinely testing into P4 of the traditional primary schools.
16. Correspondence with Lydia Teera, Pokoot early grade reading project manager 20 April 2022, regarding Pokot teacher reports on early reading classes.
17. Gilead audio file: Imo State.
18. Ibid.
19. Gilead audio file: Taraba teachers 1.
20. Osun State data was not reported in this part of the study.
21. E.g. see Gilead audio files: Taraba teachers 1.; Imo State
22. See teachers' comments on their own code-switching practices, section 2.2.4 below.
23. Gilead audio file: Taraba teacher 1.
24. The Gilead study on this point is a bit difficult to interpret.
25. This is especially perplexing, since the Kano State teachers in particular responded to the Gilead interviewer almost entirely in Hausa rather than English (audio file: Kano Teachers 3). The context would suggest that this was due to a lack of English fluency among these teachers.
26. Interestingly, the Gilead study reports that the Sokoto State government "issued a statement prescribing penalty for no adherence to the use of LiE in the lower primary levels P1-P3" (Gilead 2021: 27). In the Gilead audio data file, however, Sokoto parents clarify that this statement actually is more of an attempt to motivate and encourage the teachers to use the L1, rather than imposition of a punitive measure. Even so, it is an unusual display of government expectations where L1-medium learning is concerned.
27. Personal communication with Ms. Béatrice Konfe, senior francophone literacy consultant, SIL Africa Learning & Development, 11 April 2022.
28. Gilead audio file: Rivers teachers 1.
29. The Gilead report indicates that all of the schools visited in Rivers State were OBEC schools (Gilead 2021: 116-117).
30. Rivers State is in general a more multilingual environment than many of the northern Nigerian states, and that could account for the Rivers pupils' better English-language performance. However, the relatively high performance in the LIE recorded for Rivers pupils indicates that the stronger learning outcomes are not due only to greater English

proficiency.

30. The study's raw data (file name: Copy of Gilead data_V2_27042021.xlsx) appears to indicate a much higher incidence of code-switching, with up to 30 instances per class recorded. Also, additional instances of "translanguaging" were recorded, which in the circumstances can almost certainly be considered as additional code-switching behaviours. (No definition of the term "translanguaging" is given in the Gilead 2021 report.) Adding the two types of behaviours raises the number of such instances considerably – to as high as 41 instances per 40-minute class session.

31. Gilead audio files: Kano teacher 1, Kano teacher 2, Kano teacher 3.

32. A Gilead data file indicates that 28 SUBEB interviewees representing all eight states were asked, "Is there a threshold of performance in the LIE literacy and English oral skill that shows the pupils met the set literacy goals?" All responded "yes", except the two Benue State interviewees who said "no." (subeb_evaluation.xlsx).

33. A Gilead data file indicates that 28 SUBEB interviewees representing all eight states were asked, "Is there a threshold of performance in the LIE literacy and English oral skill that shows the pupils met the set literacy goals?" All responded "yes", except the two Benue State interviewees who said "no." (subeb_evaluation.xlsx).

34. The author's attempts to elucidate this issue further were unsuccessful.

35. Olagbaju and Akinsowon (2014: 25) ask the same question about identifying the LIE in multilingual settings.

36. Near the end of the writing of this report, the research team was made aware of a group of six language communities in Plateau State and how the Nigerian organization Conference of Autochthonous Ethnic Nationalities Communities Development Associations (CONECDA; CONAECDA - Wikipedia) is sponsoring the development of L1-medium education programming in them. As of this moment, readers have been developed in four of the six languages. The intention of this initiative is to pilot early- or late-exit transition primary classes. One could imagine such grassroots interest in local language-medium learning evolving into programmes similar to OBEC, if the technical and community support were available.

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