Language Policy in Rwanda: Shifting Linguistic and Educational Landscape

Pamela Pearson

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ABSTRACT

In the two decades since the 1994 Genocide, Rwanda has experienced pervasive societal change, due in large part to ambitious policymaking in sectors ranging from business to public health to education. Extensive language policies have also been enacted, including a 2008 Cabinet resolution shifting the medium of instruction (MOI) in all public schools from Kinyarwanda and French to English (Republic of Rwanda, 2008). The promotion of English in a formerly francophone nation inspired the present study seeking a closer look at the current state of language planning and policy (LPP) in Rwanda. Toward that end, *ethnography of language policy* (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007) fieldwork, consisting primarily of linguistic landscape analysis, teacher interviews, and classroom observations, was carried out in Southern Province,
Rwanda throughout the 2011-2012 academic year. Four research questions addressing various aspects of the 2008 Cabinet resolution are answered herein through three distinct but interrelated research articles.

The first article investigates the current linguistic ecology of Rwanda, utilizing linguistic landscape analysis methodology to explore language use in public spaces. Diachronic comparative analysis uncovers language shift trends (e.g., major English gain, major French loss, negligible Kinyarwanda shift) that converge with national policy initiatives – the language ecological implications of which (e.g. language loss, linguistic diversity) are discussed. The second article reports mainly on the ethnographic interview data. The interviews, conducted with teachers (n = 8) in two public primary schools and two public secondary schools, illuminate (a) the layers and spaces in Rwandan MOI policy and practice, as well as (b) the local realities associated with implementing national language-in-education policy without an articulated plan. The third article, informed predominantly by classroom observation at the four research sites, examines issues related to MOI policy implementation in Rwanda (e.g., classroom language use; English medium instruction vs. mother tongue instruction) as well as its impacts on education (e.g., disparate student access to content and language) through discourse analysis of classroom language use by teachers and students. Taken together, these three “snapshots” form a panorama of the LPP situation of contemporary Rwanda, exposing the shifts occurring across the past five-year period in the Rwandan linguistic and educational landscape.

INDEX WORDS: Language-in-education policy and planning, Ethnography of language policy, Medium of instruction, Mother tongue instruction, Classroom language use, Linguistic landscape analysis, Language ecology, Language shift
LANGUAGE POLICY IN RWANDA: SHIFTING LINGUISTIC AND EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE

by

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DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this work to the indomitable public school teachers and students of Rwanda, both past and present; to my intrepid grandmother Mary, who taught in a one-room schoolhouse in rural Iowa when she was a young woman; to my first teacher, my unfailingly supportive mother, Bonnie, who instilled in me the value of education, although she personally didn’t have the opportunity to pursue it beyond high school; and in loving memory of Pearl, a precious little girl who never got to see the inside of a classroom.
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First and foremost, I would like to recognize the Department of Applied Linguistics and ESL for admitting me to the doctoral program back in 2007 and for supporting me and my work over the better part of a decade. The 12th floor of 34 Peachtree was the best academic home I could have ever imagined, and I loved every minute of the long hours I spent at Workstation 14 in the GTA Room.

Among the many who shaped my academic career during my time at GSU, primary appreciation goes to my co-chairs, Gayle Nelson and Diane Belcher. Gayle took a chance on me when she took me on as her advisee, and she has been with me every step of the way ever since – including some across Rwanda and over the Virungas and back. You’ve been “fabulous,” Gayle, and the phrase ‘thank you for everything’ feels inadequate to express how grateful I am to and for you, but I really do thank you for everything. Dr. Belcher, it has been an honor to study with you and to have your input on this project. I hope you can see your influence in my work. I made many research decisions based on issues we read about or discussed in QUAL Methods.

Huge gratitude also goes to my committee members, Viviana Cortes and Eric Friginal of the Department of AL/ESL at GSU, and David Cassels Johnson of the College of Education at the University of Iowa. Throughout this pursuit, your support, flexibility, patience, and feedback have been greatly appreciated. Viviana, you have played a role in my academic career since January 2004, when I began your Discourse Analysis course at ISU; I am so lucky to have you as a constant in my life. Eric, your enthusiasm and encouragement have always been appreciated. And Dave, it has been an honor to have you serve on my committee. Your work – particularly your colloquium on Ethnography of Language Policy at AAAL 2010 – has inspired this project more than any other scholarship. I hope my work lives up to your vision for your framework.
In the Department of AL/ESL, I was fortunate to be perennially surrounded by truly outstanding faculty, colleagues, and students. Beyond my committee, I recognize graduate faculty present and past: YouJin Kim, for mentoring me in SLA research and for fun and productive work sessions at White Windmill; Stephanie Lindemann, who recommended I look into the State Department Fulbright in addition to the Department of Education Fulbright-Hays, whose international apportionment ended up getting cut in 2011; John Murphy, Sara Cushing, Lucy Pickering, and Nan Jiang. I enjoyed your classes, and I learned so much from each of you.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ........................................................................................................ v

LIST OF ACRONYMS ........................................................................................................ xvii

LIST OF TABLES .................................................................................................................. xviii

LIST OF FIGURES ................................................................................................................ xix

1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION .............................................................................................. 1

1.1 The policy ...................................................................................................................... 2

1.2 The context .................................................................................................................... 2

1.2.1 The Rwandan Genocide .......................................................................................... 4

1.2.2 Language and Rwandan society ............................................................................. 7

1.2.3 Education and languages-in-education in Rwanda .............................................. 16

1.3 The framework .............................................................................................................. 19

1.3.1 Language planning and policy ............................................................................. 19

1.3.2 Ethnography of language policy .......................................................................... 24

1.4 The study ....................................................................................................................... 31

1.4.1 Purpose of the study .............................................................................................. 32

1.4.2 Context and funding .............................................................................................. 34

1.4.3 Methodological matters ...................................................................................... 35

1.4.4 Ethical considerations ......................................................................................... 48

1.5 The plan ......................................................................................................................... 49
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>FIRST ARTICLE</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Background</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1</td>
<td>Language policy in Rwanda</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2</td>
<td>Linguistic ecology</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.3</td>
<td>Linguistic landscape analysis</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.4</td>
<td>Rationale for surveying the Rwandan linguistic landscape</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Exploring linguistic ecology in Rwanda</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1</td>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2</td>
<td>Data analysis</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Linguistic landscape findings</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.1</td>
<td>Distribution of languages on storefronts</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.2</td>
<td>Shifting linguistic landscape</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Language policy and linguistic ecology in Rwanda</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.1</td>
<td>Language policy and language shift in Rwandan society</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.2</td>
<td>The current linguistic ecology of Rwanda and implications for the future</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>References</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.8.1 Appendix A: Complete listing of storefronts along the main road.......... 102

2.8.2 Appendix B: Complete listing of storefronts on back roads by main area .. 104

2.8.3 Appendix C: Diachronic evidence of Kinyarwanda glossed with English... 105

2.8.4 Appendix D: Diachronic evidence of French replaced by English............. 106

2.8.5 Appendix E: Diachronic evidence of French and Kinyarwanda replaced by
English............................................................................................................. 107

2.8.6 Appendix F: Example of public vs. private signage priorities................. 108

3 SECOND ARTICLE...................................................................................... 109

3.1 Introduction.............................................................................................. 109

3.2 The Rwandan language-in-education policy landscape......................... 111

3.2.1 Rwandan linguistic landscape............................................................. 111

3.2.2 Rwandan educational landscape......................................................... 112

3.2.3 Rwandan language-in-education policy landscape ............................... 112

3.3 Exploring medium of instruction policy shift in Rwanda ....................... 114

3.3.1 Research sites and participants........................................................... 114

3.3.2 Data collection and analysis................................................................ 116

3.4 Local teacher perceptions of national language policy............................ 117

3.4.1 Sudden nature of the policy................................................................. 117

3.4.2 Mandatory nature of the policy............................................................ 118

3.4.3 Political and economic reasons for the policy....................................... 119
3.5 Layers and spaces in Rwandan medium of instruction policy and practice

121

3.5.1 Implementational spaces ........................................ 122

3.5.2 Ideological spaces ................................................... 128

3.6 The realities of implementing language-in-education policy without a plan

133

3.6.1 Reality 1: Policy travels unpredictably ....................... 134

3.6.2 Reality 2: Policy impacts students ......................... 134

3.6.3 Reality 3: Policy carries high stakes ...................... 136

3.6.4 Reality 4: Policy without planning leads to policy revision ...... 137

3.7 Conclusion ........................................................................ 138

3.8 Notes ................................................................................. 140

3.9 References ......................................................................... 141

4 THIRD ARTICLE .................................................................. 146

4.1 The Rwandan language-in-education policy context .................. 147

4.1.1 Language-in-education policy in Rwanda ...................... 149

4.1.2 Medium of instruction policy and practice in East Africa .......... 150

4.1.3 Mother tongue instruction vs. English medium instruction ........... 153

4.1.4 Purpose of the present study ........................................ 156
4.2 Exploring the impacts of national language policy on local educational contexts 157

4.2.1 Conceptual framework and research design .................................................. 157

4.2.2 Methods ........................................................................................................ 159

4.3 Language-in-education practice in two Rwandan primary schools ............. 163

4.3.1 Rural Primary School .................................................................................... 163

4.3.2 Urban Primary School .................................................................................. 170

4.4 Impacts of English medium instruction in Rwanda .................................. 177

4.4.1 Variation in teacher language use across classroom contexts .................. 177

4.4.2 Non-acquisition of language and content .................................................... 180

4.4.3 Detraction from quality education goals ....................................................... 182

4.5 Conclusion ...................................................................................................... 184

4.6 Notes ............................................................................................................... 185

4.7 References ....................................................................................................... 186

4.8 Appendices ..................................................................................................... 198

4.8.1 Appendix A: Lesson transcript – Angelique .............................................. 198

4.8.2 Appendix B: Lesson transcript – Emmanuel .............................................. 202

4.8.3 Appendix C: Lesson Transcript – Justine .................................................. 205

4.8.4 Appendix D: Lesson Transcript – Peter .................................................... 210

5 OVERALL CONCLUSION ..................................................................................... 215
5.1 Shifting linguistic and educational landscape .............................................. 215

5.1.1 Retrospective on the research process and outcomes ............................. 215

5.2 Taking stock of the 2009 language-in-education policy ............................... 218

5.2.1 Constraints, contributions, and future directions ................................. 218

5.2.2 Coda ........................................................................................................ 226

GENERAL REFERENCES .................................................................................. 228

GENERAL APPENDICES .................................................................................. 241

General Appendix A: Ethnographic interview guides ....................................... 241

General Appendix B: Nine-month research timeline (by month & week) ........ 244

General Appendix C: Informed consent tool ..................................................... 246

General Appendix D: Republic of Rwanda research permit .............................. 248

General Appendix E: Permission for reuse of second article ......................... 250
**LIST OF ACRONYMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EAC</td>
<td>East African Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELP</td>
<td>Ethnography of language policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMI</td>
<td>English medium instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>LPP</td>
<td>Language planning and policy/language policy and planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>MINEDUC</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOI</td>
<td>Medium of instruction</td>
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<td>NCDC</td>
<td>National Curriculum Development Centre</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organization</td>
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<td>National University of Rwanda</td>
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<td>Teacher Service Commission</td>
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<td>UPS</td>
<td>Urban Primary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS</td>
<td>Urban Secondary School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. MOI and languages as a subject: 1996 reform and 2008 resolution.................. 18
Table 2. Summary of research questions and data collection and analysis methods........ 37
Table 3. Architectures of the articles ........................................................................... 52
Table 4. Languages on storefronts of Butare main road and back roads, 2011-2012........ 65
Table 5. Diachronic comparison of languages on storefronts along main road.............. 66
Table 6. Diachronic comparison of languages on storefronts on back roads ............... 68
Table 7. Overview of participants ............................................................................ 116
Table 8. NCDC weekly time allocation (2010) .......................................................... 148
Table 9. Rural Primary School focal participants ...................................................... 165
Table 10. Urban Primary School focal participants .................................................. 172
Table 11. English language use by teachers in Rwandan classrooms ...................... 178
## LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1. Rwanda, on the African continent ................................................................. 3
- Figure 2. Rwanda, in relation to neighboring countries .................................................. 3
- Figure 3. Rwanda, on the “Linguistic Maginot Line” .................................................... 15
- Figure 4. Inaugural ELT symposium in Rwanda ............................................................. 48
- Figure 5. Map of main road and major areas of Butare ................................................... 62
- Figure 6. Distribution of languages on storefronts ......................................................... 65
- Figure 7. Diachronic trends of monolingual signs on main road .................................... 67
- Figure 8. Diachronic trends of monolingual signs on back roads ................................ 68
- Figure 9. Distribution of languages on storefronts including ambiguous items .......... 80
- Figure 10. Final distribution of languages on storefronts, 2011-2012 ............................ 81
- Figure 11. Huye District Office in 2009 (Photo credit: Vervimine Minéraux) ............ 105
- Figure 12. Huye District Office in 2011 ........................................................................ 105
- Figure 13. University Bookshop in 2009 (Photo credit: Vervimine Minéraux) .......... 106
- Figure 14. University Bookshop in 2011 .................................................................... 106
- Figure 15. National Museum of Rwanda in 2009 (Photo credit: Vervimine Minéraux) 107
- Figure 16. National Museum of Rwanda in 2011 ......................................................... 107
- Figure 17. Sign on main road, Tumba Primary School ................................................. 108
- Figure 18. Sign on building, Tumba Primary School .................................................... 108
- Figure 19. Road to Rural Primary School ..................................................................... 163
- Figure 20. Angelique’s weekly timetable ..................................................................... 166
- Figure 21. Emmanuel’s weekly timetable .................................................................... 169
- Figure 22. Recess at Urban Primary School .................................................................. 171
Figure 23. Justine’s weekly timetable................................................................. 174

Figure 24. Peter’s weekly timetable................................................................. 175

Figure 25. UNICEF’s (2007) Right to Quality Education ................................. 183
1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Although I had heard of Rwanda on the news and in French class when I was coming of age, it wasn’t until I was in college that Rwanda truly reached my consciousness. Around the time that I was studying abroad in Paris and sipping cafés au lait, something terrible was brewing in Rwanda: the 1994 Genocide that left more than 800,000 Rwandans dead – and countless chilling images in my mind. So, when on a December day in 2005 I found myself crossing the Burundi-Rwanda border en route to Kampala, I did so with apprehension. I clutched my passport and crossed the footbridge into “the heart of darkness.” But, as the bus continued on toward Kigali, I observed the sun shining both in the sky and on Rwandan flags, and people smiling and working in red clay fields. At one point, a group of young boys ran alongside the bus, waving and making faces and laughing. I noticed trees tagged in an effort to conserve national forests and signs posted in order to promote public health in Kigali, a vibrant and bustling hillside capital. “So this is Rwanda,” I thought. It had been just over a decade since that April-July of destruction and its somber aftermath.

From that point, fast forward three years to me sitting at my desk in Atlanta, reading an article about Rwanda saying adieu to French as its medium of instruction in public schools. It was at that moment – in November 2008 – that I formed this plan: For my doctoral project, I would return to Rwanda to study the implementation of this new policy and its linguistic, educational, and societal impacts. It has now been two decades since that April-July of destruction: 2014 marked the 20th Commemoration of the Rwandan Genocide. It is within this historical context that I am completing my dissertation on language policy and the shifting linguistic and educational landscape of Rwanda. So begins and ends my journey.
1.1 The policy

This project was motivated by a single act of policy of a single sentence in length: On 8 October 2008, the Rwandan Cabinet, consisting of the President and Cabinet members, issued a resolution requiring the Minister of Education to “put in place an intensive programme for using English in all public and Government-sponsored primary and secondary schools and higher learning institutions” (Republic of Rwanda, 2008, no. 11). Those 22 words made a big statement, effectively (a) replacing Kinyarwanda, the indigenous language of Rwanda and medium of instruction (MOI) for the first cycle of primary school (Primary 1-3 [Grades 1-3]), and French, the MOI since colonial times for Primary 4 onward; and (b) instating English as the sole MOI across all grades and levels, primary through tertiary. This new language-in-education policy was effective almost immediately and stood – arguably still stands – to impact the majority of the 2.39 million students and 39,000 teachers at the primary level; 535,000 students and 14,000 teachers at the secondary level; and 77,000 students and 1,800 faculty at public universities (2012 estimates; Republic of Rwanda, 2013) around the country. However, the 2008 Rwandan Cabinet resolution set the stage for not only major educational change, but also for extensive linguistic and societal change, as this dissertation will demonstrate.

1.2 The context

The Republic of Rwanda is a small, landlocked country in the Great Lakes region of East Central Africa (Adekunle, 2007; see Figure 1). Located in mountainous highlands just south of the equator, Rwanda is often called “the land of a thousand hills.” It borders Uganda to the north; Tanzania to the east; Burundi to the south; and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (hereafter ‘Congo’ or ‘DRC’; Republic of Congo [Brazzaville] is not referenced in this work) to the west
At 26,338 square kilometers, or 10,169 square miles, Rwanda is approximately the size of Belgium or the State of Maryland (Twagilimana, 2007). However, with a population of 12.3 million (July 2014 estimate; CIA, 2014), it is the most densely populated nation in sub-Saharan Africa and the second most in the world (after South Korea; Musoni, 2012). The population is largely rural, with an estimated 19.1% living in urban areas (CIA, 2014).
Life expectancy at birth is 64.5 years (Mugisha, 2014; WHO, 2014), having doubled over the last 20 years (Boseley, 2014), and the median age of the overall population is 18.7 years (CIA, 2014). The predominant religious affiliation of the Rwandan people is Christianity (93.4% of the population – of which, 49.5% are Roman Catholic, 39.4% Protestant [includes 12.2% Adventist], and 4.5% other Christian), with a smaller presence of Islam (1.8%), and indigenous beliefs/no religion/unspecified (4.8%; CIA, 2014).

Unlike most sub-Saharan countries that are composed of many different ethnic groups, there are just three major ethnicities found amongst the Rwandan people (Twagilimana, 2007): Hutu, comprising approximately 84.0% of the total population, Tutsi 15.0%, and Twa (pygmy) 1.0% (Adekunle, 2007; CIA, 2014). It must be stated here that these terms describing ethnicity (Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa) are highly charged in Rwanda, and since a 2002 law against divisionism and a 2008 law against genocide ideology, their use in either written or spoken form is prohibited (see e.g., Longman, 2011). However, these distinctions are necessary for scholarly discussion of the sociohistorical, sociocultural, and sociolinguistic issues of contemporary Rwanda – including the ones presented in this dissertation – so, it is with great awareness, sensitivity, and respect that we go forward.

1.2.1 The Rwandan Genocide

The write-up of any social sciences research set in post-1994 Rwanda should begin, I believe, with an acknowledgement of the Genocide because although it has been 20 years, it has only been 20 years. To this day, aftereffects of the Genocide continue to permeate every aspect of society – even linguistic and educational matters – so what follows is a brief synopsis of my understanding of the Genocide based on numerous readings (e.g., Berkeley, 2001; Carr, 1999; Dallaire, 2005; Des Forges, 1999; Gourevitch, 1998; Kinzer, 2008; Prunier, 1995; Strauss, 2006).
and countless conversations with Rwandans as well as longtime expatriate residents of Rwanda. Nevertheless, it falls short of adequately describing one of the most complex events humanity has ever known. (For a more nuanced account of the Rwandan Genocide, I recommend the introductory chapter of historian and human rights activist Alison Des Forges’s (1999) *Leave none to tell the story: Genocide in Rwanda.*)

Around 8:20 p.m. on 6 April 1994, two surface-to-air missiles struck and downed a plane carrying the sitting presidents of Rwanda and Burundi as it prepared to land in Kigali, the Rwandan capital, en route from a Peace Accords summit in Arusha, Tanzania. Within half an hour, Hutu militia – composed of both local police and national military forces – began setting up checkpoints and roadblocks across Kigali, essentially placing the city on lockdown. Soon after, the systematic killing of Tutsis and moderate Hutus (i.e., those who refused to participate in the Genocide) began, spread throughout the country, and lasted approximately 100 days – until more than 800,000 Rwandans (by conservative estimates) had perished, including roughly 75.0% of the Tutsi population in Rwanda at the time.

The missile attack assassination of then-President Habyarimana – a Hutu – is often cited as the catalyst for the Genocide. However, the Genocide had actually been meticulously planned months or even years in advance as a culminating response to decades of interethnic conflict in Rwanda, stoked in large part by the political impacts of colonization – first by Germany in the late 1890s, and then by Belgium in the 1920s. Prior to the colonial era and for the first few decades into colonialism, the three ethnic groups (i.e., Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa) generally coexisted peacefully through a Tutsi monarchical system established in the 15th century, in which the Tutsi king governed through a socioeconomic structure categorizing his subjects according to wealth: Those who amassed a certain number of cattle (wealth) were considered members of the Tutsi
aristocracy, while Tutsi who lost wealth would consequently lose social status, becoming part of the Hutu agriculturalists. (The forest dwelling Twa only rarely intermingled with the other groups and are known today in Rwanda as “historically marginalized people.”) Thus, in pre-colonial times the categories were fluid, with social mobility and intermarriage possible.

All that changed with colonization, however, particularly in the 1930s, when the Belgian administration began to take a more direct approach to “ruling” Rwanda. First, they replaced Hutu chiefs at both the district and hill level with Tutsi, whom they judged – based on the “Hamitic hypothesis” – to be more European in appearance and therefore more intelligent and thus worthy of educational and political opportunities than the Hutu. Then, they issued identity cards classifying citizens as Hutu, Tutsi or Twa, replacing the formerly fluid socioeconomic categories with fixed racial categories based on patrilineage – and subsequently ignited the ethnic tension.

Although the Tutsi were openly favored by the Belgian administration, by the late 1950s they had grown resentful of the Belgians for usurping their political power (i.e., removing all but the symbolic power of the monarchy), and the Hutu majority had grown resentful of their second-class status and began to demand proportional representation in the administration. Amidst these tensions, in 1959 the Government of Belgium announced it was planning to grant independence to Rwanda (Ruanda-Urundi, as it was known at the time) and began taking steps toward decolonization. This gave rise to a “Hutu Peasant Revolution” (also known as the “First Genocide”) later that year, in which thousands of Tutsi were killed, displaced, or forced to flee to neighboring countries. One of those forced into exile was Paul Kagame, the current President of Rwanda, who was a young child at the time and as a result grew up in refugee camps in Uganda.
In 1961, in cooperation with Belgium, the Hutu ousted Mwami Kigeli V, the last Tutsi king, and full independence from Belgium was granted the following year. From that point until the onset of the Genocide, Rwanda was governed by two different Hutu presidents, Grégoire Kayibanda and Juvenal Habyarimana, who maintained a strict “no return” policy for the nearly half a million Tutsi in exile in Burundi, Uganda, Zaire (present-day Congo), and Tanzania. In the late 1980s, Tutsi refugees in Uganda formed the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a political and military movement led by current President Paul Kagame, for the purpose of repatriating the Tutsi refugees to Rwanda. In 1990, RPF forces invaded Rwanda from their base in Uganda, initiating a civil war that lasted almost two years until 1992, when then-President Habyarimana signed the Arusha Accords granting a power-sharing arrangement. By the time President Habyarimana signed an agreement in 1993 calling for a transition government to include the RPF, it was assumed that the conflict was drawing to a close. However, Hutu extremists, angered by the power-sharing arrangement, had begun planning the Genocide, and the rest is history – but very much a part of the present in contemporary Rwandan society.

1.2.2 Language and Rwandan society

According to Title I Article 5 of its current Constitution, the Republic of Rwanda has three official languages, Kinyarwanda, French, and English; and one national language, Kinyarwanda (Republic of Rwanda, 2003). In this section, I (a) trace the historical development and standing of each of Rwanda’s official languages, and (b) summarize the sociolinguistic context of the country prior to September 2011, when I began conducting in-country fieldwork. The current sociolinguistic context and implications will be presented through the findings of the three articles in this dissertation, and will be discussed in the overall conclusion at the end.
1.2.2.1 Kinyarwanda

Prior to all of the conflict and devastation of the 20th century, the Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa coexisted rather harmoniously in Rwandan society. The Twa are said to have first arrived in Rwanda sometime in the 8th century BC, followed by the Hutu a few centuries later, and finally the Tutsi sometime prior to the 15th century A.D. (Briggs & Booth, 2009). For centuries, they peacefully inhabited the region, not only sharing the land, but assimilating to the point that they shared a common culture and a common language: Kinyarwanda (Rosendal, 2010).

Kinyarwanda is therefore an autochthonous (i.e., indigenous language) language, and of the three official languages, it is the only one to have national language status. This is due in part to the fact that it serves as the first language, or “mother tongue,” of the overwhelming majority of Rwandans (99.4%; Republic of Rwanda, 2005) and as the sole language of communication for an estimated 90.0% of the population (Munyankesha, 2004; LeClerc 2008; Businge & Kagolo, 2010), but also because it indexes the “heart and soul” of Rwandan culture (Gafaranga & Niyomugabo, 2010). Kinyarwanda is a tonal Bantu language belonging to the central branch of the Niger-Congo language family (Adekunle, 2007, pp. 3-4), and is alternately referred to as Rwanda, Ikinyarwanda, Orunyarwanda, Ruanda, or Urunyaruanda (Lewis, Simons, & Fennig, 2014). There are mutually intelligible variants of Kinyarwanda spoken in Burundi and parts of DRC, Uganda, and Tanzania (Samuelson, 2013).

Based on domain use analysis of data collected in Rwanda from 2006-2007, Rosendal (2010) found Kinyarwanda to be the predominant language used for formal written and oral communication as well as informal written and oral communication in official domains at both the national and local levels (i.e., legislative, administrative, judicial institutions). The only exceptions were English and Kinyarwanda used equally for formal written communication in the
Rwandan Defense Forces (Army), and greater English use – than Kinyarwanda and French – for formal written communication by Rwanda National Police.

As for literacy in Kinyarwanda, a comprehensive survey by the Rwandan Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) in 2005 determined that 74.0% of all Rwandan adults [participant ages not reported but likely follow UNESCO’s criterion of age 15 and over] were able to read and 96.0% were able to write \(^1\) – regardless of the level of education attained, including ‘never attended’ (World Bank, 2011). The most recent UNESCO Global Monitoring Report (2010), established the literacy rate among Rwandans between the ages of 15 and 24 to be 83.7% and for all aged 15 and above to be 69.7% (Ministry of Education, 2013).

1.2.2.2 French

Following the First World War, the League of Nations awarded Belgium control of Ruanda-Urundi (Ntakirutimana, 2010), a territory composed of two separate kingdoms, which are known today as Rwanda and Burundi. As a result, French – sometimes distinguished as Belgian French, although it is very similar to “French French” with the exception of a few phonological and lexical variations (e.g. ‘septante’ for 70 instead of the “standard” ‘soixante-dix’) – has been an official language of Rwanda (and Burundi) since the early 1920s, when it was given official status by the Belgian administration (Rosendal, 2010). In 1962, when Rwanda gained independence, it elected to keep French as one of its official languages (Twagilimana, 2007). Moreover, it was a language of instruction in Rwanda from the time the Belgians established Western schools (Adekunle, 2007, p. 8-9) until the recent policy change in 2009.

Although French has been an official language – and was a medium of instruction – for nearly a century, figures estimating the number of French speakers in Rwanda are generally quite low. The 2002 census estimated 3.9% of the total population to speak French – either as a first or
second language (Rosendal, 2010), while Samuelson (2013) recently reported that approximately 5.0 to 15.0% of the population speaks French, qualifying that estimate with “although this number has probably dropped in recent years” (p. 194). Media reports, such as McGreal (2009), consistently mention small numbers of French speakers in Rwanda:

> France has long claimed Rwanda as part of its francophone fold even though there is only one language common to all citizens of the tiny central African nation — the indigenous Kinyarwanda — and only a minority of the population speak passable French. (para. 1)

1.2.2.3 English

English does not have a long history in Rwanda. In fact, it was not widely spoken in the country until after the 1994 Genocide, despite Rwanda’s proximity to anglophone East Africa (i.e., Kenya, Tanzania, and to a slightly lesser extent, Uganda). Crystal (1997) estimated the number of English speakers in Rwanda around the time of the Genocide to be approximately 24,000.

In the period following the Genocide, English was introduced as a third language in society and in some schools, alongside Kinyarwanda and French, in order to accommodate large numbers of refugees and expatriates returning to Rwanda from English-speaking countries in the region (Mbori, 2008; Rosendal, 2010; Rurangirwa, 2010; Samuelson & Freedman, 2010; Samuelson, 2013). Then, in 1996, English was promoted to official language status through an amendment to the 1993 Constitution (LeClerc, 2012). By the 2002 census, the number of English speakers in Rwanda had risen to roughly 190,000 (Republic of Rwanda, 2005, *conversion to numeral from reported percentage [1.9%] mine*).
Although preliminary results of the 2012 census are available, and while the form asked for information about languages (Kinyarwanda, French, English, other) and skills proficiency (e.g. speaking, reading and writing; Republic of Rwanda, 2012), those results have not yet been published (as of early 2016). However, if as Samuelson (2013) reported, the “estimates of the total number of English speakers range from 1.9% to 5.0%” (p. 213), that would render the number of English speakers in Rwanda around the start of this fieldwork somewhere between 200,207 and 526,861 of “the total resident population of 10,537,222 people as of 15 August 2012, ‘census night’” (Republic of Rwanda, 2012).

1.2.2.4 Other languages

In addition to Kinyarwanda, French, and English, several other languages are spoken in Rwanda, including two unofficial, or “migrant,” languages: (1) Swahili\(^2\), used widely throughout East Africa (and linguistically related to Kinyarwanda), and (2) Kirundi, the principal language of Burundi. Other languages present in Rwanda include Luganda, Lingala, and Runyankole-Ruchiga [or Rukiga] (Munyaneza, 2010). Of these languages, Swahili is the only one with a significant presence. According to Samuelson and Freedman (2010), an estimated 11.0% of the Rwandan population speaks Swahili; Samuelson (2013) recently updated that statistic by speculating “that number is likely higher now that the country has joined the East African Community” (p. 213).

There are also speakers of Bufumbwa, Chiga [or Kiga], Goyi, Havu, Hutu, Lingala, Mashi, Rasi, Rera, and Twa, which may be classified as Bantu languages belonging to the Niger-Congo family, but are generally considered to be dialects of Kinyarwanda (Rosendal, 2010). Depending on whom you ask, Kirundi may also be considered a dialect of Kinyarwanda. Below
is an excerpt from my researcher journal about a conversation I had with Professor Evariste – my in-country supervisor – about my dissertation proposal:

I met with Evariste today regarding my proposal. He had a few suggestions, but thankfully I’m on the right track for the most part….One thing he requested that I delete from my proposal was ‘Kirundi’:

Evariste: What do you think Kirundi is?
Me: The language of Burundi?
Evariste: No, it’s Kinyarwanda spoken in Burundi. Why do you think it’s a different language? You must call it Kinyarwanda. (October 1, 2011)

Parenthetically, Rosendal (2010) states that Kirundi is “classed as a separate language because of its status in the neighbouring country Burundi, even if the two languages belong to the same linguistic unity” (p. 77). Not knowing either “language” well enough to know the extent of the similarities, I did know from a previous stay in Burundi that folks there refer to the local language as ‘Kirundi’, which would support Rosendal’s point about its status.

In my interviewing, only one participant reported speaking a language other than Kinyarwanda, French, English, or Swahili – some of the probable reasons for which are detailed below in the section on sociolinguistic context.

1.2.2.5 Sociolinguistic context

According to sources available at the time I was preparing my dissertation proposal, Rwanda was reported to be undergoing great sociolinguistic change in the mid- to late 2000s –
and not only in the education sector. Baldauf (2007) claimed that although French was the “language of business and power” in Rwanda for almost a century:

The Franco-Rwandaise Cultural Society – once the beating heart of all things French in Kigali – had been closed, along with the French international school, the French embassy, and many of the offices of French multinational companies. For language study, Rwandans [were] turning to a growing industry of English-language academies. (para. 10)

Africa correspondent Stephanie Nolen painted a similar picture of the (socio)linguistic shift in Rwanda following a trip she made there in 2008:

Well, it was sort of interesting. I heard a lot of people who’d grown up speaking French – at least outside of their home, it was the language of business previously – struggling to speak in perfect English. It was a real shock for me because I’ve been going to Rwanda every couple of years for about 10 years. And I got off the plane this time, and I said, “Bonjour,” and expected someone to say, “Bienvenue,” and instead I got, “Welcome to Rwanda.” And the taxi driver said, “Welcome to Kigali.” And I thought, hang on a second. (NPR, 2008)

In a multilingual context – especially in a context where the sociolinguistic situation is “on the move” – more important perhaps than examining which languages are spoken by how many people is identifying who speaks which language(s) and why.
From the outside, Rwanda would appear to have a sociolinguistic profile typical of other countries in East Central Africa: By most accounts, it boasts a (a) multilingual society, (b) plural official language policy, and (c) medium of instruction policy that prioritizes an international language over local languages in schools. Atypical of countries on the African continent, however, is the fact Rwandans share a lingua franca, or a common language, Kinyarwanda, and it is spoken by nearly the entire population (Republic of Rwanda, 2005; Rosendal, 2010). On the inside, however, this superficially tidy sociolinguistic situation begins to muddy. The remainder of this section provides a brief introduction to some of the complex issues and tensions related to language in Rwandan society (e.g., ethnicity, identity, culture, history, ideology, politics); however, a fuller discussion of sociolinguistic tensions in contemporary Rwanda will be offered in Section 5.2.2 “Sociolinguistic implications of the policy” in the overall conclusion at the end – once the issues have been presented in and explored through the articles.

One of the complicating factors contributing to the sociolinguistic complexity of contemporary Rwanda is its fateful position on what Leclerc (2008) calls “the Linguistic Maginot Line” – a line of “defense” delineating francophone Africa from anglophone Africa. On the United Nations map in Figure 3, Rwanda is shaded dark gray, designating it a country “usually considered as Francophone Africa” (United Nations, 2015). Yet, as we’ve seen, Rwanda is presently moving away from French and toward English – a stance ensuring its position on the frontlines of the battle (i.e., language politics) between anglophone and francophone Africa (Kinzer, 2008; Mazrui, 2004).

A second complicating factor is the link between language and identity – and, by extension, ethnicity. As mentioned earlier, the Rwandan Parliament passed laws in 2002 and 2008 prohibiting divisionism and genocide ideology, thereby creating nationwide laws against
speaking or writing about ethnic differences – or even using the terms Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa. An unforeseen result of the legislation, perhaps, is that “language preferences have become a proxy for identity” (Samuelson & Freedman, 2010, p. 196). To illustrate, I share this story of a conversation I had with a man seated next to me on a bus in Kigali shortly after I had arrived in country. After chatting for a few minutes and fielding his questions, the man told me that he taught at a local university, following it up with, “I’m Anglophone.” I thought to myself, “Yeah. I mean, we’re speaking English…?” As a newcomer to Rwanda, it didn’t occur to me until later that what he was saying was, “I’m Tutsi.”

What’s more, language proficiency in the language one identifies with is not a necessary condition to claim that linguistic identity (ethnicity), as Ibuka (2011) claims in her thesis:

Language is used to identify the different ethnic groups, primarily the Hutu and the Tutsi returnees from Uganda. The Hutu are referred to as Francophone, and the Tutsi from
Uganda, as Anglophone. Note that when language is used within this context of ethnicity distinction, one’s ability to speak a language does not factor in; it is irrelevant. For example, a Hutu or a Tutsi returnee from Burundi who speaks English does not qualify to be an Anglophone. In the same line, a Tutsi who speaks French does not qualify as a Francophone. The words Francophone and Anglophone are ethnic specific. (p. 141)

In all, when it comes to sociolinguistic complexity in Rwanda, there is more than meets the eye – or ear, so-to-speak. It is clear that the three main languages – Kinyarwanda, French, and English – have each played a role in the country’s social and political history over the past 100 years. They have also each played a role in Rwanda’s educational history, and so we turn now to education in Rwanda and its language-in-education situation.

1.2.3 Education and languages-in-education in Rwanda

Until European missionaries arrived at the turn of the 20th century and introduced the concept of Western education, traditional education was practiced in Rwanda. Traditional Rwandan education emphasized the principles of “dignity, diligence, discipline, mutual respect and tolerance” (Adekunle, 2007, p. 8). Classes were formed based on age and gender and taught by older relatives or villagers of the same gender so they could transmit knowledge of gender-specific societal roles. In addition to traditional principles and roles, students were apprenticed in the traditional skills of basketry, pottery, weaving, and storytelling (Adekunle, 2007).

European missionaries first introduced Western education, but it was the Belgian administration that implemented it on a wide scale. In the 1930s, they began building schools and subsidizing the costs of education. However, access to education was not universal: “During the colonial period, the Belgians ran French-medium schools to educate a small, mainly Tutsi,
bureaucratic elite” (Samuelson, 2013, p. 216). Since that time, education has expanded from a privileged few in the 1930s to 73.0% in 2000-2001 and 94.0% in 2005-2006 (EDPRS, 2007), to the nearly universal primary enrollment of today (Rosendal, 2010; J. Simpson, personal communication, January 20, 2012).

Rwanda currently operates on a 6-3-3 exam-based system for public education: six years of primary (P1-P6) are a universal right, with three years of junior secondary (S1-S3; also called O Level [for Ordinary Level]) and three years of senior secondary (S4-S6; also called A Level [for Advanced Level]) granted if students are successful on the leaving exams of the previous cycle. In 2010, the Government of Rwanda introduced Nine Year Basic Education (9YBE), which would provide an additional three years of education for students who are unsuccessful on the primary leaving exam, and in 2011, they announced plans for Twelve Year Basic Education (12YBE); implementation of both is currently underway.

The language-in-education situation in Rwanda has been punctuated by shifting MOI policy over the years. French was the MOI across all grades and all levels under the Belgian system, and it was retained as the MOI at independence in 1962 for all grades except P1-P3, which were taught in Kinyarwanda. Due to growing pan-Africanist sentiment, Rwanda launched a reform known as “Kinyarwandisation” (Rurangirwa, 2010); under this plan, the Ministry of Education extended primary education to eight years (P1-P8), with Kinyarwanda as the MOI for all eight years (Ntakirutimana, 2010; Rurangirwa, 2012).

Kinyarwandisation lasted until 1991, when MINEDUC announced a return to the previous language-in-education structure (Kinyarwanda as MOI for P1-P3 and French from P4 onward) following poor overall performance on a nationwide French exam (Ntakirutimana, 2010) plus a lack of financial and human resources coupled with a lack of commitment on the
part of the Government toward implementation (Rurangirwa, 2010). Three years into the return to the previous reform, the Genocide devastated the country, destroying lives and infrastructure – including schools. Once the Genocide ended in July 1994, large numbers of Rwandans began returning from exile in neighboring anglophone countries, so when schools began reopening in 1995, they needed to accommodate this demographic of students that had little-to-no knowledge of French – roughly 5.0% of the population at the time (Rosendal, 2010).

In response the influx of English-speaking returnees, MINEDUC announced in 1996 new language-in-education reform that would allow (a) Kinyarwanda to continue as the sole MOI for P1-P3; (b) French and English to become co-MOI for P4-P6; and (c) either French or English to serve as the MOI for S1-S6, depending on which secondary school(s) one attended (Niyitanga, 2003). The two major MOI schemes – the 1996 reform instigated by MINEDUC and the 2008 resolution issued by Presidential Cabinet order – and their accompanying languages taught as subjects (as a foreign language) are recapitulated to facilitate comparison in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>MOI + Languages as a Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1996 MINEDUC Reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1-P3</td>
<td>Kinyarwanda + French &amp; English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4-P6</td>
<td>French &amp; English + Kinyarwanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1-S3</td>
<td>French or English + English or French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4-S6</td>
<td>French or English + English or French</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reasons for Rwanda’s MOI shift are most frequently described as economic (to join the East African Community), political (to join the British Commonwealth and reject la Francophonie as a result of fallout from the 1994 Genocide), and practical (English is a global language).
Whatever the actual reason(s) for the shift, my intent was to conduct fieldwork exploring the
dynamic linguistic and educational landscape and language-in-education policy context of
Rwanda following it. In order to do so, I needed a robust but flexible framework.

1.3 The framework

The framework through which I conceptualized and conducted this research is called
ethnography of language policy (ELP³; Hornberger & Johnson, 2007), which allowed me to
follow a particular policy into a particular polity; explore it there both intensively and
extensively for a significant period of time; and make necessary adjustments to my research plan
in response to the contextual realities I encountered along the way. Johnson himself might call
ELP a ‘method’ or an ‘approach’ (2007; 2009a). However, I view it as a comprehensive
conceptual framework – and one that I relied on to guide my research in the field of language
planning and policy.

1.3.1 Language planning and policy

Throughout this document, the terms language policy, language planning, and language
planning and policy (also known as language policy and planning) are frequently utilized.
Because these constructs are complex, overlapping, and inconsistently defined in the literature, I
offer working definitions of each of them here before we move into a description of the study. In
his seminal work on language policy, Johnson (2013b) answers the question, “What is language
policy?” by synthesizing existing and often disparate definitions (e.g., Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997;
Spolsky, 2004; Tollefson, 1991) in order to come up with a new and more cohesive one of his
own:

A language policy is a policy mechanism that impacts structure, function, use or
acquisition of language and includes:

1. Official regulations – often enacted in the form of written documents, intended to effect some change in the form, function, use, or acquisition of language – which can influence economic, political, and educational opportunity;

2. Unofficial, covert, de facto, and implicit mechanisms, connected to language beliefs and practices, that have regulating power over language use and interaction within communities, workplaces, and schools;

3. Not just products but processes – “policy” as a verb, not a noun – that are driven by a diversity of language policy agents across multiple layers of policy creation, interpretation, appropriation, and instantiation;

4. Policy texts and discourses across multiple contexts and layers of policy activity, which are influenced by the ideologies and discourses unique to that context.

(Johnson, 2013b, p. 9)

While closely related to language policy, the term language planning carries at least two connotations in the literature: one refers to the field itself (e.g., Liddicoat & Baldauf, 2008; LoBianco, 2010), while another points to the practical implementation of a language policy or the deliberate efforts to influence linguistic behavior in a particular environment (Cooper, 1989; Ferguson, 2006). I adopt the latter definition of language planning here and throughout, as I follow Hornberger (2006), Ricento and Hornberger (1996), and Wiley (1996) in using the term language planning and policy – or language policy and planning – (LPP) to denote the field. Here, Hornberger (2006) demonstrates why there is a general lack of consensus around the nature of their relationship:
Does planning subsume policy (Fettes, 1997) or policy subsume planning (Ricento, 2000; Schiffman, 1996; [Spolsky, 2004])? Is policy the output of planning? Not always – “a great deal of language policy-making goes on in a haphazard or uncoordinated way, far removed from the language planning ideal” (Fettes, 1997, p. 14). Does planning have policy as its intended outcome? Not necessarily – language planning is first and foremost about social change (Cooper, 1989; Tollefson, 1991)…. (p. 25)

Certain researchers (e.g., Fishman, 1979) have contended that planning follows policy, while others have claimed that policies arise from planning interventions (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). The onetime contentious nature of the policy-planning relationship seems to have in recent years coalesced around the fact that language policy and language planning are “inextricably linked” (Hornberger, 2006): “LPP offers a unified conceptual rubric under which to pursue fuller understanding of the complexity of the policy-planning relationship and in turn of its insertion in the processes of social change” (p. 25). Referring to Hornberger’s (2006) integrative framework which cross-indexes language planning activities with policy approaches, McCarty (2011) indicates that she and the authors in her edited volume also view language planning and policy “not as separate acts but at mutually constitutive, interdependent, and co-occurring sociocultural processes” (p. 7-8).

Ricento and Hornberger (1996) introduced the metaphor of “unpeeling the onion” to describe LPP as a “multilayered construct” and demonstrate how multiple agents and levels “permeate and interact with each other in complex ways” (p. 419) – an idea that McCarty (2011) reiterates, saying “LPP is an integrated and dynamic whole that operates within intersecting planes of local, regional, national, and global influence” (p. 8). I share the belief that the
planning-policy relationship is complex and inextricable: In my grant statement of purpose, I suggested that language planning should “at least walk hand in hand with” language policy. To me, the two concepts are dialectic (i.e., responsive to each other) – or rather should be.

When it comes to language planning, or the deliberate effort to influence the function, structure, or acquisition of languages (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997), there are three main types: status, corpus, and acquisition. Status planning concerns the allocation of languages to certain functional domains within society (e.g., officialization, nationalization); corpus planning deals with deliberate intervention in the forms of a language (e.g., graphization, modernization); and acquisition planning aims to promote language proficiency – including literacy – through education (e.g., revitalization, shift). However, only two types are relevant to this study of the 2008 Cabinet resolution for English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in Rwanda: (1) status planning, which addresses the uses of language in society, and (2) acquisition planning, which focuses on the users of language in society who require proficiency in a particular language for educational, literary, religious, or employment purposes, amongst others.

As for LPP, McKay and Hornberger (1996) classified it as a subfield of sociolinguistics. A decade later, Ricento (2006) located LPP as a separate field of inquiry – one that “came into its own as a branch of sociolinguistics” (p. 19). More recently, in a special issue of the International Journal of the Sociology of Language entitled “Ethnography of Language Policy: Theory, Method and Practice,” Johnson (2013a) noted that the field of LPP has “come a long way since Haugen coined the term language planning (Haugen 1959) and the field’s founders set about the task of developing language planning theories, concepts and models (e.g. Rubin and Jernudd 1971)” (p. 1). Regardless of the standing of LPP, it is abundantly clear that there has been rapid development in LPP from the latter part of the 20th century until now, which McCarty
(2011) credits to “pragmatic concerns with solving language ‘problems’ in decolonizing, multilingual polities” (p. 5), and Hornberger (2006) credits to the “resurgence of interest in the field of language policy and planning, fueled in large part by the imperious spread of English and other global languages and, reciprocally, the alarming loss and endangerment of indigenous and small language communities world-wide” (p. 24).

Ricento and Hornberger (1996) claimed that LPP could provide a wealth of opportunities for researchers in applied linguistics and social sciences – and beyond, suggesting that “scholars from disciplines such as linguistics, education, political science history, policy studies, law, demography, and sociology” (p. 401) have begun broadening the scope of the inquiry. For us in applied linguistics, the interdisciplinary nature of LPP affords us opportunities to investigate linguistic, sociocultural, and educational issues in our field. To that point, Wiley (1996) has called us to examine the relationship between language planning and conflicts, whether social, legal, economic, political and educational:

Language planning affects speakers of regional and social varieties within the language, immigrants who do not speak the standard or majority language, and indigenous conquered peoples and colonized peoples who speak languages other than the dominant one. In struggles for power and dominance between groups, language is often the surface focal point for deeper conflicts. Applied linguists and language teachers are not immune from these conflicts but must consider how their skills and work relate to them. (p. 106)

It is through such a lens that we shall view language policy in post-conflict Rwanda (minus Wiley’s deficit thinking/language). And while there is no overarching theory of LPP “due to the
complexity of issues involving language in society” (Ricento, 2006, p. 19), it is very possible to examine complex LPP issues through a conceptual framework of *ethnography of language policy*.

1.3.2 *Ethnography of language policy*

Ethnography in education is not new; in fact, it likely dates back to Mead’s (1928) *Coming of Age in Samoa* (McCarty, 2011). Ethnography in applied linguistics isn’t new either: It is generally traced to Hymes’ (1962/1964) *ethnography of speaking/ethnography of communication*, which Hymes (1964) promoted as a means of ensuring scope and complexity in sociolinguistic studies. Ethnography in LPP, on the other hand, is quite new – which is logical, given that LPP as a field is itself quite new. We owe the innovation of ethnography in LPP research to Nancy Hornberger and her protégées, such as David Cassels Johnson and Francis Hult, in Educational Linguistics at Penn Graduate School of Education. Until Hornberger’s (1988) portrait of Quechua language and bilingual education in Peru – which Johnson (2013a) names as the first *ethnography of language policy* (ELP) – much of the work done in LPP concerned concepts, frameworks, and technological aspects (Jernudd & Nekvapil, 2012). ELP has expanded our understanding of LPP issues by permitting us to (a) examine “language policy processes across national, institutional, and interpersonal layers [of the LPP onion],” and (b) “slice through [them] to reveal agentive spaces in which local actors implement, interpret, and perhaps resist policy initiatives in varying and unique ways” (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007, p. 509).

While Hornberger may be the first to have done an ELP study, and she introduced the concept to the field alongside Johnson with their *TESOL Quarterly* article “Slicing the Onion Ethnographically: Layers and Spaces in Multilingual Language Education Policy and Practice”
(Hornberger & Johnson, 2007), it has been Johnson, who, to my mind, has advanced ELP in applied linguistics more than anyone else. Johnson’s momentous dissertation on ethnography of language policy in the School District of Philadelphia (2007) not only provided empirical data for the ELP framework, but it foregrounded numerous contributions to the field, such as (a) conceptual elucidations (e.g., Hornberger & Johnson, 2007, 2011; Johnson, 2009a; Johnson & Ricento, 2013); (b) methodological/heuristic explications (e.g., Johnson, 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2011b, 2013a, 2015; Johnson & Hult, 2015; Johnson & Ricento, 2015); (c) critical issues in ELP (e.g., Johnson, 2013c; D. Johnson & E. Johnson, 2015); and (d) topics related to (bilingual) education policy (e.g., Johnson, 2010, 2011a; Johnson & Freeman, 2010; Johnson & Pratt, 2014; E. Johnson & D. Johnson, 2015; Johnson, LaMare, & Williams, 2015; Stephens & Johnson, 2015). Through these publications, Johnson has identified what ELP is and what ELP can do.

1.3.2.1 What is ELP?

‘Ethnography’ is synonymous with the study of culture: it literally means ‘the study of culture’. Therefore, at the heart of any ethnography of language policy (ELP) study is culture. According to the TESOL Quarterly Research Guidelines, all ethnography must adopt a “complex theoretical orientation toward culture” and “culture – in collectives of differing magnitude, whether educational institutions, student communities, classrooms, or activity groups” must be treated as “heterogeneous, conflictual, negotiated, and evolving, as distinct from unified, cohesive, fixed, and static” (TESOL, para. 2). The guidelines also ask authors to consider whether the purpose of ethnography is “interpretive, aimed at developing insights into the symbolic meanings of experiences for participants” or “more critically, the pursuit of social justice” (TESOL, para. 3). It is the latter view that most closely aligns with ELP, as Johnson (2013b) contends that the goal of ELP is not objective description but “a critical understanding
of how imbalances of power hegemonically perpetuate and normalize linguistic and cultural hierarchies that lead to deficit approaches, and...challenging such practices for social justice” (Johnson, 2013b, p. 147).

Moreover, because ethnographic approaches to LPP have their roots in anthropology, they presuppose the ontology, epistemology, and methodology of the anthropological tradition. McCarty (2011) cites Blommaert (2009) to demonstrate this logic: “[The anthropological tradition] is characterized by the contextualization of cultural phenomena socially, historically, and comparatively across time and space,” and there is, therefore, “no way in which language can be ‘context-less’ in this anthropological tradition” (Blommaert, 2009)” (McCarty, 2011, p. 10). This culturally-situated view of language aligns with the function of ethnography, which has traditionally been employed by anthropologists who seek to develop an insider’s perspective of a particular culture; that is, an understanding of the culture from the inside out, through the participants’ eyes (as much as possible)....In order to develop this insider’s perspective, the researcher needs to spend an extended period of time (often years) with the research participants, engaging in multiple types of data collection, including participant observation…, insider accounts…, and document collection” (Johnson, 2013b, p. 144).

What distinguishes ethnography of language policy research from other kinds of ethnographic research on multilingualism and multilingual education is that ELP “focuses squarely on language policy processes, emerges from the LPP literature, asks language policy research questions, incorporates policy text and discourse units of analysis, and presents findings
about language policy, specifically” (Johnson, 2013b, pp. 43-44). It is, in fact, what Hornberger and Johnson (2007) “had in mind when they introduced [ELP] as a method and theory for examining the agents, contexts, and processes across the multiple layers of language policy creation, interpretation, and appropriation” (Johnson, 2013b, p. 44).

In the early days of ELP, the authors referred to it mainly as a research ‘approach’ or ‘method’. However, I have construed ELP to be a conceptual framework since reading Johnson’s dissertation to prepare my grant statement of purpose and dissertation proposal (back in 2010-2011), as Johnson (2007) anchors ELP in the philosophical orientations of anthropology (e.g. Levinson & Sutton 2001), sociology (e.g. Ball 2006), and critical linguistics (e.g., Fowler et al. 1979), and in critical social theory (e.g. Foucault 1990). More recently, I have begun to see Johnson’s definition of ELP expand to include theory:

empirical findings from ethnographies of language policy have proved an essential part of our understanding of policy processes all over the world…but it also has provided a theoretical and conceptual orientation that combines the macro and the micro, provides a balance between policy power and interpretative agency [structure and agency], and is committed to issues of social justice, particularly pertaining to the rights of indigenous and minority language speakers” (Johnson, 2013b, p. 45, emphasis mine).

1.3.2.2 What can ELP do?

Ethnography in LPP can provide thick description of (a) language planning within communities, schools, and other social institutions (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007), and (b) “the intersection of meaning of policy decision-makers, teachers, community members, and others
within a particular social setting” (Davis, 1999, p. 72). It can also cause us to reflect on the role of education in the broader society (Jaffe, 2010). In *Language Policy*, Johnson (2013b) summarizes what ELP can do, as established by Hornberger and Johnson (2007; 2011).

*Ethnography of language policy* can:

1. illuminate and inform various *types* of language planning – status, corpus, and acquisition – and language policy – official and unofficial, de jure and de facto, macro and micro…national and local;
2. illuminate and inform language policy *processes* – creation, interpretation, and appropriation;
3. marry a critical approach with a focus on agency, recognizing the power of both *societal* and *local* policy texts, discourses, and discoursers;
4. illuminate the links across the multiple LPP layers, from the macro to the micro, from policy to practice; and
5. open up ideological spaces that allow for egalitarian dialogue and discourses that promote social justice and sound educational practice (Johnson, 2013b, p. 44)

In the interest of “fairness,” I should point out what ELP cannot do. While I have not seen any criticism leveled against ELP, I have heard Johnson address a couple of limitations, which I consider to be quite minor. For example, Johnson (2013b) mentions three “challenges” regarding ethnography and the study of language policy: (1) the object of study is a policy – not a culture/people, (2) the multi-sited nature of the research setting, and (3) the extended time it takes to do ethnography. The first challenge is fairly easily dismissed if we specify the definition
of policy: If policy is narrowly defined to mean ‘policy document’, ‘policy text’, or ‘government act’, then I, too, would see the mismatch in methodology. However, if we “do not restrict our analysis to or even focus primarily on official policy or government acts” but “take as a starting point the notion of language policy as processual, dynamic, and in motion” (McCarty, 2011, p. 2) – what Johnson means when he says “policy as a verb, not a noun,” then ethnography as a method applies. It is important to note that ELP can include textual and historical analyses of policy texts, but it “must be based in an ethnographic understanding of some local context. The texts are nothing without the human agents who act as interpretive conduits between the language policy levels (or layers of the LPP onion)” (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007, p. 528).

We’ll jump to the third challenge – the one regarding the length of data collection – as it is also fairly easily dismissed. I first heard Johnson raise this criticism of ELP at his and Katherine Mortimer’s colloquium on ELP at the American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL) conference in 2010. He said, “Walford [2002] asks, ‘When policy moves fast, how long can ethnography take?’” (D. Johnson, personal communication, March 7, 2010), a concern I would heed much more seriously if I were a journalist. However, as an applied linguist, I personally do not see the longitudinal nature of ELP as a drawback; rather, it allows us to capture and chronicle the effects of policy over time (e.g., policy shift; policy reversion; bureaucratic turnover). Thus, it presents the unique opportunity to not only map a policy, but to map it onto a timeline to show the scope, sequence, and contour of a policy – which, to me, constitutes the richness of the thick description we seek through ethnography.

Returning to the second challenge – the concern about the multi-sited nature of the research, which I would like to give ample consideration, since it directly relates to the design of the present project. As Johnson (2013b) acknowledges, the “foundation of ethnography is
typically long-term participant observation in a particular site or community, but often there is no one “site” in which a language policy is created nor one ‘community’ in which a language policy is penned” (p. 145). It follows then that ELP is multi-sited, “even if there is debate about whether or not a multi-sited approach counts as true ethnography” (Johnson, 2013b, p. 145). I counter such claims by pointing out that “true” cultural anthropologists – those who rely on participant observation to describe and interpret life in a remote village, for example – may not be with every inhabitant or in every dwelling every day. Similarly, the ethnographer of language policy cannot be with each participant at every site in the policy context every day.

Another point of clarification regarding the multi-sited nature of this project is that although I present eight different teacher participant “cases” throughout this dissertation, the overarching approach is not one of case study research, which “focuses on the behaviors or attributes of individual learners or other individuals/entities” (Duff, 2008, p. 34). Instead, it “aims to understand and interpret the behaviors, values, and structures of collectivities or social groups with particular reference to the cultural basis for those behaviors and values” (Duff, 2008, p. 34), which situates it more under the umbrella of ethnography. Duff (2008) further clarifies the distinction:

ethnographies represent a particular kind of anthropological case study – where the case is a defined cultural group or community – and, to confuse matters more, the ethnography may include focal participants who are members of a culture to illustrate features of the whole. In other words, they are case studies within a particular culturally oriented larger case study. (Duff, 2008, p. 34)
In this project, each “case,” if you will, represents a stake in the collective enterprise of teaching in a particular medium of instruction (English) in a given context (Rwandan public education) – and these cases are all held together by the unifying framework of ELP and the role of culture. We now arrive at the study.

1.4 The study

In April 2008, the Rwandan Parliament announced via its official website discussions between the Minister of State and Minister of Education regarding the English language in schools. At that time, it reported that they had agreed that “by January 2009, there [would] be teaching mathematics in English, in the year 2010, there [should] follow the technical know how, civil education and general education” (Parliament, 2008, para. 4). The report goes on to mention the proposed plan to train English teachers:

Six thousand of them will be trained in these holidays [November-December 2008] and these are normally maths teachers, and the program of training other teachers of other subjects such that by the beginning of 2010 all teachers whether Primary or Secondary teachers will have completed their training. (Parliament, 2008, para. 6)

The Minister of State also assured the Rwandan people that 10 teacher training colleges in the country would start teaching in English, and the “management of such colleges will be entrusted to foreign experts and the former members will be in position to learn from them and he added that trainers of primary teachers are already in KIE [Kigali Institute of Education]” (Parliament, 2008, para. 5).
Despite these plans and assurances, one year after the announcement of the Cabinet resolution, McGreal (2009) claimed that Rwanda was not prepared for the Cabinet resolution: “the switch to English dominance is a huge undertaking in a country where more than 95% of schools teach in French to pupils from about the age of nine” (para. 12) and that “just 4700 of 31,000 primary school teachers had been trained, and only 600 of 12,000 secondary school teachers had “received training in the language they will soon be expected to teach in” (para. 14). And one year after that, Rosendal (2010) questioned “just how this recent decision will be implemented is still unclear” (p. 99). Such shifts are generally of interest to applied linguists – particularly to sociolinguists, as they involve sociocultural, sociopolitical, linguistic, and educational dimensions of macro-level language planning. Yet two years on, we still knew precious little about the MOI shift in Rwanda due to limited reporting on it in either academic journals or mainstream media outlets. Thus, motivated by my own curiosity and a desire to contribute to our understanding of this MOI shift, I undertook the following ELP study in Rwanda to get a closer look at the state of Rwandan LPP in the hope that it would shed light on the implementation of this new policy as well as its linguistic, educational, and societal impacts.

1.4.1 Purpose of the study

Hornberger (2009) has claimed that “there are many unanswered questions and doubts as to policy and implementation, program and curricular design, classroom instruction practices, pedagogy, and teacher professional development, but there is also much that we understand and know very well, based on empirical research in many corners of the world” (p. 197). Yet, others like Braine (2005) contend that “for the most part, the accomplishments of…indigenous teachers remain unknown, their research remains unpublished, and their stories remain untold” (p. xiii). While I acknowledge that we have begun to learn more about the lived experiences of educators
in some global localities over the past few decades, it is my belief that certain “corners of the world” continue to be overlooked and underrepresented in the applied linguistics literature – and none more so than sub-Saharan Africa, particularly when it comes to studies voicing teacher perspectives on LPP, which are virtually non-existent. Therefore, the general purpose of this study is to contribute to the growing body of research on the perspectives and practice of educators from a corner of the world not typically represented in scholarly literature: sub-Saharan Africa – and specifically, Rwanda.

Ricento (2006) prioritized the need for empirical findings in LPP, arguing that theory has “little value in and of itself as a tool to argue for the need for specific language policies” and what we need in order to advocate specific policies or policy directions is for scholars “to demonstrate empirically – as well as conceptually – the societal benefits, and costs, of such policies” (p. 11, emphasis in original). In proposing the *ethnography of language policy*, Hornberger and Johnson (2007) “[took] up the call for more multilayered and ethnographic approaches to language policy and planning (LPP) research” (p. 509). Johnson (2009) also highlighted this gap in the LPP research, stating that “while theoretical conceptualizations of language policy have grown increasingly rich, empirical data that test these models are scarce” (p. 139).

The calls made by Ricento, Hornberger, and Johnson for further empirical evidence for both LPP and ELP have precipitated the development of the following research questions, which contribute to the specific purpose of this dissertation (i.e., to explore the shifting linguistic, educational, and language policy landscape in contemporary Rwanda):

1. What is the current linguistic ecology of Rwanda?
2. What is the nature of the 2008 Rwandan Cabinet resolution for English medium instruction (EMI) in public education, and how are the objectives of the policy and the procedures for its implementation envisioned by policymakers and administrators?

3. How is language policy interpreted and appropriated (e.g., adopted, adapted, resisted) by Rwandan classroom teachers in their day-to-day practice, and to what extent does their practice converge with the 2008 Cabinet resolution mandating EMI?

4. How does national language-in-education policy (EMI in public schools) impact local educational contexts in Rwanda?

1.4.2 Context and funding

This project was carried out primarily in Butare (also referred to as Huye), a town of approximately 100,000 in Southern Province, Rwanda. My ability to travel to Rwanda and spend nine months (from September 4, 2011 to June 3, 2012) conducting ethnographic fieldwork in and around Butare was made possible by a J. William Fulbright Full Grant, which provides funds appropriated by the U.S. Congress for fellows to study and do research abroad. The grant paid for my airfare to and from country in addition to a monthly stipend to offset the cost of living (e.g., accommodations, food, transportation). The Fulbright Program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and administered by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs; in Rwanda, the Public Affairs Section at the U.S. Embassy in Kigali manages the program.

I selected Butare as my home base in Rwanda based on several factors/assumptions: (1) its location well outside Kigali, the cosmopolitan capital – in order to collect more naturalistic
data and have a more authentically “Rwandan” experience; (2) its smaller size – for more rapid integration into and greater involvement with the local community; and (3) its reputation as the cultural and educational capital of the country – due to it being the site of the National University of Rwanda (NUR\textsuperscript{4}), which served as my Fulbright Program affiliate institution.

1.4.3 Methodological matters

As established above, I relied on an *ethnography of language policy* orientation to frame this research, and thus relied on its methodology to collect, analyze, and interpret data gathered through nine months of fieldwork in Rwanda. My ability to do so was facilitated by Johnson’s (2009) article in *Language Policy* introducing ELP, wherein he offers a heuristic to guide data collection, underscoring the importance of considering policy agents, goals, processes, discourses, and the social and historical contexts for the policy, “keeping in mind that these categories are neither static nor mutually exclusive” (Johnson, 2007, p. 18):

(1) The agents include both the creators of the policy and those responsible for policy interpretation and appropriation. (2) Goals refers to the intentions of the policy as stated in the policy text. (3) The processes of interest include creation, interpretation, and appropriation. (4) The discourse category is meant to capture the discourses within and without the policy; i.e. the discourses (whether explicit or implicit) within the language policy text, intertextual connections to other policies, and the discursive power of a particular policy…. (5) Finally, an ethnography of language policy is interested in the dynamic social, historical, and physical contexts in which language policies are created, interpreted, and appropriated. (Johnson, 2009, p. 144)
More recently, Johnson (2013b) has refined the heuristic, adding three essential elements of a bona fide *ethnography of language policy*: (a) a balance of emic and etic perspectives; (b) long-term engagement; and (c) triangulation of data. Balanced emic (insider) and etic (outsider) perspectives ensures that the researcher not only approaches the policy context as an outsider (i.e., through knowledge of policy and about research) but elicits the view from the inside looking out as well by “develop[ing] an understanding of how the participants view their policy landscape” (Johnson, 2013b, p. 149). Long-term engagement with a community/communities is necessary for “establish[ing] a thick description of how community members create, interpret, appropriate, and instantiate language policy” (Johnson, 2013b, p. 149). And finally multiple sources of data allow the researcher to obtain a “full account,” not the “objective truth” (Johnson, 2013b, p. 150). In following the prior version of the heuristic, my study naturally fell in line with these newer principles, as I (a) allowed for participant perspectives to shine through by incorporating both formal (e.g., interviews) and informal conversations, and employing a Rwandese research assistant to accompany me to interviews and observations to interpret and translate for me when Kinyarwanda was used; (b) engaged in nine months of full-time fieldwork; and (c) triangulated data through multiple methods of data collection and analysis (e.g., participant observation, grounded analysis). An overview of the data collection and analysis methods used to answer each research question is found below in *Table 2*. 
**Table 2. Summary of research questions and data collection and analysis methods**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
<th>Data analysis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What is the current linguistic ecology of Rwanda?</td>
<td>Photographic evidence; media and research reports; researcher journal (general observations on language use in society)</td>
<td>Linguistic landscape analysis (LLA); diachronic comparative analysis; synthesis of reports and researcher journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What is the nature of the 2008 Rwandan Cabinet resolution for English medium instruction (EMI) in public education, and how are the objectives of the policy and the procedures for its implementation envisioned by policymakers and administrators?</td>
<td>Policy documents; textbooks; curriculum; activities of MINEDUC/NCDC/REB; interviews with school administrators and additional stakeholders (officials representing governmental and non-governmental agencies); researcher journal</td>
<td>Document analysis; axial and open coding of interview transcripts and researcher journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How is language policy interpreted and appropriated (e.g., adopted, adapted, resisted) by Rwandan classroom teachers in their day-to-day practice, and to what extent does their practice converge with the 2008 Cabinet resolution mandating EMI?</td>
<td>Classroom observation; teacher interviews; researcher journal</td>
<td>Axial and open coding of fieldnotes, teacher interview transcripts, and researcher journal; discourse analysis of classroom observation data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How does national language-in-education policy (EMI in public schools) impact local educational contexts in Rwanda?</td>
<td>Classroom observation; teacher interviews; researcher journal</td>
<td>Axial and open coding of fieldnotes, teacher interview transcripts, and researcher journal; discourse analysis of classroom observation data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each article in this dissertation goes into detail about the specific data collection and analysis methods used therein – including information about research settings and participants.\(^5\)
Therefore, the purpose of this introductory methods section is to cover only the general methodological issues encountered across my fieldwork in Rwanda. In my proposal, I wrote:

> It is important to note that the plan for research that I have laid out here is tentative and subject to the realities of the situation that I will encounter. Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman (2007) recommend planning for flexibility in qualitative design, as ‘procedures must be responsive to what actually happens during data collection, as well as to the nature of the data that begin to accumulate’ (p. 103); this is of utmost importance for my exploratory project in a context unfamiliar to me. (dissertation proposal, July 7, 2011)

These words rang true time and again during my stay in Rwanda. For instance, in my first face-to-face meeting with my local supervisor, Professor Evariste, on September 7, 2011, I learned that the shift in the start of the academic year – moving it forward from January 2012 to October 2011 so as to “harmonize with other countries in the region” (E. Ntakirutimana, personal communication, June 15, 2011) that he advised me via email to arrive in time for – was not going to happen after all, and consequently, I had arrived in time for a month-long revision and exam period followed by a six-week yearend break. That significantly altered my plan for data collection in schools as laid out in my dissertation proposal. So did the meeting with Professor Evariste regarding my dissertation proposal (the same one in which he told me I should strike ‘Kirundi’ from the proposal). I had originally planned to collect data at one primary, one secondary, and one tertiary school over the course of the academic year, spending eight weeks each school (four weeks at two points in the semester); however:
I consulted Evariste about eliminating NUR as a research site. I have the feeling that it is already saturated with researchers – including [my only other friends in Butare] Straton and Abubakar – and I don’t want to get in their territory. Evariste agreed with me that it would be best if I focused on primary and secondary schools, since “no one’s doing that research.” Evariste urged me to investigate rural schools, too. This will cause me to add a research site [for a total of four] instead of eliminating one [for a total of two] to my already shrinking data collection timeline, but I see his point and will take his suggestion. (researcher journal, October 1, 2011)

Another important outcome of the meeting with Evariste that I should mention here was the revision of the ethnographic interview guides as they appeared in my dissertation proposal. Admittedly, several of the questions sought personal information, as I had planned to do life history interviews as a means of complementing the data elicited from the language-in-education policy and practice interviews. Prior to going to Rwanda, I was aware that it was (a) illegal to ask questions of ethnicity, and (b) insensitive to ask questions about family. However, I didn’t realize at the time that asking someone where they were born could be proxy for inquiring about ethnicity – or that the language(s) they speak could be proxy for identity. Although Professor Evariste did not explain why my opening question “Where were you born?” was so charged, he did ask me why I needed to know it and pointed out that it might make participants feel uncomfortable. I didn’t fully appreciate his advice until I later learned that if, for example, a Rwandese was born in an anglophone country in East Africa, it could mean that their family had been escaping ethnic violence in Rwanda (meaning they were likely to be Tutsi) (see e.g., Samuelson & Freedman, 2010). I also learned that it is not illegal – but greatly discouraged – to
ask where in Rwanda one is from – not for exactly the same reason, but owing to a history of regional favoritism by those in positions of power. In the end, I captured a lot of participant background information, but I did so through a more open-ended or indirect style of questioning (see General Appendix A for the finalized ethnographic interview guides). Incidentally, this aside serves as a good reminder for us to balance emic and etic perspectives in ethnography, especially when doing international ELP.

Back to the research calendar: Given (a) the school year beginning in January as usual, (b) the Genocide Commemoration (cessation of regular work/study) occurring for a couple of weeks in April, and (c) my return ticket to the U.S. on June 3rd, I would have only one month to spend at each school. In the interim, I would get established in Butare; learn some Kinyarwanda; perform linguistic landscaping; visit schools, seek access, and recruit participants; (attempt to) locate policy documents; and interview officials (see General Appendix B for the final research timeline). Though listed last here, two primary tasks on my research agenda beyond the classroom included (a) locating the language policy documents, and (b) interviewing a variety of policy actors/agents – officials from the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), National Curriculum Development Committee (NCDC), and Rwanda Education Board (REB; the implementation arm of MINEDUC) – to learn about the background to the policy and the plan for its country-wide implementation. In setting that agenda, I made a couple of naïve assumptions: that (1) the policy documents existed, and (2) people in official positions in Rwanda would be willing to talk to me about the policy.

Policy text analysis was essential to “top-down” LPP research approaches in the past (e.g. the historical-structural approach), and it continues to be a priority in current approaches that combine top-down with “bottom-up” methodologies (e.g., language ecology, ethnography of
language policy). In reading the work of more current and “bottom-up” based approaches to LPP research, I saw evidence of other researchers gathering and analyzing policy texts:

In the winter following the conclusion of my year-long fieldwork, the Swedish parliament approved Bästa språket, the language policy based on Mål i mun. I quickly obtained a copy of this highly anticipated policy and began analysis of this document as well….As a study of language policy, policy documents are central to my research. Though they are themselves neither settings nor participants, they are at the heart of this dissertation. (Hult, 2007, p. 130-132)

Data collection was undertaken across the different layers of the LPP onion: (1) the Federal level – including Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), commonly known as the Bilingual Education Act (BEA), Title III of No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), and political discourse which accompanied the creation, interpretation, and implementation of the policy, as well as national media discourse around language education policy issues (2) the State level – Pennsylvania policy and the political/educational discourse therein, and (3) educational language policy and program development in the School District of Philadelphia including official and unofficial policy texts, interviews with teachers and administrators, audio-recorded policy meetings, and field notes from policy meetings, teacher meetings, and bilingual classrooms. (Johnson, 2007, p. 43-44, emphasis added)
Therefore, I sought to locate the Rwandan language policy texts. This process began soon after I learned about the language policy shift in Rwanda and was spending a semester abroad at Boğaziçi University in Turkey (spring 2010) to take a language planning and policy course in which I elected to research the Rwandan MOI policy as my final project. Through the Internet, I was able to locate several media reports on the policy as well as the 2003 Rwandan Constitution that mentions MOI, plus a few government and NGO reports on education in Rwanda. But that was it for primary sources. Later that year when preparing for comprehensive exams, I would learn about the existence of other policy documents while studying Tove Rosendal’s (2010) dissertation comparing multilingual management in Rwanda and Uganda. So, I imagined that once in country, I would visit the national archives or wherever official government policies are stored in order to access the documents.

However, several weeks into my stay in Rwanda, my archival research had turned up nothing. By that point (October 2011), I had hired a local research assistant who made phone calls to try to find out where they might be (the response rate to email in Rwanda is low) but to no avail. It may be just as well, as Johnson (2007) notes that progressing from the “top-down” creates two methodological issues:

(1) It places potentially undue emphasis on the power of top-down policies, and (2) It can muddy the researcher’s interpretive lens as they may be mired in thoughts of top-down policies and miss local policy activity which may have little or nothing to do with each other. (Johnson, 2007, pp. 77-78)
It was around this same time (in mid-October) that my research assistant and I began making trips to Kigali to interview policy actors. We would frequently make the 2-hour bus trip to Kigali only to get “stood up” – and not just by Rwandans, but by UNICEF employees and other international NGO workers – or learn that the official with whom we had an appointment was:

‘in the field’ or ‘on assignment’ or ‘in Kibuye,’ which was disappointing when [my research assistant] and I had traveled for two hours on a daybreak bus from Butare to make it to the appointment on time (researcher journal, November 3, 2011).

One day in mid-November, my research assistant and I traveled to MINEDUC in Kigali for an appointment and sat in the waiting area for around an hour before we were called back. We were excited; we often waited for several hours with few updates. However, once we reached the office of the Director of Policy Planning, we were informed by his secretary that he was in fact not the person we needed to see, but he had directed us to the person we needed to see: the Deputy Director at Teacher Service Commission (TSC). We thanked her, and took off across the city on a minibus. When we arrived at TSC, the Deputy Director met with us right away (as if he had been expecting us):

After a quick exchange in Kinyarwanda with [my research assistant], [the Deputy Director] asked me in English if I was a reporter. I said no, and showed him my MINEDUC research permit. He said, “Okay, because it’s a lot easier to talk to a researcher than a reporter.” He entertained our questions, but did not provide specific answers. When I asked him about the policy documents, he said, “There is no language
policy in Rwanda.” When I asked him to clarify, he said, “Here, there is only language practice.” After we’d spoken for a few minutes, he gave us his card and referred us to the Director General of Education: back to MINEDUC! (researcher journal, November 11, 2011)

This happened on a near weekly basis from October through December, but each time it did I approached the process as progress – and not the “wild goose chase” that it was. Deep down, I think my research assistant knew that it was more the latter, but he didn’t have the heart to tell me – or perhaps he, too, believed that one day we would locate the policy texts.

Answers about policy implementation also remained elusive, though we continued to interview. In an interview I conducted in January with John Simpson, Language & Education Adviser for the British Council Sub Saharan Africa, I inquired about who was responsible for policy implementation. Dr. Simpson responded:

Who’s overseeing the policy implementation? That’s tricky. It’s a collectivist culture, so they make group decisions and no one person will say they’re overseeing anything. But if I were to say, it would be the Director of REB. The Ministry [MINEDUC] is the political agency, whereas REB is the practical one. And while it still very much looks as though education is centralized in Rwanda, it is technically decentralized, so technically district officials should be in charge of implementation of policy, but ultimately no one wants to take responsibility or be accountable. (January 20, 2012)
Furthermore, Dr. Simpson clarified my suspicion about (not) locating the policy texts. I asked if the policy was articulated somewhere; to which he replied, “There’s no articulated policy. What we have are “high level general statements” (J. Simpson, personal communication, January 20, 2012). So beyond my concerns about never locating the policy texts, I was now worried that I was no longer pursuing ELP but an “ethnography of high level general statements.”

Another disclosure about the methodology has to do with the local research assistants. In the acknowledgements of this dissertation, I thank “three undergraduate research assistants who worked for me at different phases of the project.” Methodologically, I would like to be thanking only one (i.e., for consistency, trustworthiness). However, keeping an assistant throughout the project proved to be an impossibility, even though I paid the assistants very well. I lost the first assistant at the beginning of January just prior to beginning data collection, and the second one just before the last research site. I explained the issue in my Fulbright Final Report:

In the end, I was able to complete my work, although I wasn’t sure if I would be able to for a while toward the end. After Genocide Memorial in April, it was time to begin data collection at the fourth and final school: a rural secondary. (I needed it to complement the month of data I had collected at the urban secondary school and round out the study.)

A couple of days before we were to begin, my trusty research assistant informed me that she had taken a job in Kigali and could no longer assist me. She recommended another assistant who accepted the job but quit the day before we ever started, citing the need for more time to finish her B.A. dissertation. I then hired another assistant who accompanied
me to school in the morning but left during the middle of the day when she received a phone call from the Director of the National Museum, offering her a permanent position. Finally, I enlisted the help of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Media & Social Sciences. He recommended an assistant for me; however, that assistant quit after the first day, saying he had gotten a job as a tutorial assistant and couldn't reserve time for me anymore. I was beyond frustration -- to the point of desperation.

Luckily, that assistant recommended another candidate, who proved to be reliable and committed (he even declined a job offer while working for me). After two weeks wasted, I had just enough time to collect data at the last research site (four weeks) and do one final visit at each school (four days). I finished on May 31, left Butare on June 1, and departed for the U.S. on June 3. (Fulbright Final Report, August 11, 2012).

In the recommendations for future researchers section, I wrote:

When hiring local assistants, I would suggest offering to pay them only half of their salary on a regular basis and giving the remainder to them upon project completion (like a bonus). I compensated my assistants well for their work, but I made the mistake of paying them in full every two weeks -- so, they had no incentive to stay until the end. It made no difference whether the assistant and I negotiated on our own or had the meeting mediated by an NUR administrator: They always quit if they were offered permanent employment. (Fulbright Final Report, August 11, 2012).
Finally, though not specifically an ELP method, I would like to report that I attended several professional conferences to get to know people and the issues in (language) education affecting them:

Just 10 days after I arrived in Rwanda, I attended the first annual INATEK (Institute of Agriculture, Technology & Education at Kibungo) symposium on sustainable language policy, where I was able to network with local educators and administrators [see Figure 4]. Two months later, I co-presented with a Rwandan colleague at the inaugural ATER (Association of Teachers of English in Rwanda) conference on using local resources in English language teaching. A month after that, I attended the IPAR (Institute of Policy Analysis and Research) conference on December 9, 2011. Later in the year, I would make two presentations at NUR (National University of Rwanda) – one in an oral expression course for social sciences majors and another in an advertising class. Each of these invitations stemmed from contacts I made at the INATEK symposium. I also attended two conferences that were organized by my Fulbright affiliate, Professor Evariste Ntakirutimana, a sociolinguist at NUR: a regional symposium on plurilingualism and an international conference on the Genocide (CNLG). (Fulbright Final Report, August 11, 2012).
1.4.4 Ethical considerations

From the planning stage of this project until now, the dissemination stage, protecting my research participants has been a central priority. In designing the study, I was very aware that an ethnographic orientation featuring observation and interviews would necessitate working with human subjects and thus took precautions to ensure their anonymity and confidentiality. For example, I applied for an exception from standard informed consent procedures during Internal Review Board (IRB) review. In lieu of my participants signing a consent form with their actual names, I was able to establish verbal consent through a digitally recorded response to the statement “If you are willing to volunteer for this research and be audio recorded, please state your pseudonym (false name) and today’s date now” after my research assistant had reviewed the content of the consent tool in Kinyarwanda with the participant (see General Appendix C for IRB informed consent tool).
At the same time, I aligned my research protocol to meet all GSU IRB ethical and legal criteria for conducting international research. One such criterion requires the principal investigator to provide official letters of permission from an in-country contact in order to conduct research in an international location. I was able to supply them from both Professor Evariste and the Rector of NUR at the time, Dr. Silas Lwakabamba – not only for the GSU requirement but also to obtain the Rwanda Ministry of Education research permit (see General Appendix D for MINEDUC research permit).

Finally, although utmost care was taken to protect the identity of my participants (e.g., using pseudonyms, naming government officials by their title/position), I had underestimated the political and controversial nature of my research topic – a fact I would learn while in the field – and have therefore extended the completion date of this dissertation as long as I could. Moreover, I have requested a three-year embargo – the maximum the GSU College of Arts and Sciences Graduate Office grants – in order to delay dissemination until after the 2017 Rwandan Presidential election, which is likely to be characterized by instability – if Burundi is an indicator, as it historically has been.

1.5 The plan

The plan presented in this section is not the plan for implementing English as a medium of instruction in Rwanda, but rather the “roadmap” to this journal article-style dissertation. The document contains three distinct but interrelated research articles that center on language policy issues in Rwanda, stemming from the same overall ELP research project undertaken in country from September 2011 to June 2012. Each article is intended as a separate piece of scholarship and therefore contains its own notes, references, and appendices. The articles (Chapters 2-4) are
framed by a general introduction (this chapter, Chapter 1) and an overall conclusion (Chapter 5) to provide broader contextualization and interpretation for the project as a whole. Immediately following the overall conclusion come the general references and appendices for the introduction and conclusion (Chapters 1 & 5). Each article is briefly described below, including the research question(s) addressed, the landscape and LPP aspect explored, and the actual or intended publication venue. Chapter 1 culminates in Table 3, which lays out the architecture of the articles.

Chapter 2 presents the first article entitled “Language policy and linguistic ecology in Rwanda: A view from the ground,” which answers the first research question – concerning the current linguistic ecology of Rwanda – primarily through linguistic landscape analysis. The article explores the status planning aspect of LPP, and is presented as the initial piece in the series in order to contextualize the medium of instruction question within language in society. Additionally, it serves as an introduction to some of the sociopolitical issues associated with LPP status planning in Rwanda. The manuscript is currently under review at Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development. I selected JMMD as a possible publication venue for two reasons: first, because the journal is “concerned with macro-level coverage of topics in the sociology and social psychology of language, in language and cultural politics, policy, planning and practice” (JMMD website), and second, because I directly compare my results with a portion of Rosendal’s (2009) JMMD publication “Linguistic markets in Rwanda: Language use in advertisements and on signs.”

The second article, “Policy without a plan: English as a medium of instruction in Rwanda,” is featured in Chapter 3. It addresses (a) the second and third research questions – regarding the Cabinet resolution and implementation of EMI in Rwanda, and the interpretation
and appropriation of it by classroom teachers – and is informed mainly by the ethnographic interview data. The article examines the policy landscape through both status and acquisition perspectives. It was published in 2014 in *Current Issues in Language Planning*; its copyright is held by Routledge/Taylor and Francis and is reused here by permission (see General Appendix E for T&F reuse permit). *CILP* was selected as the publication venue due to the fact that it publishes “major summative and thematic review studies related to polities and language planning and issues in language planning” as well as “individual articles related to any area of language policy and planning” (*CILP* website). The article was included second in this series since it addresses RQs 2 & 3 and therefore serves as a bridge between Articles 1 & 3 (the linguistic and educational landscape).

Chapter 4 presents the third article, “Impacts of Rwandan national language policy on local educational contexts,” which answers the fourth research question – phrased similarly to the article title – by exploring the ways the 2008 Cabinet resolution has affected teaching and learning in Rwandan public school settings in the years immediately following its announcement. It examines the educational landscape and therefore addresses acquisition planning, relying primarily on the classroom observation data. *TESOL Quarterly* was chosen as the potential publication for this article given that it “encourages submission of…articles on topics of significance to individuals concerned with English language teaching and learning and standard English as a second dialect” and “invites manuscripts on a wide range of topics,” especially in language planning, curriculum design and development, instructional methods, materials, and techniques, and professional standards and preparation (*TQ* website).

Individually, these three “snapshots” offer a glimpse into different aspects of the Rwandan LPP landscape. Taken together, however, they provide a panoramic view of the shifts
occurring across the past five-year period in the Rwandan linguistic and educational landscape.

By the time we reach the end of the document, we should have a fuller picture of recent national language policy on present-day Rwanda society.

Table 3. Architectures of the articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article (Chapter)</th>
<th>First (2)</th>
<th>Second (3)</th>
<th>Third (4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Language policy and linguistic ecology in Rwanda: A view from the ground</td>
<td>Policy without a plan: English as a medium of instruction in Rwanda</td>
<td>Impacts of Rwandan national language policy on local educational contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ(s) addressed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 &amp; 3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape explored</td>
<td>Linguistic</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Educational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPP aspect</td>
<td>Status planning</td>
<td>Status &amp; acquisition planning</td>
<td>Acquisition planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intended venue for publication</td>
<td>Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development</td>
<td>Current Issues in Language Planning</td>
<td>TESOL Quarterly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.6 Notes

1 Literacy in this survey is operationalized as an individual’s ability to read or write a letter or short note.

2 Swahili is used throughout this dissertation in place of Kiswahili in order to distinguish it from the other regional languages (e.g., Kinyarwanda and Kirundi) frequently referred to.

3 I use ELP to efficiently discuss ethnography of language policy in this work; however, I do not apply the acronym beyond this project, as elsewhere in the field ELP may stand for English language proficiency or English language program.
NUR is used throughout this volume, as it was the official acronym for the National University of Rwanda during my stay in Rwanda. Since that time, it has been renamed and is presently known as UR-CASS (University of Rwanda – College of Arts and Social Sciences).

Consistent with the conventions of disseminating qualitative research, the names of all research settings and participants have been replaced with pseudonyms. However, I do not replace the names of the Rwandan government officials I interviewed with pseudonyms; instead, for the sake of clarity, I refer to them by title/position. I have chosen not to conceal the identities of Professor Evariste and Rector Lwakabamba of NUR, as they openly sponsored my research and were not actual participants in the study (i.e., they were not interviewed).
2 FIRST ARTICLE

LANGUAGE POLICY AND LINGUISTIC ECOLOGY IN RWANDA: A VIEW FROM THE GROUND

In the two decades since the 1994 Genocide, Rwanda has undergone rapid societal development, due in large part to ambitious policymaking in sectors ranging from business to public health to education. Extensive language policies have also been enacted – namely a 1996 constitutional amendment designating English an official language of Rwanda, and most recently, a 2008 Cabinet resolution shifting the medium of instruction in all public schools from Kinyarwanda and French to English (Republic of Rwanda, 2008). This study takes a linguistic landscape approach (Landry & Bourhis, 1997) to investigate the current language ecology (Haugen, 1972) of Rwanda. It (a) utilizes linguistic landscape analysis methodology (i.e., photographic evidence of signage; Backhaus, 2006, 2007; Hult, 2007, 2009) to explore language use in public spaces (via shop signs in Butare), and (b) features diachronic comparative analysis of findings with those in Rosendal (2009). Results reveal local language shift trends in the Rwandan linguistic landscape (major English gain, major French loss, negligible Kinyarwanda shift) across the five-year period (from 2006-2007 to 2011-2012) that converge with national policy initiatives – the language ecological implications of which (e.g. language loss, linguistic diversity) are discussed.

Keywords: Ecology of language, Linguistic landscape analysis, Linguistic market, Language shift, Language loss, Linguistic diversity
2.1 Background

2.1.1 Language policy in Rwanda

Prior to the 1994 Genocide, language in Rwanda was a comparatively uncomplicated matter. Like many other postcolonial nations in Africa, Rwanda had a dual official language policy, consisting of a local language, Kinyarwanda, and an international language, French, the former colonial language. Unlike other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, however, nearly the entire Rwandan population spoke a common language, Kinyarwanda (Ntakirutimana, 2010; Rosendal, 2009, 2010) – not only as a national lingua franca, but also as a mother tongue¹ (Bakirdjian, 2012; Rurangirwa, 2012). French was not widely used in society even though it was the medium of instruction (MOI), given that only a small segment of the population had access to education in those days (Adekunle, 2007; Businge & Kagolo, 2010).

Then, following the Genocide, a special set of linguistic necessities arose within the country, due in large part to certain groups of Rwandans (e.g., the Tutsi² diaspora) being repatriated after having spent many years in exile abroad – mainly in the anglophone countries of East Africa (i.e., Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda). It was at that time (in 1996) that English was promoted to of ficial language status (Crystal, 1997). A little over a decade later (in 2008), English was granted MOI status in all Government-sponsored schools (Republic of Rwanda, 2008). These two policies are believed to have had a profound impact on the current linguistic ecology of Rwanda.

2.1.2 Linguistic ecology

Although the ecology of language may be traced to earlier work by scholars such as Trim (1959; see e.g., Van Lier, 2000), the concept is generally attributed to Haugen (1972) as the “study of interactions between any given language and its environment” (Haugen, 2001, p. 57).
Traditionally, two main strands of ecolinguistics\(^3\) have been recognized: first, Haugen’s, in which *ecology* and *ecosystem* are used metaphorically in order to study the dynamic processes of language contact situations, and second, Halliday’s (1992), wherein ecology is conceptualized more literally for critically analyzing the role language plays in environmental issues (Fill, 2001). Both strands link the study of language with ecology; however, only Haugen’s guides the present study, as it allows for the exploration of multilingualism and social change by focusing on the dynamic relationships among languages and societal issues (Haugen, 2001). Within this framework, Haugen draws on two basic premises: (1) that endangered languages are similar to endangered species, and (2) linguistic diversity is analogous to biodiversity. Fill (2002) explains the significance of Haugen’s linguistic ecology metaphor:

> Languages have frequently been compared to organisms which grow, have a life of their own and may die from a number of causes – among them suppression by governments, but also natural extinction through the death of the last speakers. What is new about Haugen’s ecological metaphor is that it compares languages not to individual living beings, but rather to whole species, and that it shows languages as existing not in isolation, but in their ‘environment’ – as part of an ecological system with all its interrelations and its forms of equilibrium, which may be stable or in danger of getting destabilized. (p. 421)

Today, according to Skutnabb-Kangas (2011), it has become fashionable to use *ecology* simply as a reference to *context* or *language environment*, although it should generally be reserved to describe “language-related issues embedded in (micro or macro) sociolinguistic,
educational, economic or political settings” (p. 177). Current conceptualizations of the ecology of language involve the simultaneous exploration of different dimensions of multilingualism: relationships among languages, among social contexts of languages, and among speakers of languages (Garner, 2004; Hornberger, 2002; Hornberger & Hult, 2008; Hult, 2007), with contemporary language ecology scholars recognizing linguistic ecology as a conceptual orientation but not as a method. Hult (2009) thus (a) advocates for researchers engaging in ecolinguistic work to “synthesize methodological tools for gathering and analyzing the socially contextualized data needed to investigate the multidimensional issues that the orientation calls forth” (p. 90), and (b) demonstrates the utility of combining other methods with linguistic landscape analysis for the study of linguistic ecology.

2.1.3 Linguistic landscape analysis

Linguistic landscape analysis (LLA), or the study of the visual use of language in the environment (Shohamy & Gorter, 2009), has been making increasing contributions toward our understanding of the ecology of language over the past couple of decades. In their seminal work, Landry and Bourhis (1997) define linguistic landscape (LL) as: “the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, commercial shop signs and public signs on government buildings [that] combine to form the [LL] of a given territory, region or urban agglomeration” (p. 25).

The primary emphasis of LLA has been to quantify language use in public spaces in multilingual societies. However, its potential is not only descriptive but also analytical (Blommaert, 2013). Ben-Rafael (2009) suggests that the focus should be on analyzing public signage “according to the languages utilized, their relative saliency, syntactical or semantic aspects” (p. 40), while Backhaus (2007) claims that LLA can provide insight into
multilingualism and language contact in the “written medium.” To date, LLA has been useful for examining language on signs in environments inhabited by two distinct linguistic groups and in bilingual or multilingual locales, such as Jerusalem (Ben-Rafael, Shohamy, Amara & Trumper-Hecht, 2004, 2006), Bangkok (Huebner, 2006), Tokyo (Backhaus, 2006, 2007), Malmö (Hult, 2007, 2009), and Antwerp (Blommaert, 2013).

LLA is not driven by a coherent theory; rather, it draws on theoretical principles in sociolinguistics and communication (for an in-depth discussion of signs and semiotics, see e.g., Scollon & Scollon, 2003; Backhaus, 2006). Methodologically, LLA relies on photography and visual analysis (Hult, 2009), producing photographic ethnographic evidence, which Crang and Cook (2007) endorse for social sciences research:

There is a long history of using photographs as ethnographic evidence. In anthropology, modern ethnography and photography have gone hand in hand…And geography, whose history of ethnographic research is just as long, is often characterized as a profoundly visual discipline, where seeing (and showing) is close to knowing. (p. 104)

In applied linguistics, the study of linguistic landscapes is relatively new (Backhaus, 2007; Blommaert, 2013; Hult, 2009; Rosendal, 2009), yet it is a growing area of the field, “developing into a sub-field of sociolinguistics and language policy” (Spolsky, 2009, p. 25). The current study seeks to contribute to this new sub-field by employing LLA in surveying the Rwandan linguistic landscape.
2.1.4 Rationale for surveying the Rwandan linguistic landscape

Throughout the 2011-2012 academic year, I carried out ethnography of language policy (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007, 2011; Johnson 2007, 2009, 2010) fieldwork in order to explore the shifting linguistic and educational landscape in Rwanda. I undertook the present LL study for several reasons – the most practical being that my 2009 guidebook was already out-of-date when I arrived in country in September 2011 due to sudden cartographic changes: “The country’s ten provinces (with their historically evocative names) were reduced to four…Practically overnight most cities, towns, and other places changed names and shapes” (Straus & Waldorf, 2011, p. 9). The more professional and academic reasons for pursuing this research were to (1) uncover the current linguistic ecology of Rwanda, and (2) respond to Rosendal’s (2009) call for further investigation into the changes she observed taking place in the Rwandan LL during her fieldwork there from 2006 to 2007.

A multilingual country with Kinyarwanda as the national language and French and English as official languages (Republic of Rwanda, 2003), and a developing nation guided by robust federal policymaking, Rwanda is a prime setting in which to conduct linguistic ecology work. According to Backhaus (2006), much of the LL research has focused on regions or countries with linguistic conflicts (e.g., Brussels, Montreal). In Rwanda, the linguistic conflict arguably manifests itself in terms of economic competition on the “linguistic market” (Bourdieu, 1991), where the three official languages are free to compete, as explained by the President, Paul Kagame, himself in an interview with Jeune Afrique:

Nous avons ici trois langues officielles: le kinyarwanda, l’anglais et le français. Chacun évolue, progresse ou régresse dans le cadre d’un marché linguistique ouvert et libre.
L’état n’intervient pas.⁵ (Soudan, 2005 as quoted in Rosendal, 2009, p. 23)

[We have here three official languages: Kinyarwanda, English, and French. Each one evolves, progresses or regresses in the framework of an open and free linguistic market. The State does not intervene.⁶]

Therefore, in addition to an ecology metaphor, this study is framed by an economic one, as demonstrated by the terminology used throughout (e.g., market, share, competition). Specifically, it utilizes LLA to explore language competition on the linguistic marketplace (i.e. shop signs on the main road and on back roads of a Rwandan city) by (a) looking for evidence of language shift⁷ across time, and (b) exploring the dynamic relationships among languages and with their environment (e.g., economic and sociopolitical context) in order to gain further insight into multilingualism and social change – and obtain a view of Rwandan language policy and linguistic ecology from the ground.

2.2 Exploring linguistic ecology in Rwanda

The LL data gathered in this study center on Butare,⁸ a city in southern Rwanda, located approximately 30 kilometers north of the Rwanda-Burundi border. Butare was the administrative center of the northern half of Ruanda-Urundi (a Belgian territory under League of Nations and United Nations mandates) from 1924 until independence in 1962, when it became the capital of Butare Province, Rwanda. Since recent restructuring/redistricting, Butare has been the capital of Huye District, Southern Province. Butare houses the National University of Rwanda (NUR)⁹ and has long been considered the “intellectual capital” of the country.
According to most sources, Butare is the third largest city in Rwanda – after Kigali and Gitarama – with an estimated population of around 100,000. The vast majority of residents are Rwandan nationals; however, there is a perceptible international community, particularly in sectors of business, health, and education (foreign-born inhabitant statistics are not available). Briggs and Booth (2009) note that Butare is “pleasant and businesslike” but “for all its laid-back atmosphere, [it] is a busy town with a mixed population” (p. 130). To all appearances, Butare is home to a multilingual community, with signage posted around town in a variety of languages (e.g., Kinyarwanda, English, French).

The data for this study were collected along the main road running through Butare (the Kigali-Kanyaru Highway) and on back roads in the six principal areas of town: (1) Taba, a residential neighborhood popular with expats, aid workers, and university faculty; (2) Airport, a mostly commercial and industrial area on the northwest side of town; (3) Market, centrally located and comprising the newly built Huye City Complex (a three-story shopping center that replaced the traditional open-air market) as well as a large number of the town’s retail shops; (4) Cathedral, a pocket of town perched on a hill and consisting mainly of a massive cathedral and the oldest and largest secondary school in the country; (5) Hospital, the University Teaching Hospital of Butare and environs; and (6) University, composed of NUR and its arboretum located on the southeast end of town (see Figure 5 for mapping).

2.2.1 Data collection

Relying on the methodology of previous work investigating linguistic landscapes (e.g., Backhaus, 2006, 2007 in Japan; Hult, 2007, 2009 in Sweden), I documented public signage in Butare during my nine-month stay there (from September 2011 to June 2012). I took
comprehensive photography and charted signs on storefronts along the main road from Taba at the north edge of town to Tumba at the south end (indicated by the ‘begin’ and ‘end’ arrows in Figure 5), as well as on back roads of the six principal areas of town described above: Taba, Airport, Market, Cathedral, Hospital, and University.

Figure 5. Map of main road and major areas of Butare

Storefront signs ($n = 177$) were captured via digital photography using a 28mm Canon PowerShot SD1400IS without enabling the zoom feature in order to “obtain images that approximated what would be visible at street level with the naked eye” (Hult, 2009, p. 96). Every attempt was made to digitally capture the complete set of signs. However, after two separate incidents involving security officers inquiring about my actions and requesting that I cease
photographing public spaces, the remaining data (roughly a third of the data set) were sketched in a notebook (see Appendices A and B for complete listings of signs).

2.2.2 Data analysis

The entire set of photos and sketches was double coded (i.e., coded in full) by two researchers: the author and a colleague in the Faculty of Arts, Media, and Social Sciences at NUR. Initial codes were English, French, Kinyarwanda and other, with proper nouns ignored in the analysis (i.e., Chez Gikongo = French; Kwa Josee = Kinyarwanda). To account for language dominance (i.e., greater amounts of language, larger size of text and/or prioritized order of appearance), we followed Rosendal (2009), indicating dominant use on bilingual or multilingual signs with the greater-than symbol (>): for example, a sign featuring more Kinyarwanda than English would be coded Kinyarwanda > English.

We established interrater reliability by individually coding 25.0% of the data and then meeting to address discrepancies. The following issues were resolved to code the remaining 75.0% of the data: (1) hotel was determined to be French when the name followed in the noun phrase (e.g., Hotel Barthos) and motel English (American), even if the name followed (e.g., Motel Ineza); (2) local pronunciation would not affect the coding for ambiguous items (i.e., if a sign could serve as either French or English [e.g., Horizon, Ibis, Volcano], it was coded other); however, (3) all acronyms/initialisms were classified as other, even if we knew the underlying language of origin (e.g., VSF [Vétérinaires Sans Frontières] = French, but here other). By reaching consensus on these issues, the interrater reliability measures as calculated through simple percentages increased for the remaining data: from 90.9% agreement on the first 25.0% of the data to 97.0% on the remainder.
Diachronic comparative analysis was achieved by comparing (a) the present quantitative results with those collected by Rosendal (2009) from 2006-2007, and (b) the current photographic evidence gathered in 2011-2012 with photos taken and posted online by a Belgian travel blogger on a visit to Butare in 2009 (Vervimine Minéraux, 2009). Data interpretation was facilitated by insight gained through extended ethnographic fieldwork in country from 2011-2012, as well as ongoing online monitoring of Rwandan language policy and sociolinguistics-related issues beginning in late 2008.

2.3 Linguistic landscape findings

2.3.1 Distribution of languages on storefronts

Analysis of the storefront signs \( (n = 177) \) yielded information about the distribution of languages used on storefronts in Butare for the years 2011-2012. As seen in Table 4, of the three official languages of Rwanda (i.e., Kinyarwanda, French, English), English was the predominant language displayed on storefronts on both the main road and back roads, followed by French, and then Kinyarwanda. It is interesting to note that Kinyarwanda – not only an official language, but also the national language – is featured on less than 10.0% of the signage throughout the entire city of Butare.

The vast majority of “stationary” (either affixed or professionally painted), as opposed to “mobile” (Reh, 2004), signage on buildings in Butare was monolingual. Given that duplication of information on signs in Rwanda is “very rare” (Rosendal, 2009), it comes as little surprise that there were just two instances of bilingual signs on the main road (one Kinyarwanda > English (see Figure 11 in Appendix C) and one Kinyarwanda > French), and just one on the back roads (French > English).
Table 4. Languages on storefronts of Butare main road and back roads, 2011-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language combinations on storefronts</th>
<th>Number of storefronts in each location (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Main road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English only</td>
<td>30 (32.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French only</td>
<td>15 (16.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinyarwanda only</td>
<td>8 (8.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinyarwanda &gt; English</td>
<td>1 (1.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinyarwanda &gt; French</td>
<td>1 (1.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French &gt; English</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>38 (40.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>93 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6. Distribution of languages on storefronts

The distribution of languages on storefronts along the main road and on back roads in Butare is represented through the chart in Figure 6. It is worth noting that although English holds the largest share on the marketplace among the official languages of Rwanda, it doesn’t hold the largest share of the market on the main road of Butare: That distinction goes to storefronts displaying signs coded as other, with 40.9% of the share and composed of 16 ambiguous items.
(e.g., 5/5, Photocopies), nine “globalization” items (e.g., Kobil, tiGO [stylized]), eight acronyms (e.g., SP [gas station], BCR [bank]), and five ‘other others’ (e.g., Arabic sign on the mosque).

2.3.2 Shifting linguistic landscape

By directly comparing my findings with those of Rosendal (2009), shifts in language use in the LL of Butare across the five-year timeframe become evident. Diachronic comparative analysis results are found for the main road in Table 5 and for back roads in Table 6. The following are notable trends in language use on buildings along the main road (as demonstrated in Table 5 and Figure 7): (1) major French loss (from over half the signs in 2006-2007 to 16.1% in 2011-2012); major English gain (from 23.4% to 32.3%); minor Kinyarwanda gain (up 6.5 percentage points); and major multilingual loss (from 19.2% to 2.2%). The other category experienced the most gain (40.9 percentage points), the likely reasons for which are discussed later.

Table 5. Diachronic comparison of languages on storefronts along main road

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language combinations on storefronts</th>
<th>Number of storefronts at each time (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 2006-2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French only</td>
<td>26 (55.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English only</td>
<td>11 (23.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinyarwanda only</td>
<td>1 (2.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French &gt; Kinyarwanda</td>
<td>3 (6.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English &gt; French</td>
<td>2 (4.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English &gt; French &gt; Kinyarwanda</td>
<td>2 (4.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinyarwanda &gt; French</td>
<td>1 (2.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinyarwanda &gt; English</td>
<td>1 (2.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>47 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As for noteworthy trends in language use on signage on back roads in Butare (as demonstrated in Table 6 and Figure 8), we see minor French loss (down fewer than 10 percentage points); major English gain (from 17.4% to 39.3%); minor Kinyarwanda loss (down 6.5 percentage points); and major multilingual loss (from 29.3% of the market share to almost none [1.2%]). Once again, other gained significant ground over the five years (up 21.4 percentage points) and will be addressed in the discussion to follow.

### 2.4 Language policy and linguistic ecology in Rwanda

Performing LLA of storefront signs in Butare and complementary diachronic analysis of data across a five-year period has revealed trends in the contemporary LL of Rwanda – trends that when interpreted provide insight into (a) the ways local language shifts converge with national language policy initiatives, and (b) how recent language policy (as evidenced via language shift) in Rwanda has had a significant impact on its current linguistic ecology.
Table 6. Diachronic comparison of languages on storefronts on back roads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language combinations on storefronts</th>
<th>Number of storefronts at each time (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 2006-2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French only</td>
<td>28 (37.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English only</td>
<td>13 (17.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinyarwanda only</td>
<td>12 (16.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French &gt; English</td>
<td>10 (13.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinyarwanda &gt; French</td>
<td>5 (6.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French &gt; Kinyarwanda &gt; English</td>
<td>4 (5.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English &gt; French</td>
<td>2 (2.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinyarwanda &gt; English</td>
<td>1 (1.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>75 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8. Diachronic trends of monolingual signs on back roads

2.4.1 Language policy and language shift in Rwandan society

The findings of the present study have demonstrated the following instances of language shift (i.e., trends in monolingual storefront signs throughout Butare) in the Rwandan LL vis-à-vis
its three official languages across the five-year timeframe: (1) major English gain: from 19.7%\textsuperscript{10} of the total market (i.e., main road + back roads) in 2006-2007 to 35.6% in 2011-2012; (2) major French loss: from 44.3% to 22.0%, and (3) relatively little Kinyarwanda shift: from 10.7% to 9.0%. When we compare these findings to recent language policymaking in Rwanda, patterns of convergence emerge. It should be noted that this analysis is presented to illustrate the context for the language shift trends and is not meant to imply direct policy causality.

2.4.1.1 Major English gain

As indicated in the LL findings in the current study, English was the predominant language used on storefront signs on both the main road and back roads of Butare in 2011-2012. That was not the case just five years prior, when Rosendal (2009) found English to be the second most visible language on storefronts in Butare. Some might suggest that English’s rise to prominence in Rwanda is due to external forces (e.g., globalization, linguistic imperialism) acting on the market, which inarguably play a role. However, based on my fieldwork and analysis of the language shift phenomenon in Rwanda, I attribute the rapid rise of English more to internal forces – namely drastic language policymaking and strategic political alignment on the part of the Rwandan Government.

The first major promotion of English through policymaking in Rwanda came in 1996 when English was given official language status via an Article 7 amendment to the 1993 Constitution, immediately affording it “equal status with Kinyarwanda and French” (LeClerc, 2012). Legitimizing English was seen as necessary following the Genocide to reintegrate large numbers of the Tutsi diaspora (most sources claim around 800,000) who were returning to Rwanda after living in exile in neighboring anglophone countries since prior episodes of ethnic
violence (i.e., in 1959, 1973). These returnees generally had little to no command of French, as Mbori (2008) explains:

In recognition of the growing international role of English as a global language and, to some extent, because some prominent people in the top leadership considered themselves ‘Anglophones’ and spoke little or no French, English became the other official language in Rwanda. (p. 16)

The second major act of policy elevating the position of English in Rwanda occurred in October 2008, when it was announced that English would replace Kinyarwanda and French as the official MOI for all public schools – primary through tertiary. It is important to note that this policy came in the form of a Cabinet resolution (i.e., President, Cabinet officials) – and not through an act of Parliament. The 2008 Cabinet resolution may be considered drastic because of its sweeping nature (all grades, all levels) and rapid schedule for implementation (to take effect in less than three months). Furthermore, due to the top-down nature of the policy (i.e., direct from the President) and given the tightly controlled political climate in Rwanda following the Genocide (see e.g., Plaut, 2012; Samuelson & Freedman, 2010; Straus & Waldorf, 2011), the resolution has been described as “mandatory” (Pearson, 2014)\(^{11}\) – which could serve to explain why the linguistic landscape in Rwandan educational settings might change in a short period of time. However, it does not specifically address language use in society (i.e., on street/shop signs or billboards). Thus, if the resolution holds responsibility for the upward trend in English use in public spaces, it is an example of \textit{de facto} language reality as opposed to \textit{de jure} language policy (Shohamy, 2006).
These major shifts in language policy correlate with trends in Rwandan foreign policy and recent strategic alignment with regional and international entities. For example, in 2007, Rwanda became a full member of the East African Community (EAC), thereby strengthening its identification with other anglophone countries in the region, as “the EAC aims at widening and deepening co-operation among the partner states in, among others, political, economic and social fields for their mutual benefit” (East African Community Portal, 2014). Rwanda’s alignment with the EAC makes sense for many reasons (e.g., regional trade and development; foreign relations and security), as partner states Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda rely mainly on English for trade and politics; thus, a strategic move toward English in that respect is logical.

However, a more surprising anglophone alignment in recent years is Rwanda’s entrance into the Commonwealth. In November 2009, Rwanda – a former German protectorate and Belgian colony with no historical ties to the British crown – was admitted to the Commonwealth of Nations, further “underlining the anglophone shift” (Carnegy & Manson, 2014, para. 18). Although the background leading up to this strategic alignment isn’t entirely clear, it is common knowledge that Rwanda applied for membership in 2008 (Kron, 2009), the same year that the British Council began working with the Rwandan Ministry of Education (P. Masterjerb, personal communication, November 11, 2011). The British Council has been quite instrumental in the Rwandan shift toward English, “heavily investing in the language transition throughout the country” (Plaut, 2012, para. 14). The UK is, in fact, now the single largest donor to Rwanda, providing nearly half of its foreign aid (McGreal, 2009) – aid that comes with no strings attached, according to John Simpson, the Language and Education Adviser, British Council Sub Saharan Africa. In an interview, Dr. Simpson disclosed that “the British government allows Rwanda to invest the money as they see fit, which speaks to Rwanda’s transparency,
accountability, and low level of corruption” (personal communication, January 20, 2012). Therefore, it seems that the “major English gain” (in terms of language shift) in Rwanda can be at least partially attributed to the status Rwanda stands to earn through political alignment with Britain: At the time of Rwanda’s admission to the Commonwealth, Minister of Information Louise Mushikiwabo was quoted as saying, “Rwandans are ready to seize economic, political, cultural and other opportunities offered by the Commonwealth network” (BBC, 2009a, para. 8).

2.4.1.2 Major French loss

Although the rapid rise of English in the Rwandan LL is remarkable, it is really the steep decline in French that warrants our attention here. In the five years since Rosendal (2009) reported “the role of French as being quite strong overall in the investigated areas, followed by English and [Kinya]Rwanda” (p. 35), the places of French and English in public spaces in Butare (and anecdotally across the country) have reversed. At the time of data collection for the present study, French held only 22.0% of the total linguistic market, whereas it held 44.3% just five years prior. Once again, it is interesting to note the ways language shift trends correlate with policy and politics.

French was granted official language status in Rwanda sometime “during Belgium’s rule of the country from 1890 to 1962” (Steflja, 2012, p. 2) and was retained as an official language following independence from Belgium in 1962 (Samuelson & Freedman, 2010; Twagilimana, 2007). It served as the main MOI in Rwanda from the time formal education was introduced by the Belgian administration in the 1930s until the 2008 Cabinet resolution. With French in Rwanda enjoying official language and MOI status for nearly a century, it is not really a surprise that it held such a large corner of the linguistic market in Rosendal’s (2009) LL study.
In terms of language policy, the 2008 Cabinet resolution does not specifically address French – that is, it does not state that French shall no longer be the MOI. Nor has French been demoted from official language status in Rwanda, even though some scholars and media outlets have reported so. For example, in 2008, an NPR story claimed that “the Rwandan government want[ed] to replace French with English as the language of business, diplomacy and scholarship” (NPR, 2008, para. 2). In 2010, Samuelson and Freedman published an article stating, “Near the end of 2008, some international news coverage focused on Rwanda’s announcement that it was discarding French as one of its three official languages. Rwanda would now have only two official languages: Kinyarwanda and English” (2010, p. 191). And, in 2012, Clover (2012) mentioned Rwanda’s “2008 decision to downgrade French,” while Stefija referred to “the removal of French as one of three official languages” (2012, p. 2).

However, there has been no official act (de jure policy) to date “downgrading” French. Tanganyika (2013) recently emphasized that point, reporting that at a media and government dialogue:

[Minister of Information] Louise Mushikiwabo told the workshop that attracted participants from the public sector, civil society, international organizations and some foreign guests, that the French language had not been banned in Rwanda and stressed that, like Kinyarwanda and English, French is still an official language as stipulated in Rwanda’s statutes. (para. 1)

While that may be the case, Carnegy and Manson (2014) point out that “the purge against French influence continues. Although French is still an official language, the opposition
Democratic Green Party has said Rwanda has broken the constitution by phasing French out of bank notes, tax returns and identity papers” (para. 17). Ntakirutimana (2010) judiciously sums up the situation: “Despite the disadvantageous position of French in Rwanda, it remains a co-official language with English and Kinyarwanda, unless a revision of the Constitution intervenes in the next few years” (p. 26, emphasis added).

An official demotion of French in Rwanda does seem impending, given the strain in Franco-Rwandan relations in the two decades following the Genocide. As SAP (2012) explains:

Rwanda once had close ties to France and Belgium, strengthened by its membership in La Francophonie, the international union of French-speaking countries. But the 1994 genocide of Tutsis and moderate Hutus devastated Rwanda’s people and economy…A dramatic reorganisation of the country’s government and financial institutions followed, and the legacy of Belgian colonialism and the military and financial support of the French government were quickly implicated in the genocide. A Rwandan commission formally alleged that French officials, including then-president François Mitterrand, were directly involved in the genocide. Relations with France naturally soured. (para. 2)

Further embittering the relationship, in 2006, a French anti-terrorism judge formally accused Kagame of involvement in the missile attack that brought down the plane carrying then-President Juvenal Habyarimana (BBC, 2006; McGreal, 2006; Tran, 2006), and thus “starting” the Genocide. Because he could not issue a warrant for Kagame’s arrest (due to head-of-state immunity), the judge asked UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to bring Kagame before the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (Tran 2006). Ultimately, Kagame did not face trial;
however, the judge succeeded in issuing international arrest warrants for nine of Kagame’s aides, including the head of Rwanda’s armed forces and the army chief of staff (McGreal 2006).

Soon after, Rwanda severed all diplomatic ties with France (SAP, 2012; Tran, 2008):

“On 24 November 2006, Rwanda announced the official rupture of its diplomatic relations with France. The Rwandan Embassy in France was closed, and the French ambassador to Rwanda was expelled” (Ntakirutimana, 2010). Hasselriis (2010) noted that Kagame was “furious” and “shut down the French Embassy, kicked out the ambassador, ordered Radio France Internationale off the air in Rwanda, and closed the local French cultural centre” (para. 3).

Kagame has never shied away from implicating France in the Genocide (see e.g., Kroslak, 2006 and Wallis, 2007 for detailed analyses of France’s role in the Genocide) and has always “vigorously rejected accusations that his Rwandan Patriotic Front [RPF\textsuperscript{15}] was responsible for killing Mr Habyarimana” (McGreal, 2006, para. 3). In January 2012, Kagame received some vindication: An independent investigation cleared him and the RPF of involvement in the missile attack on Habyarimana’s plane (BBC, 2012).

Although diplomatic relations were restored between France and Rwanda in 2009 (BBC, 2009b), there appears to be renewed discord as of late. This time, the conflict was related to the 20\textsuperscript{th} anniversary commemoration of the Genocide (Carnegy & Manson, 2014; Irish, 2014), as Carnegy and Manson (2014) report:

Painstaking efforts to heal the deep divisions between France and Rwanda over French actions during the Rwandan genocide have been severely set back by an angry diplomatic dispute on the 20\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the massacres. Kigali barred France’s ambassador from attending the genocide commemorations in the Rwandan capital on Monday in response
to Paris’s decision to cancel the planned participation of the French justice minister in protest at published remarks by Paul Kagame, Rwandan president. (para. 2)

Given this and the fact that Kagame and many of his chief advisors do not speak French (Mbori, 2008; NPR, 2008; Rosendal, 2009), it seems unlikely that the French language will experience a resurgence in the LL of Rwanda either through policy initiatives or political alignment – at least for the remainder the current administration (i.e., 2017).

2.4.1.3 Negligible Kinyarwanda shift

The LLA findings regarding Kinyarwanda, the national language and lingua franca – spoken as a mother tongue by 99.4% of Rwandans (Republic of Rwanda, 2005) and as the sole language of communication for an estimated 90.0% of the population (Businge & Kagolo, 2010) – again provide insight into the ways language shift converges with national language policy initiatives – or, in the case of Kinyarwanda, lack thereof.

In this study, Kinyarwanda was shown to hold a small share of the linguistic market in Butare at both points in time and relatively little shift across the five-year span: from 10.7% of the overall market in 2006-2007 to 9.0% in 2011-2012. The stable but marginal presence of Kinyarwanda in the LL in Rwanda may be explained by the fact that Kinyarwanda is “not of interest” (Rurangirwa, 2010) or “absent” (Rurangirwa, 2012) from current language policy in Rwanda. Officially, Kinyarwanda has been promoted through policy only once: the “Kinyarwandisation” movement of 1979. At that time, policymakers thought that the use of a foreign language [French] “was the cause for a high number of failings in schools and that Kinyarwandisation [extending primary education to eight years (P1–P8) with Kinyarwanda as
the MOI for all eight years] would resolve the problem…However, short-term evaluation revealed the opposite” (Ntakirutimana, 2010), and the measure was quickly abandoned.

In recent years, policymakers have presumably focused so much on the competition between international languages in Rwanda (i.e., English vs. French) that Kinyarwanda has been overlooked. The earlier quote from Mbori even disregards Kinyarwanda in Rwandan language policy: “In recognition of the growing international role of English as a global language and, to some extent, because some prominent people in the top leadership considered themselves ‘Anglophones’ and spoke little or no French, English became the other official language in Rwanda” (2008, p. 16, emphasis added). Another probable reason Kinyarwanda hasn’t factored into recent language policy debates is that it tends to be “devalued” by the current administration (Bakirdjian, 2012), particularly when it comes to the development agenda of the country.

2.4.2 The current linguistic ecology of Rwanda and implications for the future

The previous section examined the apparent relationship between policy and language shift in contemporary Rwanda. The focus of the discussion now turns to the ways the three official languages (i.e., English, French, Kinyarwanda) behave in relation to one another in the LL of Butare – which, in turn, will provide a picture of the current linguistic ecology – and economy – of Rwanda.

2.4.2.1 The current linguistic ecology of Rwanda

At this point, aggregate data have defined language shift in Rwanda in near mathematical terms: When Kinyarwanda is held constant (around 10.0% of the market share), the values of English and French are inversely proportional (i.e., when English increases, French decreases). However, it hasn’t provided information about what Mackey (2001) calls the ecology of language shift, or the “interrelated sequences of causes and effects producing changes in the
traditional language behavior of one group under the influence of another, resulting in a switch in the language of one of the groups” (p. 68). In order to gain insight into that phenomenon, we must look at specific examples of the ways English, French, and Kinyarwanda interact in the Rwandan LL.

When a new species is introduced into an ecosystem, there are several scenarios for its behavior in relation to existing species (e.g., avoidance, coexistence, replacement). Similar scenarios exist when a new language is introduced into a linguistic landscape. In Rwanda, English tends to either (a) gloss (i.e., coexist with) or (b) replace other languages, as revealed through diachronic comparative analysis. To illustrate, Appendix C presents photographic evidence of English glossing Kinyarwanda. In the two years since Vervimine Minéraux (2009) took the photo, the Kinyarwanda-only sign on the Huye District Office (Figure 11) was glossed with an exact English translation (Figure 12). This is unusual behavior for English in Rwanda, however, as we don’t see English “cropping up” alongside Kinyarwanda or French in the data set because we see so little bilingual/multilingual signage overall. In this case, it appears that Kinyarwanda was retained on the sign – even assigned language dominance through prioritized order of appearance – because, as the District Office, it offers important social services to the community – 90.0% of whom rely on Kinyarwanda as their only language of communication. Rosendal (2009) suggests that when the authorities want to “reach all Rwandans for important social and health issues” (p. 29), they use Kinyarwanda. The present data appear to support that claim, as six of the 12 signs offering state/publicly owned services (e.g., city hall, hospital, post office, water treatment plant) were displayed in Kinyarwanda.

Another scenario, replacement, is demonstrated in Appendix D. Here, the French-only sign on the university bookstore (Librairie Universitaire du Rwanda; 12) was replaced by
English (NUR University Bookshop; *Figure 13*) sometime in the same two-year period (2009-2011). Replacement of this nature is really the only explanation for the dramatic language shift phenomenon in Butare (unless we assume complete turnover of establishments – not just signs). What is interesting is that we see replacement of one international, fast spreading language (i.e., Mandarin, English, Spanish, French; Romaine, 2000) with another. This is not the typical “big fish little fish” language ecology dynamic, as described by Mackey (2001): “Just as competition for limited bio-resources creates conflict in nature, so also with languages. If a small fish gets in contact with a big fish, it is the smaller which is more likely to disappear” (p. 67). Although both French and English are big fish, so-to-speak, English is stronger on the Rwandan market, which is a plausible function of globalization and/or linguistic imperialism (e.g., Phillipson, 1992), wherein replacement is thought to eradicate one language in favor of a more dominant one and often by force (e.g., policy).

A second and more radical example of replacement occurring within the same timeframe is seen in *Appendix E*. At the time of Vervimine Minéraux’s (2009) visit to Butare, the signage on the National Museum of Rwanda consisted of French on the left (Musée National du Rwanda) and Kinyarwanda on the right (Ingoro y’Umurage w’u Rwanda; *Figure 13*). However, just two years later, both languages had been replaced by English. The new sign reads ‘INMR’ on the left and ‘Institute of National Museums of Rwanda Ethnographic Museum’ on the right (*Figure 14*; acronyms in the Rwandan LL are discussed in greater detail below).

Given the scenarios above, it is clear that English is currently the dominant species in the linguistic ecosystem of Rwanda, and its dominance is even more evident if we perform a finer analysis of the data originally coded as *other* (i.e., ambiguous items, “globalization” items, and the acronyms). The ambiguous items – all English-French ambiguous (e.g., Cactus, Cafe Tumba,
Electro, Horizon Express) – were originally conservatively coded as *other* in order to give French the benefit of the doubt in the Rwandan linguistic marketplace. However, if we were to assume those instances to be in fact “English compliant,” then the new percentages for the distribution of languages on storefronts on the main road become *English* (49.5%), *French* (16.1%), *Kinyarwanda* (8.6%) and *other* (23.7%), and *English* (40.5), *French* (28.6%), *Kinyarwanda* (9.5%) and *other* (20.2%) on the back roads (compare graphs in Figure 6 and Figure 9).

![Figure 9. Distribution of languages on storefronts including ambiguous items](image)

Going one step further, we could also consider the “globalization” items – at least the English amalgamations, which, for the most part, represent international/multinational corporations (e.g. Ecobank, a pan-African banking conglomerate headquartered in Togo) – as English. Likewise, we could include English initialisms (e.g., KCB [Kenya Commercial Bank], MTN [Mobile Telephone Networks]) in the count, rendering the final language distribution percentages as follows: *English* (67.7%), *French* (16.1%), *Kinyarwanda* (8.6%) and *other*
(5.4%) on the main road, and English (51.2%), French (28.6%), Kinyarwanda (9.5%), and other (9.5%) on the back roads (see Figure 10).

![Bar chart showing percentage of signs in English, French, Kinyarwanda, and other languages on main and back roads.](chart.png)

**Figure 10. Final distribution of languages on storefronts, 2011-2012**

Acronyms/initialisms are certainly a noticeable commodity on the Rwandan linguistic market these days, with eight instances on the main road and seven on the back roads, totaling 8.4% of the overall market. Curiously, it appears that the francophone style of abbreviation is disappearing at the expense of English initialisms, particularly when it comes to government agencies, such as the ones my 2009 guidebook calls ORINFOR (Office Rwandais d’Information) and ORTPN (Office Rwandais du Tourisme et des Parcs Nationaux) are now known as RBA (Rwanda Broadcasting Agency) and RDB (Rwanda Development Board). A prime example is the English initialism on the National Museum of Rwanda (in Figure 16) that replaced the name of the museum in French. More research is needed to know if acronyms/initialisms are an EAC convention, an effect of the global marketplace, or a Rwandan particularity.

Nonetheless, Figure 10 reveals that English decidedly dominates the overall linguistic
market (i.e., both main road and back roads), occupying 59.5% of the LL, followed by French (22.4%), and Kinyarwanda (9.0%). These figures may more accurately highlight the Rwandan LL priorities demonstrated herein, especially when considered in conjunction with the earlier language shift findings. It appears that replacing French with English has been more of a priority along the main road (which is paved and more traveled) than it has on the back roads (which are dirt or cobblestone and more off the beaten path, so-to-speak) – likely due to the “economic considerations” involved in linguistic landscaping (Cenoz & Gorter, 2009). An example of public (e.g., main road) versus private (e.g., off the main road) priorities in Butare is seen in Appendix F, where the sign for Tumba Primary School on the main road is in English (Figure 17), but the sign on the building is still (assuming it has been that way for a long time) written in French (Figure 18). If cost were a concern (as it often is in a development context), then replacing the most visible signs first would be the logical priority.

In sum, Haugen’s ecology of language metaphor shows languages “as part of an ecological system with all its interrelations and its forms of equilibrium, which may be stable or in danger of getting destabilized” (Fill, 2002, p. 421). In Rwanda, we see symbiotic relationships and interspecies competition among English, French, and Kinyarwanda in the LL, and, although a linguistic landscape is a complex system like an ecosystem – and thus hard to untangle – the following general statements appear to characterize the current linguistic ecology of Rwanda: (1) French once dominated the ecosystem; (2) English was recently introduced to the system and has been growing and spreading at a rapid rate ever since (fertilized by politics and policies); (3) French and English are competing species and cannot co-exist; (4) English is more dominant than French, replacing and threatening to eradicate it; and (5) Kinyarwanda does not compete
with other languages, instead coexisting with them and therefore remaining stable – despite receiving little encouragement for growth.

### 2.4.2.2 Implications for the future

The current linguistic ecology of Rwanda has implications for the future – in terms of both language ecology and economy. Haugen’s language ecology metaphor with its central concepts of endangered languages and linguistic diversity will be considered first, followed by Kagame’s linguistic market metaphor.

Haugen (1972) likens endangered languages to endangered species, which must be protected in order to avoid loss. In the case of French in the Rwandan LL, we see substantial language loss\(^{16}\), perhaps approaching language death (i.e., total shift from one language to another). It may even be considered “glotticide” (Ntakirutimana, 2012), as it potentially involves a government attempting to “kill off” a language (Romaine, 2000). However, there is one crucial difference: French is neither a “minority” language nor an “indigenous” language. Nor is it a vulnerable or endangered language (UNESCO, 2014), so it doesn’t absolutely merit protection. This then begs the question of whether we should care about language loss in this situation, since it involves one of the most powerful languages in the world. But what if it were Kinyarwanda (which doesn’t actually appear on UNESCO’s endangered languages list either)? Would it matter more if the loss were a local/national language as opposed to an international/official one?

French loss in Rwanda introduces some unusual ethical issues, as it doesn’t present in the typical language loss sequence (i.e., loss of an endangered language leads to extinction).

Without intervention, some estimates have predicted the loss of up to 30.0% of the world’s species by 2050 (Gabriel, 2007) and 90.0% of the world’s languages by 2090 (Hale et al., 1992), which would have major ecological implications, especially regarding diversity.
Haugen (1972) has proposed that linguistic diversity – the number and variety of languages spoken within a certain country or region – is akin to biological diversity – the number and variety of organisms found within a specified region – the assumption being the more diversity, the better (i.e., the healthier the ecosystem). The present findings suggest that the Rwandan LL has experienced major multilingual loss over the period from 2006-2007 to 2011-2012 in that there are significantly fewer signs appearing in two or more languages on both the main road and the back roads. This raises some critical questions, namely (a) is Rwanda becoming a monolingual country, and (b) is linguistic diversity essential to the health of the Rwandan ecosystem?

Answering the first question will necessarily depend on how we define multilingualism (e.g., spoken competence, literacy). Regardless, we should take a step back and consider to what degree Rwanda was multilingual in the first place. According to 2002 census data, Kinyarwanda was spoken by 99.4% of the population, French by 3.9%, Swahili by 3.0%, and English by 1.9% (Rosendal, 2010), and in 2010, it was reported that “outside major towns, the vast majority speak only Kinyarwanda” (Businge & Kagolo, 2010, para. 19). Moreover, Rwanda currently ranks 218 out of 227 countries in terms of linguistic diversity (Lewis, Simons & Fennig, 2014), with one universally shared language, Kinyarwanda. Our LL findings might lead us to believe that Rwandan policy is paving the way for English monolingualism. However, interpreted in the light of the previous statistics, it could also be seen as an attempt to promote linguistic diversity – that is, encouraging English to “take root” in a way that French, the ex-colonial language, never really could. When President Kagame is posed this very question (whether Rwanda is becoming monolingual), apparently he commonly responds, “Rwanda isn’t becoming unilingual. It’s simply making room for new languages” (Hasselriis, 2010, para. 7).
As for the second question, it is generally accepted that biodiversity is essential to the health of an ecosystem. In 2007, the German Minister of the Environment claimed that “failure to address species loss will make the world a poorer place – both naturally and economically” (Gabriel, 2007, para. 1). So, how does this relate to linguistic diversity? Will language loss in Rwanda make the country a more impoverished place? At present, Rwanda is in the process of transforming from an agrarian economy to a knowledge-based economy (Republic of Rwanda, 2000) as outlined in Vision 2020, the national development plan; and for now, the economy is steadily growing: “Since [the 1994 Genocide], the rebuilding has been impressive, with GDP growth that has risen by 7-8% annually in recent years” (Redmond & Crisafulli, 2013, para. 5). And, although Rwanda does receive a substantial amount of aid from foreign donors (particularly anglophone countries), the country’s leadership appears not complacent but action-oriented toward a sustainable future. Claver Yisa, Director of Policy Planning at MINEDUC, explains the rationale behind selecting English for development in Rwanda:

Really it is not choosing English for its own sake. This is a way to make Rwanda to be equal, to use English. English is now a world language, especially in trade and commerce. Rwanda is trying to attract foreign investors – most of these people are speaking English. It’s choosing English as a medium of instruction so we Rwandans of today, and more importantly of tomorrow, will be able to benefit. If Spanish or any other language could get us to that, no problem. If Kinyarwanda could get us to that, that would be marvellous. It is not English for its own sake. (McGreal, 2009, para. 6)
Admittedly, French language loss may constitute a loss of linguistic and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991) on some scales. However, French doesn’t appear to factor into Rwanda’s strategic plan for the future in terms of development and economic growth. For now – and the foreseeable future, English is winning on Kagame’s linguistic market (2005) – as a lingua franca and “lingua economica” (Phillipson, 2008) of East Africa and beyond.

2.5 Conclusion

This study followed a linguistic landscape approach to investigate the current language ecology of Rwanda. It utilized (a) LLA methodology to explore language use on storefronts in Butare, and (b) diachronic comparative analysis to examine language shift and the dynamic relationships among languages in Rwanda, revealing that the major findings (English is dominating the LL; French is disappearing from the LL; Kinyarwanda is holding a small but stable corner of the linguistic market) converge with recent national policy initiatives. It is hoped that this study has contributed to our understanding of the impacts of policy on linguistic ecology – both in Rwanda and more generally. In the very least, it has called into question the issue of whether LLA is a useful index of multilingualism. In some cases (e.g., Rwanda), it may be less of a sociolinguistic index than an economic (i.e., linguistic market) or sociopolitical indicator (i.e., means of demarcating a territory; Calvet, 1990 in Backhaus, 2007).

As a conceptual orientation, the ecology of language is not without its critics. For some, a weakness of the orientation is its tendency to animate or anthropomorphize languages – as if they have volition and/or agency. For the purposes of the present study, however, linguistic ecology has served as a useful metaphor through which to explore language contact and language change in the Rwandan LL. Methodologically, the study has demonstrated powerful explanatory
potential in combining LLA and diachronic comparative analysis for the study of linguistic ecology. Nevertheless, I must mention a couple of shortcomings here. First, the boundaries of Butare may be inconsistent between Rosendal (2009) and the present study. In the five-year span between studies, an additional nine storefronts were added to the back roads count, which seems like plausible development; however, the 46 additional storefronts on the main road suggest that I may have operationalized the edges of town too far. Secondly, I did not have access to comprehensive photography from before/during the language shift, so it was impossible to account for its totality and complexity through direct comparison. Finally, I conducted no interviews as a part of the investigation. In order to more meaningfully interpret any LL project data, a complementary qualitative dimension (i.e., interviews with shopkeepers, owners, and local officials) should be included.

Indeed we have reached a juncture in LL research where we need to move beyond mere description – a point Pennycook, Morgan, and Kubota make in the introduction to Blommaert (2013): “In order to understand signs in landscapes, we need signographies (ethnographies of signs) rather than sign cartographies (maps of signs)” (p. ix). Qualitative data can provide answers to questions about authorship (Malinowski, 2009) and audience to help us better understand the “intricate relationship between a sign, its producers, its anticipated consumers, and its actual consumers” (Burdick, 2012, p. 2), or what Backhaus (2007) succinctly refers to as “linguistic landscaping by whom and for whom.” As for follow-up research, a third “portrait” in the series – ideally at another five-year interval (2016-2017) – would allow us to see whether the language shift trends in Rwanda hold, continue in the current direction, or go off in divergent ones. Replication studies – adding a qualitative dimension – in the other EAC countries (especially in Burundi, where a similar language shift is occurring) would be of particular
interest and could provide us with a bigger picture of the linguistic landscape in East Africa as well as a clearer view of language policy and linguistic ecology in Rwanda from the ground.

2.6 Notes

1 Although this may constitute non-inclusive language for some readers, in East Africa mother tongue is the term most commonly used for first language, or the language(s) used since birth (in the home or community), first learned, and/or most identified with.

2 This term is supplied purely for sociohistorical context, as ethnic terminology is a contentious issue in Rwanda. In 2002, the Rwandan Government began to ‘enforce a law against “divisionism,”’ a crime…used to punish any discussion of ethnicity. The 2003 Constitution made supporting “genocide ideology” illegal…and a 2008 law against “genocide ideology” went even farther in limiting people’s ability to discuss identity issues’ (Longman, 2011, p. 37).

3 While some scholars make distinctions among the concepts ecology of language, language ecology, linguistic ecology, and ecolinguistics (see e.g., Pennycook, 2004 for a discussion of ‘the terminological mess that surrounds the notion of language ecology’ [217]), herein the concepts are used interchangeably, with a preference for the term linguistic ecology.

4 Hult (2009) among others is careful not to extrapolate cityscape findings to the entire country (e.g., Malmö does not equal Sweden); while I agree that it is an important point, I do not hold those same reservations here, as Rwanda is such a small and highly centralized context.

5 Although the article was published in French, it should be noted that Kagame is not a French speaker. He was born in 1957 in Rwanda-Urundi, but shortly after the 1959 Rwandan
Revolution, his family fled to Uganda, where he resided until the leading the RPF (see Note 15) into Rwanda in the early 1990s. As a result, Kagame speaks Kinyarwanda and English but not French.

6 English translation of French done by the author.

7 Here, *language shift* is defined as ‘the gradual displacement of one language by another in the lives of the community members’ (Dorian, 1982 as cited in Hornberger, 2010, p. 412).

8 Although the official name for Butare was changed to Huye in January 2006, Butare will be used throughout this article, as it was the way people across Rwanda referred to it during my time in country (2011-2012) – and, according to my local sources, still do today; and it continues to be used almost ubiquitously outside Rwanda (i.e., on the Internet, maps, etc.). The rationale behind the restructuring/redistricting is said to be threefold: ‘increased decentralisation of government, the blurring of old provincial ethnic distinctions, and the dissociation of the present-day administration with names that retained associations with the genocide’ (Briggs & Booth, 2009, p. 22). Some scholars also highlight the ‘social engineering’ aspect of this ‘spatial reconfiguration of Rwanda’ (Straus & Waldorf, 2011, p. 9).

9 The acronym NUR is used in this article, as it was the official acronym for the National University of Rwanda throughout my stay in Rwanda. Previous to NUR, it was referred to as UNR (Université Nationale du Rwanda), and presently it is referred to as UR-CASS (University of Rwanda – College of Arts and Social Sciences) due to the consolidation of public universities into One University, a system modelled after the University of California system (G. Rugege [Executive Director of Higher Education Council], personal communication, December 8, 2011).
Calculated as the number of English only signs on main road (11) + the number of English only signs on back roads (13) ÷ by the total number of signs (122) = 19.7%.

A reviewer of this article (Pearson, 2014; Second Article, this volume) “mandatory” did not constitute a finding, since by definition all policies are mandatory. However, the sense I intended (and admittedly tiptoed around) was “or else,” implying consequences for non-compliance. In discussions I had over the course of my stay in Rwanda with teachers and individuals on the ground, a common thread intimated was fear of severe punishment (e.g., jail time or even death) for going against policy – and the current administration. There is a general sentiment of “comply or else” when it comes to policy in post-conflict Rwanda (see e.g., Tertsakian, 2011; Santoro & Thomson, 2014).

The ‘British Commonwealth’ name was dropped in 1949. It is now known simply as ‘the Commonwealth’ or ‘the Commonwealth of Nations.’

The British Council is the UK’s international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities, housed in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the UK Government.

The missile attack assassination of President Habyarimana is sometimes referred to as the incident that started the Rwandan genocide. The fact of the matter is that ‘it set in motion a sweeping and breathtakingly brutal campaign that had been meticulously planned in advance’ (Kinzer, 2008, p. 138).

The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) is the current ruling party of Rwanda, led by President Paul Kagame. It was formed by Tutsi refugees in the Ugandan army (including Kagame) and is the militant group who invaded Rwanda to negotiate cease fires and peace deals.
between Hutu and Tutsi in the early 1990’s. The RPF are credited with taking control of the country from Hutu extremists in July 1994 and putting an end to the Genocide.

16 Not to be confused with language attrition (which may also be referred to as language loss), which is the term for the loss language proficiency of an individual.

17 Ethnologue (SIL International) defines linguistic diversity as ‘the probability that any two people of the country selected at random would have different mother tongues’ (Lewis, M. P., Simons, G. F. and C. D. Fennig 2014). Their ordering of countries ranges from the most linguistically diverse, Papua New Guinea (#1) with 837 (all indigenous) languages, to the least: North Korea (#227) with only one living (and indigenous) language.

2.7 References


   *International Journal of Multilingualism, 3*(1), 52-66. doi: 10.1080/14790710608668385


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# Appendices

## 2.8.1 Appendix A: Complete listing of storefronts along the main road

### to Kigali

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Magerwa Butare</td>
<td>warehouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merez</td>
<td>gas station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irebero Pearl</td>
<td>hotel, restaurant &amp; bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Museum of Rwanda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kobil</td>
<td>gas station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENDP Karubanda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huye Stadium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibiro by’Akarere ka Huye - Huye District Office</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruhongore House</td>
<td>lodging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iposita/Poste</td>
<td>post office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUR University Bookshop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librairie Caritas</td>
<td>bookstore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aux Delices</td>
<td>restaurant &amp; bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gym Tonic</td>
<td>fitness center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Source</td>
<td>grocery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farumasi</td>
<td>pharmacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA COPABU, Expo-Vente</td>
<td>souvenirs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecobank</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KCB</td>
<td>bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matar Super Market</td>
<td>grocery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheers Coffee and Fast Food</td>
<td>cafe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tiGO</td>
<td>mobile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amafu</td>
<td>restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda Revenue Authority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>gas station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SONARWA</td>
<td>insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwa Josee</td>
<td>restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGIS - Center for Geoinformation System</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engen</td>
<td>gas station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eglise Ste. Therese</td>
<td>church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cactus</td>
<td>restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VSF Belgium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCR</td>
<td>bank/Western Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sotra Express</td>
<td>intercity bus service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Faucon</td>
<td>hotel, restaurant &amp; bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fauccon Supermarket</td>
<td>grocery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bajaj Cybercafe</td>
<td>internet cafe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station Gemeca</td>
<td>gas station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kobil</td>
<td>gas station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volcano Express</td>
<td>intercity bus service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Ibis</td>
<td>hotel, restaurant &amp; bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank of Kigali</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTN</td>
<td>mobile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Star Times</td>
<td>media/cable TV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atraco Express</td>
<td>transportation service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imberabyombi</td>
<td>city hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East African Handicraft Village</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Planete</td>
<td>internet cafe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUR Registrar Office</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photocopies</td>
<td>NUR Centre for Conflict Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horizon Express (intercity bus service)</td>
<td>Centre de Sante (clinic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCR (bank)</td>
<td>Faculty of Arts, Media &amp; Social Science - FAMSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kabutare (district hospital admin offices)</td>
<td>School of Law and Social Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CxC - Cafe ConneXion</td>
<td>E.A.R. Guesthouse (lodging)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shekinah (restaurant)</td>
<td>Shalom Guesthouse (lodging)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Centre</td>
<td>Butare Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club Speak</td>
<td>Ecobank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMI (NGO)</td>
<td>Hotel Credo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inzozi Nziza</td>
<td>Mosque Almasidjid Q’Ubad – [Arabic]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motel du Mont Huye Annexe</td>
<td>Wariraye (restaurant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safari Excursions (car hire)</td>
<td>The New Times (newspaper)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacy of NUR Medical Insurance</td>
<td>Electro (copy shop)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutuelle de Sante</td>
<td>Airtel (mobile)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratoire Pharamaceutique Universitaire</td>
<td>Macrobotique (restaurant – closed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CURPHAMETRA</td>
<td>Campus Driving School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ikibondo Primary School</td>
<td>Hotel Barthos (hotel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Rwanda - Tumba Primary School</td>
<td>National University of Rwanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tumba Pharmacy</td>
<td>Kobil (gas station)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alpha (shop)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5/5 (restaurant &amp; bar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Top Class (barbershop)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hilltop (restaurant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baptist Churches of Rwanda (church)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eglise Apostolique de Butare (church)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cafe Tumba (restaurant)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To Burundi ↓
### Appendix B: Complete listing of storefronts on back roads by main area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Airport</th>
<th>Discentre (gas station)</th>
<th>Eglise Presbytérienne au Rwanda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Petit Seminaire Virgo Fidelis</td>
<td>Garage Umusanzu</td>
<td>Ecole Maternelle Josepha Rosella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butare Airport</td>
<td>USAID SPREAD Project</td>
<td>CEFOTEC Groupe Scholaire des Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twiga (lodging)</td>
<td>Radio Salus</td>
<td>Motel du Mont Huye Apartments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University Arts Center</td>
<td>Amazi ya Huye (water treatment plant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty of Law</td>
<td>NSPA (university)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University Club (nightclub)</td>
<td>PIASS (university)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theatre de Verdure</td>
<td>Catholic University of Rwanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rwandatel</td>
<td>Ecole Autonome de Butare</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Casablanca Cyber Cafe</th>
<th>Mere du Verbe (lodging)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Huye City Complex</td>
<td>Isaro Salon - The Best (hair salon)</td>
<td>VIP Bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agaseke Bank</td>
<td>Quincaillerie Alpha - Hardware</td>
<td>Freres de la Charite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank of Kigali, Ltd.</td>
<td>Pharmacie La Preference</td>
<td>Kamena Stadium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTN Service Center</td>
<td>Beauty Saloon (hair salon)</td>
<td>EAV Kabutare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kobil</td>
<td>Motel Gratia (hotel, restaurant)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Restaurant</td>
<td>Amaso (shop)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boulangerie Chez Venant</td>
<td>La Nouvelle (restaurant)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koperative Inzira</td>
<td>Victory (shop)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mu Cyarabu (restaurant)</td>
<td>Papeterie Pacis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mama Aline (restaurant)</td>
<td>Africana (lodging)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaux Arts (lodging)</td>
<td>Banque Populaire du Rwanda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rwandatel</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hospital</th>
<th>ESSO Butare</th>
<th>Universite Nationale du Rwanda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESSO Butare</td>
<td>Dushishoz Youth Center</td>
<td>Ecobank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHUB (hospital)</td>
<td>NUR Faculty of Medicine</td>
<td>ICT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiza (bar)</td>
<td>NUR Faculty of Agronomy</td>
<td>Mini Imprimerie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRST (research institute)</td>
<td>Domus Pacis (lodging)</td>
<td>Arboretum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.8.3 Appendix C: Diachronic evidence of Kinyarwanda glossed with English

Figure 11. Huye District Office in 2009 (Photo credit: Vervimine Minéraux)

Figure 12. Huye District Office in 2011
2.8.4 Appendix D: Diachronic evidence of French replaced by English

Figure 13. University Bookshop in 2009 (Photo credit: Vervimine Minéraux)

Figure 14. University Bookshop in 2011
2.8.5 Appendix E: Diachronic evidence of French and Kinyarwanda replaced by English.

Figure 15. National Museum of Rwanda in 2009 (Photo credit: Vervimine Minéraux)

Figure 16. National Museum of Rwanda in 2011
2.8.6 Appendix F: Example of public vs. private signage priorities

Figure 17. Sign on main road, Tumba Primary School

Figure 18. Sign on building, Tumba Primary School
3 SECOND ARTICLE
POLICY WITHOUT A PLAN: ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN RWANDA

From the time of Belgian colonial rule, French was predominantly the medium of instruction (MOI) in Rwanda. Then, in October 2008, a Rwandan Cabinet resolution called for the immediate implementation of English as the language of instruction in all public schools at all levels – from primary to tertiary. This study reports on ethnographic interview data collected in a larger ethnography of language policy (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007, 2011; Johnson 2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2010) study undertaken in Rwanda between September 2011 and June 2012. The interviews, conducted with teachers (n = 8) in two public primary schools and two public secondary schools in Southern Province, Rwanda, reveal (a) the layers and spaces in Rwandan MOI policy and practice, as well as (b) the local realities associated with implementing national language-in-education policy without an articulated plan.

Keywords: Language planning and policy, Medium of instruction, Ethnography of language policy, Local implementation of national language policy

3.1 Introduction

The question of medium of instruction (MOI) is not new to the African continent. Over the past 50 years, MOI policy shifts have been a relatively common occurrence in educational systems in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in postcolonial or multilingual societies. At independence, some countries moved away from using the former colonial language as the sole MOI, combining it with local languages (e.g., French in Guinea and Burkina Faso), while others
chose to move toward greater use of the ex-colonial language (e.g. French in Democratic Republic of Congo). In Rwanda, at independence from Belgium in 1962, the language-in-education policy remained as it had been: Kinyarwanda, the local language, would serve as the MOI for primary grades 1-3, and French, the ex-colonial language, for all others. The Rwandan MOI policy situation fluctuated at times in the ensuing years – either expanding or decreasing the use of Kinyarwanda – until October 2008, when a Presidential Cabinet order shifted the language of instruction in all public schools from Kinyarwanda and French to English.

This study reports on an ethnography of language policy (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007, 2011; Johnson 2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2010) conducted in Rwanda from 2011 to 2012 to explore the impacts of the 2008 Rwandan MOI policy on local educational contexts. Ethnography of language policy is an innovative approach to the study of language policy in practice developed in response to calls for a language planning and policy (LPP) methodology that could provide (a) thick description of language policy implementation (e.g., Davis, 1994), and (b) a “locally informed, comparatively astute, ethnographically rich account of how people make, interpret, and otherwise engage with the policy process” (Sutton & Levinson, 2001, p. 4). In general, it seeks to “reveal agentive spaces in which local actors implement, interpret, and perhaps resist policy initiatives in varying and unique ways” (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007, p. 509) through the examination of micro-macro connections of LPP by combining critical discourse analysis of policy texts with ethnographic field methods. The main developers of the framework, Hornberger and Johnson, claim that ethnography of language policy holds the potential to illuminate interactions between bottom-up and top-down LPP layers but also “uncovers indistinct voices, covert motivations, embedded ideologies, invisible instances, or unintended consequences of LPP” (2011, p. 282).
Ethnography of language policy has been used to study LPP topics ranging from Quechua and bilingual education in Peru (Hornberger, 1988) and Māori revitalization in New Zealand (May & Hill, 2008) to Proposition 227 (Baltodano, 2004) and No Child Left Behind (Johnson, 2007) in the USA. The goal of the present study – like all ethnographies of language policy – is to illuminate local interpretation and implementation of language policy (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007), while uncovering the particularities of the Rwandan language-in-education policy landscape.

3.2 The Rwandan language-in-education policy landscape

3.2.1 Rwandan linguistic landscape

From a distance, the linguistic landscape of Rwanda may look similar to that of other countries in East Central Africa. It is the terrain of a multilingual society marked by a plural official language policy (Kinyarwanda, French, and English) and a language-in-education policy that favors an international language (English) over a local language (Kinyarwanda) as the MOI in schools. However, a closer look reveals a linguistic landscape that is vastly different from its neighbors. First, linguistic minorities in Rwanda are virtually nonexistent, with the most recent census data reporting that almost all Rwandans (99.4%) speak a common mother tongue (Republic of Rwanda, 2005). And, despite the presence of multilingual media (broadcast in Kinyarwanda, English, French, and Swahili), several reports claim that Kinyarwanda functions as the only language of communication for an estimated 90.0% of the Rwandan population (LeClerc, 2012; Munyankesha, 2004), especially in rural regions where the vast majority speak only Kinyarwanda (Businge & Kagolo, 2010). This is in contrast to other countries in the region, where first language may be tied to sociopolitical issues (e.g., ethnicity, power, access to
education). Secondly, the international medium of instruction is not an ex-colonial language, which, in Rwanda’s case would be French; rather, it is English, and it was only recently adopted.

3.2.2 Rwandan educational landscape

Traditional Rwandan education was practiced in Rwanda until European missionaries introduced Western education. In the 1930s, the Belgian colonial administration began building schools and subsidizing the costs of education; however, access to education was granted to only an elite few (Adekunle, 2007). Over time, the number of students enrolled in primary education has steadily increased: from the small minority of the 1930s, to 73.0% in 2000-2001 and 94.0% in 2005-2006 (EDPRS, 2007), to the nearly universal primary enrollment of today (Rosendal, 2010). At present, Rwanda operates on a 6-3-3-4 exam-based system for public education: six years of primary (P1-P6), three years of junior secondary (S1-S3), three years of senior secondary (S4-S6), and four years of university. Nine Year Basic Education (9YBE) was introduced in 2010, providing Rwandan students an additional three years of free education – no matter their performance on the primary school leaving examination. Twelve Year Basic Education (12YBE) was announced the following year. In 2008, 99.0% of primary school teachers held credentials, yet only 36.0% of secondary school teachers were qualified (World Bank, 2011); more recent statistics on teacher qualifications are not available.

3.2.3 Rwandan language-in-education policy landscape

Under the Belgian system and for several years after independence in 1962, French was the language of instruction in Rwanda for all grades with the exception of P1-P3, which were taught in Kinyarwanda. Then in 1978, a general reform or “Kinyarwandisation” was launched. The Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) extended primary education (P1-P8) with Kinyarwanda as the MOI for all eight years (Rosendal, 2010). The 1990s witnessed great changes in Rwandan
language-in-education policy. First, after a nationwide exam revealed poor overall French language ability by students, MINEDUC announced in 1991 a shift back to the previous system. The second reform of the 1990s came after the Genocide, when large numbers of Rwandans began returning from exile in anglophone countries. In 1996, MINEDUC announced new language-in-education reform to accommodate the situation: Beginning the following year, Kinyarwanda would continue as the MOI for P1 to P3; both French and English would become the MOI for P4 to P6; and depending on which secondary school one attended, the MOI would be either French or English (Niyitanga, 2003).

3.2.3.1 The 2008 Rwandan Cabinet resolution on MOI

In 2003, a new Constitution of Rwanda was adopted. Title I Article 5 of the new Constitution declared Kinyarwanda the national language, and Kinyarwanda, French, and English the official languages (Republic of Rwanda, 2003). Title II Article 40 specifically addressed the issue of MOI, stating:

The language of instruction in the first cycle of primary education is Kinyarwanda except for the lessons of foreign languages. The Minister having education in his or her portfolio may, through Ministerial Order, authorize the use of French and English as the medium of instruction in the first cycle. The language in the second cycle is French or English, except for other language lessons. (Republic of Rwanda, 2003)

Then, on 8 October 2008, the Rwandan Cabinet circumvented the Constitution, issuing a Cabinet resolution requesting the Minister of Education “to put in place an intensive programme for using English in all public and Government-sponsored primary and secondary schools and
higher learning institutions” (Rosendal, 2010, p. 99). However, three and a half years later, in March 2011, Kinyarwanda was restored as the MOI for the first cycle of primary (P1-P3). Currently, the Rwandan language-in-education policy stands at Kinyarwanda for the first three years of primary school, and English for all subsequent grades. The 2008 Rwandan Cabinet resolution on medium of instruction served as the impetus for the present study exploring medium of instruction policy shift in Rwanda.

3.3 Exploring medium of instruction policy shift in Rwanda

Because the investigation of language policy necessarily extends beyond the analysis of static legal texts into the realm of dynamic social processes, a complex framework is required to capture it. Therefore, the main study was guided by an ethnography of language policy approach (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007, 2011; Johnson 2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2010), which combines “bottom up” ethnographic fieldwork (e.g., classroom observation, teacher interviews) with “top down” LPP strategies (i.e., discourse analysis of language policy texts and discourses) in order to illuminate local interpretation and implementation of national language policy.

3.3.1 Research sites and participants

Fieldwork was carried out between September 2011 and June 2012 at four public schools in Southern Province, Rwanda: Rural Primary School (RPS), Urban Primary School (UPS), Rural Secondary School (RSS), and Urban Secondary School (USS). Southern Province was chosen as the backdrop for the present study, as it is located outside the capital and administrative center, Kigali, where many international non-governmental organizations have “adopted” area schools and are actively involved with in-service teacher training and curriculum and materials development. In order to consider the full range of educational settings in the
region, a rural and an urban school at both the primary and secondary level were selected as research sites. Tertiary settings were not included in the study, as it was discovered that local researchers were carrying out similar work in that context during the same timeframe.

Access to research sites was obtained by (a) securing a research permit from the Directorate of Science, Technology, and Research at MINEDUC; (b) obtaining a list of public schools and contact information from the Southern Province Director of Education; and (c) phoning school administrators and scheduling face-to-face meetings to request permission to conduct research in their schools. School administrators were also consulted to locate two focal participants (eight in total) meeting the following a priori criteria: being an experienced teacher (having taught in public schools in Rwanda continuously since 2007), of Rwandan nationality, reflective about teaching, and interested in volunteering for the research. In most cases, participants satisfied these requirements; however, occasionally a less experienced teacher was allowed to participate, if no one else on staff held the desired amount of experience. Table 7 provides an overview of participant background information as revealed through ethnographic interviews; greater explanation follows during the analysis of individual background in implementational space.
3.3.2 Data collection and analysis

At each research site, focal participants were followed in their teaching practice for two consecutive weeks. Fieldnotes of classroom observations were taken by the researcher and a local research assistant, who captured events occurring in Kinyarwanda. It was hoped that the lengthy amount of time spent with each participant would produce more naturalistic data, as well
as promote trust between the researcher and the research participants. Two, hour-long ethnographic interviews (Kvale, 1996; Spradley, 1979) were conducted with each participant (one at the end of each week) in their language(s) of choice and digitally recorded. Interpretation was provided by the research assistant when requested. In order to prepare the data for analysis for the current study, which examines only the ethnographic interview data, the audio files were transcribed following a verbatim transcription protocol and using SoundScriber (University of Michigan Regents, 1998) to facilitate the process. The transcripts were then coded for emergent themes and categories through grounded analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) in Atlas.ti (Muhr, 2013), a qualitative data management program. Analysis yielded local teacher perceptions of national language policy as well as the realities of implementing language-in-education policy without planning.

3.4 Local teacher perceptions of national language policy

Ethnographic interviews with focal participants revealed teacher perceptions of the 2008 Rwandan Cabinet resolution on national language-in-education policy. Participants routinely described the nature of the policy as sudden and mandatory, and the reasons for it political and economic.

3.4.1 Sudden nature of the policy

In the literature, the policy has been depicted as “abrupt” (Rosen, 2010; Samuelson & Freedman, 2010) or “sudden” (Rosendal, 2010). In general, teachers also alluded to the sudden nature of the policy. Angelique, a teacher at RPS, for example, reported, “In 2008, there is no idea for using English as policy. But, in 2009, it comes. It comes quickly.” Angelique’s colleague at RPS, Emmanuel, described the shift as automatic:
Et on a changé automatiquement la langue sans préparer les enseignants. Ça devrait prendre peut-être 10 ans pour préparer les enseignants et enfin ils vont commencer à enseigner en anglais. Mais, on a même pas pris une année. C’est, c’est—ça était automatique.

[And they automatically changed the language without preparing teachers. It should take maybe 10 years to prepare teachers and then they are going to begin teaching in English. But, it didn’t even take one year. It’s, it’s—it was automatic.]\(^4\)

### 3.4.2 Mandatory nature of the policy

In addition to describing the policy as sudden, teachers generally characterized the 2008 Rwandan MOI policy as top-down and mandatory. Mugisha, a math teacher at USS said, “As it is a Cabinet policy, we have to follow it.” In discussing the languages he uses in teaching, Peter, a UPS teacher, stated, “We use both language, Kinyarwanda and English, but we try to use in English because this is our, our policy. Our policy is to use in English.” When asked the same question, Kwizera Aime, a math teacher at RSS, said, “I use English because in our education we—it is an obligation to use English in teaching.” Another teacher at RSS, Innocent, who teaches Geography, had this to say about the obligatory nature of the policy:

But, what I can say? It was a kind of a law. You cannot escape it [laughs]. It is an order from the Government, like a Presidential order. We are forced to do whatever possible to teach in it because this started in the whole country, from primary, secondary, even the universities.\(^5\)
3.4.3 Political and economic reasons for the policy

The reasons behind the 2008 Rwandan Cabinet resolution have been speculated about in media reports, the main ones being political (McCrummen, 2008; NPR, 2008; Rukara, 2008) and economic (Baldauf, 2007; McGreal, 2009; Ndabaga, 2008). Omoniyi (2003) claims that official language policy implementation of this kind is mediated by politics and economics, both local and international, and teachers echoed those reasons when asked about the purpose behind the policy, with some citing political reasons, some citing economic reasons, and others citing both.

Several teachers, like Mugisha from USS, suggested that “the policy was only for the Government” but didn’t provide any explanation. Others, like RPS teacher Emmanuel, painted a rich portrait of a policy shift steeped in Rwanda’s recent political past:

[There were those who form the Government, these are people who came from Uganda. And, Uganda is an anglophone country. The countries of the East – Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya – these are anglophone countries. So, when they came, they wanted to impose—they wanted to change the system: the system of leaving the francophone system for the anglophone system. But, as they didn’t have—it was just after the war, and they couldn’t find people who should teach automatically, those who came from abroad – from Burundi, from Congo, and those who were here in Rwanda – spoke French. And it all began when there was a problem between Rwanda and France. Yeah, following the political problem between Rwanda and France. So, that pushed the Government to automatically change the language.]

A few of the teachers, like Angelique at RPS and Peter at UPS, mentioned Rwanda’s 2009 entrance into both the East African Community and the British Commonwealth of Nations. Angelique posited, “Because I think that it is… It is because we enter in East African Community. And Commonwealth.” Peter explained, “If I need to go in Tanzania or the other countries [of EAC], I will use in English.” Innocent of RSS also pointed to Rwanda joining the EAC and the Commonwealth: “The Government said must be fluent in English because the Rwanda was one member of East African Community and wanted to adhere the Commonwealth.” Finally, Kagabo, who teaches history at USS, provided his analysis of the reasons prompting the shift:

Probably the Government of Rwanda was proposing to shift from Francophonie to Anglophonie especially to join Commonwealth, the Commonwealth community. So,
given that in the Commonwealth the country is English-speaking countries and those who were colonized by England…some Ministers said that there was economic interests and diplomatic, of course. I think it had matched together the reform in education and the political change from Francophonie to Anglophonie, especially the Commonwealth.

The factors behind MOI policy shifts of this kind are usually numerous and complex, particularly in a post-conflict society like Rwanda, as has been discussed elsewhere (see e.g., Samuelson & Freedman, 2010). Whatever the reasons for Rwanda’s sudden shift of language-in-education policy, it has had a significant impact on teachers in their practice.

3.5 Layers and spaces in Rwandan medium of instruction policy and practice

Ricento and Hornberger (1996) have likened the study of LPP to peeling back the layers of an onion, and Hornberger and Johnson (2007) have demonstrated that by slicing through the LPP layers, we can illuminate the “ideological and implementational spaces” for educational policy and practice. Ethnographic interviews with focal participants in the present study shed light on the layers as well as ideological and implementational spaces in Rwandan language education policy and practice.

Although the 2008 Rwandan Cabinet resolution is perceived by educators as top-down and hence obligatory by nature, we find the majority of Ricento and Hornberger’s (1996) policy layers at work in the Rwandan LPP context: (a) legislation and political processes, (b) states and supranational agencies, (c) institutions, and (d) classroom practitioners. Interviews with teachers cut across each of these policy layers to reveal the implementational and ideological spaces that form when national language policy meets local teaching practice.
3.5.1 Implementational spaces

Implementation of educational policy may depend on the ways in which it is interpreted and appropriated (i.e., adopted, adapted, resisted) by classroom teachers. These processes vis-à-vis the Rwandan 2008 Cabinet resolution came to light through ethnographic interviews with participants, uncovering three main implementational spaces: (a) federal support, (b) institutional direction, and (c) individual background.

3.5.1.1 Federal support

Interviews with Rwandan teachers experiencing the shift from French to English as a MOI demonstrate a perceived lack of support toward that end on the part of the Rwandan Government following the announcement of the policy. Participant responses indicated a desire for training and materials that are, in some cases, still hoped for.

3.5.1.2 Training

In 2009, there were reports of MINEDUC devising an accelerated program to train teachers en masse with the assistance of the British Council (McGreal, 2009), and in fact six of the teachers in this study reported participating in some form of training provided by MINEDUC. However, according to participants, the training did not adequately prepare teachers for performing their job in English.

First, the length of the training was quite limited, and it occurred during the break between academic years. No matter whether you were a primary school teacher like Emmanuel (“C’était un mois, seulement un mois dans l’année” [It was one month, only one month in the year]) or a secondary school teacher like Kagabo (“It takes only one month”), the duration of the training programs was generally perceived as too short. Moreover, due to the unexpected announcement of the policy and timing of the required training sessions, one primary school
teacher reported a sense of frustration on the part of the teachers. She said, “We don’t like their formations. They just come and they take our holiday,” explaining in Kinyarwanda that she personally had to forfeit a temporary job she had lined up during the break for extra income.

Second, the content of the training was also quite limited. It consisted of basic English for a general teaching audience. RPS teacher Angelique commented on the low level of English that the training provided: “We begin with zero. And, they have taught us with one, two, how to count, and so on.” Additionally, teachers at both levels – primary and secondary – reported attending trainings together. Mugisha of USS recalled the trainings: “They were in general, the trainings. They did trainings in general for primary schools teacher and secondary schools teacher, teacher that teach different subjects.”

Although it was not part of the interview protocol, teachers often commented on the effectiveness of the trainings. Mugisha shared the result of not separating teachers by level or subject area:

“Those trainings provided by the Ministry, we did not—they were not very good for us. For the teacher, we want, for example, the training where we train only according the teacher which taught the same subject. And, the teachers can share the technical domain.”

Mugisha’s colleague at USS, Kagabo, explained the impact of the training on him, saying, “Frankly speaking, all trainings help. There is no training which cannot help. But indeed, frankly speaking, my [English] level has not been influenced by such trainings.”

Justine, a teacher at UPS, sums up the training issue well: “I attended trainings, but I want to know more.” According to the teachers interviewed in this study, it appears that the
accelerated, general approach to trainings did not meet their actual teaching needs – especially at the secondary level, where discipline-specific language would have been appreciated.

3.5.1.3 Materials

Just as the participants in this study reported receiving limited English language training, they also reported being provided limited English language curriculum and materials. Yet, as challenging as that might have been, ethnographic interviews also revealed some of the ways teachers coped with the situation in order to comply with the policy.

Peter of UPS noted the difficulty in finding materials in English: “Ah! The Ministers… They are not to send us the teaching materials in the schools. And, the books are not, are not very easy to search in English.” According to Emmanuel, RPS didn’t receive any English language teaching materials immediately after the shift either:

Quand on a commencé, il n’y avait pas de livres d’anglais…Alors, dans les premières années, l’enseignant était obligé de traduire les livres qui étaient écrits en français de les traduire en anglais.

[When we began, there weren’t any English books…So, in the first years, the teacher was obliged to translate books that were written in French and translate them in English.]

In a separate interview, Angelique corroborated Emmanuel’s account of the situation at RPS: “I try to take French book and translate. Yeah, translate in English. You’re a teacher, you just translate book for student.”

At the secondary level, teachers described being impacted by the lack of English materials at varying degrees depending on the subject matter taught. Mugisha of USS did not
receive materials in English; however, as a math teacher, he was able to manage because so much of what he does is visual: “For math, it was not a problem.” However, his colleague, Kagabo, who teaches history, recalled a time when he would stay up late into the night, preparing lessons in English for the next day. During the interview, however, he held up the fruit of that labor, a course pack: “You see this syllabus? It was written by me.”

Collectively, teacher responses indicate an expectation for federal support of national language-of-instruction policy shift through the provision of training and materials in particular.

3.5.1.4 Institutional direction

A second implementational space came into focus when participants discussed the level of school-based direction or supervision they received. In some cases, the Head Teacher (primary level) or Head of Studies (secondary level) played an almost perfunctory role regarding the implementation of the policy. For example, at RPS, Angelique recalled that “MINEDUC gave instruction to our director and told us to use English.” Similarly, according to Innocent, the Head of Studies at RSS said, “Things has been changed. Since this day, you have to prepare all lessons in English. Forget about French.”

However, at one school, USS, the Head of Studies took a very proactive approach. Kagabo reported asking the Head of Studies, “Shall we use English? Shall we use French? What shall we do? We were in front of a dilemma,” to which the Head of Studies replied, “You go. You use both.” When prompted, Kagabo clarified what this meant: “Finally, what decision was taken that students who were in Senior 5 and Senior 6 could continue in French.” So, for the time it took to transition to an English MOI across the board, there were two separate MOI systems in place at USS. Mugisha described the situation back then:
But the difficulty we had, it was for teaching different—in different languages in different classes. You had to teach, for example, in English to Senior 1, and you go to the next class [laughs]. Next hour, you return another class in French.

Mugisha also mentioned that the Head of Studies took a further administrative decision to hire an on-site trainer:

Tugitangira nyine, tugitangira habagaho akantu ko gihugura, hari umwarimu mbese waduhuguraga mu cyongereza nyine adufasha.

[In the beginning, there was a teacher here that was helping us to know English. He just trained us in English after school.]

Peter, of UPS, described how his head teacher has taken a proactive stance toward ensuring that the policy is implemented: “Today, in P4, P5, P6, she tried to search the teachers of these years….She tries to search some teachers studied in the National University of Rwanda in order to get the performance, the student performance [in English].”

Therefore, at the institutional level, we see that proactive direction on the part of visionary administrators can open up spaces through which teachers may go about implementing national MOI policy in their day-to-day practice.

3.5.1.5 Individual background

Finally, individual teacher background, particularly linguistic background and educational preparation, can contribute to the way national policy gets adopted, adapted, or resisted at the local level. A detailed description of participant background is beyond the scope of
this report; however, information about participants’ educational preparation, MOI experience and English language proficiency is warranted.

Every participant in this study had completed primary and secondary education, and all but one (Angelique of RPS) had taken some coursework at the tertiary level. The only ones to have completed university degrees were Kagabo and Mugisha of USS. All participants received the majority of their education in French MOI systems. Only one (Emmanuel of RPS) had never studied in Kinyarwanda, as he grew up in Congo; the others reported studying in Kinyarwanda for at least the first three years of primary school. A few of the teachers mentioned receiving some upper secondary or university instruction in English, but, for the most part, the teachers claimed to have received little, if any, instruction in English. RPS Angelique put the situation very simply: “Now we are supposed to teach in English, and we didn’t study in English.”

When asked whether or not teachers felt they had sufficient skills to teach their subject matter in English, responses varied from a laugh from Justine to a more optimistic “Not yet” from Mugisha. Emmanuel shook his head but then qualified it: “Mais ceux qui enseignent n’ont pas assez d’anglais sauf pour quelques qui sont venus de l’Ouganda, de Tanzanie, et de Kenya.” [But those who teach don’t have enough English except for some who came from Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya.] Kagabo of USS intimated a commonly held fear – the fear of having lower English proficiency than your students:

“You check a word in the dictionary, and you fix it in the mind because you are supposed to use it next time. You cannot forget it. If I forget it, I can be ashamed in front of my students.”
None of the teachers in the study perceived they had sufficient skills to teach their subject matter in English, and all of the teachers reported a desire for further English language training.

Looking through the layers, it is clear that language-in-education policy gives way to space formed by individual teachers’ educational preparation, MOI experience, and proficiency in the new MOI – factors which may contribute to variation in the implementation of national language policy in local teaching practice.

3.5.2 Ideological spaces

Beyond tangibles (e.g. federal support, institutional direction, individual preparedness), teacher beliefs may also play a role in the implementation of MOI policy. Although several of the teachers in the study declined to express their beliefs about the policy directly, teacher interviews revealed some of the ideological space that can develop within educational policy and practice, particularly around issues of teacher autonomy and student achievement.

3.5.2.1 Teacher autonomy

Teachers routinely make decisions about their teaching practice. For the most part, these decisions are based on personal beliefs about teaching and learning. When it comes to MOI policy, the appropriation (adoption, adaption or resistance) of national policy in local contexts may depend on issues related to teacher autonomy, such as teacher investment and classroom management needs.

When asked how fellow teachers at RSS reacted to the announcement of the new policy, Innocent replied:

They said it was challenging. Kind of challenging, hm? They were saying they won’t do. But, they [the Government] were encouraging us. They were telling us the importance or
benefits of using English as the official language. For instance, they told us, “You see, Rwanda is in this, uh, communities—different communities: East African Communities, Commonwealth… And most used language. Main in commerce, it is English. So, to go—or to achieve the development without English, it’s a problem. After hearing this, then we were convinced [laughs].

As mentioned earlier, teachers generally characterized the 2008 Cabinet resolution as sudden or automatic. Innocent’s response suggests that a lack of psychological preparedness on the part of teachers could have resulted in widespread policy resistance—unintentional or otherwise—had teachers not eventually “bought in” to it.

In multilingual educational settings, teachers may also have to make decisions about which language to use for different purposes in their teaching. Participants in the present study reported using a mix of languages while teaching, though primarily English and Kinyarwanda. When asked about the use of languages other than English in the classroom, Kagabo of USS responded:

French? Sometimes it can come. So, for example, in joking… You can—so, when students are tired, a teacher is obliged to revive the spirit. Okay? You can use joking. So, in joking sometimes you cannot find proper words in English given that it is not our native language. You can use Kinyarwanda, which is understood by everybody. Even the weaker—the weakest student. So that even the weakest student can understand. So as everybody can smile, and the good spirit come back—be back in the room, and we start the course. So, the Kinyarwanda is sometimes used. But the Kinyarwanda is used when?
So, if I come to teach in the afternoon, even if the students are tired, if the Head of Studies is there to supervise me… I can never use the word from Kinyarwanda nor from French.

Although Kagabo feels obligated to use “100% English,” he finds ways to inject small amounts of other languages into his teaching for classroom management and rapport building purposes.

Emmanuel of RPS was the only teacher in the study to express concern about French disappearing from Rwandan public schools. During his second interview, Emmanuel shared a potential benefit in retaining a few hours of French each week:

Si possible, si on leurs donne quelques heures d’enseigner en français… Parce qu’on ne sais jamais. La politique africaine est… C’est une politique qui change d’un moment en autre. Peut-être, si le Gouvernement change dans quelques années, qui vont venir et qu’il y a quelques qui parlent français, il va aussi changer.

[If possible, if we give them some hours of teaching in French… Because one never knows. African politics are… They are politics that change from one moment to another. Maybe, if the Government changes in a few years, who is going to come and if there are some who speak French, it’s also going to change.]

Although Emmanuel did not report using French in the classroom, it appears that he believes it could be an important resource for students in the future.

In multilingual societies, teachers make decisions about which language to use in the classroom for reasons as simple as making a joke or developing rapport with students. Teacher
decisions about language use may be driven by ideology and sensitive to factors ranging from teacher “buy in,” or investment, to critical questions about language and regional politics.

3.5.2.2 Student achievement

Each teacher in the study described conditions requiring the use of the local language in addition to the MOI in the classroom. For example, when questioned about his use of Kinyarwanda in the classroom, RPS teacher Emmanuel intimated:

Because les enfants ne comprennent pas assez. Et, il faut alors en enseignant l’anglais, il faut doser, il faut expliquer en Kinyarwanda. Parce que c’est la langue que les enfants comprennent mieux. Le contenu est donné en Kinyarwanda, mais on transforme ça en anglais….Eh, on donne les cours soit en mathématiques, en STE, ou en social studies, le cours est donné en Kinyarwanda et en anglais. Et vous êtes obligé d’expliquer chaque mot – chaque mot – en anglais. Il doit être expliqué en Kinyarwanda.

[Because the children don’t understand enough. And, it is thus necessary while teaching English, it is necessary to proportion, it is necessary to explain in Kinyarwanda. Because that’s the language that the children understand best. The content is given in Kinyarwanda, but you transform that in English….Yeah, you give the course be it in mathematics, in EST (Elementary Science and Technology), or in social studies, the course is given in Kinyarwanda and in English. And you are obliged to explain each word – each word – in English. It should be explained in Kinyarwanda.]
In justifying the decision to use Kinyarwanda in teaching, Emmanuel shifts his viewpoint away from himself and what is required for teaching to his students and what is required for learning:

*Iyo umaze, si vous, vous entendez que les enfants ont déjà compris le contenu, la matière, vous, uh, vous essayez alors de changer ce contenu dans la langue que les enfants comprennent. Pour que les enfants comprennent. C’est l’objectif de l’éducation.*

[So, if you, you hear that the children have already understood the content, the material, you, uh, you try then to change the content in the language that the children understand. So that the children understand. That’s the objective of education.]

Emmanuel’s rationale for using Kinyarwanda in the classroom appears not as deliberate resistance to MOI policy, rather as a commitment to student learning and achievement over total compliance with the policy.

It is clear that teachers can have strong beliefs about teaching and learning. It is less clear how their beliefs directly impact the implementation of language-in-education policy. However, ethnographic interviews with teachers in this study reveal some of the ways ideological space can form within the policy layers. Overall, participant responses indicate that autonomy of practice and beliefs about education can impact teacher interpretation of policy and thus the degree of national language policy appropriation in local educational contexts.
3.6 The realities of implementing language-in-education policy without a plan

The 2008 Rwandan Cabinet resolution has been widely characterized as “abrupt,” “sudden,” “automatic,” and now, as this paper claims, “without a plan.” However, to say that there was no plan at all is somewhat overstating the situation. In April 2008, the Rwandan Parliament posted on its website discussions between the Minister of State and Minister of Education regarding “the program of teaching English language in schools” (Parliament, 2008, para. 1). It stated that they had agreed “by January 2009, there [would] be teaching mathematics in English, in the year 2010, there [should] follow the technical know how, civil education and general education” (Parliament, 2008, para. 4). In early 2009, Claver Yisa, Director of Policy Planning at MINEDUC clarified the phases of the plan:

Schools will become bilingual and will teach some subjects in English and others in French as capacity is built up. We are starting with those subjects which are really not that difficult in terms of language – mathematics, sciences. We will wait for history or arts subjects that need a lot of language for explanation and description. (McGreal, 2009, para. 15)

There is thus evidence of advance planning in progress, but the 2008 Cabinet resolution was announced before the plan could be set in motion. As it stands, the only articulation of the policy is the Cabinet resolution itself. This section presents and discusses the realities associated with implementing language-in-education policy without a well-articulated plan.
3.6.1 *Reality 1: Policy travels unpredictably*

As we have seen throughout this discussion, national language-in-education policy in Rwanda doesn’t travel directly to the local educational context. It first passes through layers and around ideological and implementational spaces that form when institutions and individuals interpret and appropriate MOI policy. The phenomenon of nonlinear policy may be especially evident when there is little policy articulation and teachers perceive greater latitude to appropriate policy in their local teaching practice. Although the Rwandan policy states that English shall be the sole MOI, participants at all levels and each context of this study found ways around it in what Hornberger and Johnson (2007) would call “agentive space.” A quote from Emmanuel of RPS illustrates the divide he senses between ideal and real in top-down policy implementation:

L’État donne des lois et nous sommes obligés de les appliquer, de les suivre. Mais, les moyens de les appliquer sont difficiles.

[The State gives some laws and we are obliged to apply them, to follow them. But, the ways to apply them are difficult.]

3.6.2 *Reality 2: Policy impacts students*

At the outset of the policy, Claver Yisa, Director of Policy Planning at MINEDUC, reportedly said, “The problem we are expecting is not with the children. The children can always learn. The problem is the teachers” (McGreal, 2009, para. 13). The following year, Rosen (2010) claimed that students in Rwanda were adapting to the policy but that teachers were struggling. However, participants in the present study report that both teachers and students struggle during
MOI policy shift. Innocent of RSS recalled that the policy shift “challenged teachers and students.” UPS Peter recollected, “Ah! It was very difficult for us and for the students. So difficult.” Through an interpreter, Justine of UPS said:

> It’s a challenge for us to use English while teaching as we are not having sufficient knowledge to teach in English. But also, it is a challenge to students because they are taught with teachers who are not having enough skills for teaching in English.

Furthermore, students demonstrate sensitivity to the policy shift according to their familiarity with English. Peter reported that after he explains something in English to his students at UPS, he checks for understanding: “Some say, ‘Good, I understand.’ Others, ‘No, Teacher.’” Students’ educational background may also play a role. RPS teacher Angelique pointed out that when students arrive in the second cycle of primary (P4-P6), they have few skills in English because in the first cycle “they study only alphabets.” Innocent noted that his students at RSS possess varying levels of English proficiency based on the previous school they attended: “It depends on the school situation the students come from how much English they know.”

A major reality then of language-of-instruction policy implementation is that, unless it occurs in an entirely lecture-based educational system, MOI is not simply a question of the language the teacher uses for instruction. It is the medium of teaching and learning, and as such, impact on students should be considered; they deserve a layer of the policy onion.
3.6.3 Reality 3: Policy carries high stakes

The educational system in Rwanda follows a national curriculum and is exam-based. For those reasons, participants in this study reported an acute awareness of both time constraints and student performance on national examinations.

Teachers routinely mentioned ways a new MOI slows down the pace of instruction. Several mentioned that they are now unable to cover all of the material of the national curriculum. Emmanuel explained the impact of English on his progress through the curriculum at RPS:

Vous essayez, et vous marchez un peu rapidement pour que vous terminiez le programme….Et vous allez essayer. Peut-être vous n’allez pas terminer. Ça peut rester deux ou trois points que vous allez commencer le trimestre suivant. Mais le problème c’est à la fin de l’année.

[You try, and you go a little quickly so that you can finish the program….And you are going to try. Maybe you’re not going to finish. There could remain two or three points [units/chapters] that you are going to begin the next trimester. But the problem is at the end of the year.]

Kagabo, who teaches history at USS, also mentioned the difficulty in covering the required curriculum in English. In explaining why he sometimes shifts to Kinyarwanda during lessons, he said, “So as to go quickly. You see, the syllabus in two hours for a week is already very big.”
Time is not the only constraint impacting student performance on the national examination. Language, naturally, plays a large part. Kagabo mentioned the consequences of English on leaving exams: “Many students fail the General Paper [upper secondary composition course] on the national examination. Eh, they hugely fail it due to language skills, to some expressions, informal languages, and so on and so on.” Peter of UPS noted that “The learners must understood very well in order to get the result in the exam,” and went on to recount a specific example of a language issue his students faced on the national exam:

*Set.* Ah! We used *ensemble*—*ensemble* in English [laughs]. We try to give any meaning with *together*. We always used *together*. Eh! In examination, they used *set*. And, we say, ‘What is set?’

Therefore, we can see that the stakes of MOI shift are very high in an exam-based educational system. Understandably, in a development context, the focus is on the future. However, the future is the present generation, and their educational success is tantamount to development.

### 3.6.4 Reality 4: Policy without planning leads to policy revision

When MOI policy is not preceded by language-in-education planning, it can encourage micro-policymaking and may ultimately lead to policy revision. Teachers in this study reported post hoc strategies developed at the national layer (e.g., hiring teachers from other East African countries, requiring teachers to pass English proficiency exams to retain their jobs) to ensure the success of the policy. Justine pointed out an unforeseen consequence of the UPS administrator decision (i.e., a micro-policy) to recruit English-speaking teachers that Peter referred to earlier:
We [teachers hired before the 2008 policy] are not having sufficient skills of English to teach in, but we know a lot about the teaching methods. We have been trained for that because we studied in Teacher Training Centers. We know different methods to use in teaching any subject. That is what is different from these new teachers who are coming in this school because they know English but they have not yet been trained to teach. They are not having enough skills in teaching methods but they have skills in English.

This example illustrates the need for administrators and educators to critically consider the cost of MOI shift on the total educational landscape before going to any length to comply with language-in-education policy.

Finally, in March 2011 (three and half years into the policy), due to pressure from international organizations (e.g., UNESCO), Rwanda reverted to the prior language-in-education policy that designated Kinyarwanda as the MOI for the first cycle of primary (P1-P3) – another example that hurried policy (i.e., policy devoid of planning) can ultimately lead to policy revision.

### 3.7 Conclusion

Exploring local teacher perceptions of national language policy through an *ethnography of language policy* approach has made it possible to peel back the policy layers (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996) to illuminate the ideological and implementational spaces (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007) in Rwandan MOI policy and practice, as well as highlight some of the realities associated with implementing language policy without language planning in the 2008 Rwandan MOI policy context.
Ethnographic interviews with Rwandan public school teachers have demonstrated some of the ways ideology can contribute to policy appropriation – or non-appropriation – especially when teachers are not involved in the planning and thus not invested in the process. Johnson (2010) claims “a strong characteristic of this ideological space is the empowerment of bilingual teachers to take ownership of language policy processes and appropriate language policy in a way that benefits bilingual learners” (p. 61), which was evident here in teacher decisions to use languages other than the mandated MOI for reasons ranging from classroom management to mastery of content. Psychological preparedness was also reported as a factor in resistance to MOI policy shift, particularly when the shift is sudden.

Beyond ideology, participant responses indicate that the degree and quality of implementation of MOI policy shift by practitioners in local teaching contexts can depend on individual factors such as teacher linguistic and educational background, prior MOI experience, and proficiency in the new MOI. However, they also underscore the major role the federal policy layer plays in the successful implementation of top-down MOI policy shift – namely through provision of appropriate training and supporting materials in the new MOI. Therefore, we must acknowledge the usefulness of acquisition, or language-in-education, planning.

Language-in-education planning generally falls within the purview of governments (e.g., ministries of education) due to the macro political and economic aspects involved. Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) have suggested that in addition to deciding which languages should be taught or used to teach in, language-in-education planners must (a) determine the amount and quality of teacher training, (b) involve local communities, (c) determine which materials will be used, (d) establish assessment systems to monitor progress, and (e) determine financial costs. Cost-benefit analyses (Rivers, 2012; Thorburn, 1971) should be performed, as acquisition planning can take a
financial toll on a polity. All of these planning goals should be explored very carefully prior to enacting language policy in order to ensure successful implementation, as policies that are too drastic, sudden or theoretical may fail in actual practice (Thorburn, 1971), and unintended realities may ensue.

Despite the sudden and mandatory nature of the 2008 Rwandan Cabinet resolution and its accompanying implementational challenges, ethnographic interviews with teachers in this study shed light on a genuine investment in the policy by teachers like Mugisha, who recognize both accomplishment in the present and potential for the future of the Rwandan language-in-education landscape:

We are happy to teach in English. And because, for example, if you compare where we have started and where we are now, there is a big difference. And we hope that in, for example, ten years after—so there will be no problem about the English.

3.8 Notes

1 School names have been replaced with pseudonyms.

2 Interviews were transcribed by a professional translator in Rwanda and validated by the researcher (with the exception of Kinyarwanda). Verbatim transcription was selected in order to convey participant contributions as authentically as possible and not to highlight “error.” Although French was the language of instruction in Rwanda for several decades, it is common for Rwandans speaking French to use a local variety unless they received tertiary education abroad; this pattern is common in other parts of Francophone Africa, such as Cote d’Ivoire (Djite, 2000).
3 Participant names have been replaced with self-selected pseudonyms.

4 Translations from French to English were done by the author.

5 Interview excerpts provided without translation were originally conducted in English.

6 Translations from Kinyarwanda to English were done by a professional translator in Rwanda.

3.9 References


management in Rwanda and Uganda, focusing on the position of African languages.


At the end of the 2008 academic year (October 2008), the Government of Rwanda announced policy shifting the medium of instruction (MOI) in public schools throughout the country from Kinyarwanda, the local language spoken by nearly every Rwandan, and French, a language of instruction since Belgian colonial times, to English, an international language largely unknown by the majority of Rwandans at the time. The policy was effective at the start of the next academic year (January 2009). This rapid MOI shift precipitated the present exploration into the impacts of English medium instruction (EMI) on teachers and students in Rwandan educational contexts two years into its implementation. The study draws on the classroom observation data of a larger *ethnography of language policy* (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007) conducted in country from 2011 to 2012. Discourse analysis of classroom language use in two schools in Southern Province – a rural and an urban primary – yields certain linguistic and educational impacts of EMI in Rwanda, including (a) wide variability in English uptake in classrooms, (b) great reliance on teacher-centered instruction, and (c) disparate student access to both language and content. The discussion examines issues related to EMI versus mother tongue instruction in East Africa, as well as progress toward national education quality and international development goals.

*Keywords*: Language-in-education policy and planning, English medium instruction, Mother tongue instruction, Classroom language use, Primary and secondary schools
4.1 The Rwandan language-in-education policy context

Over the past century, education in Rwanda has been characterized by periods of great change. In the 1930’s the Belgian administration began expanding Western education throughout the country by implementing French medium instruction schools. However, access was limited to a very few, a “mainly Tutsi, bureaucratic elite” (Samuelson, 2013, p. 216). Enrollment gradually increased across time until it was halted by the Genocide in the mid-1990s (McLean Hilker, 2011). Since that time, efforts have been made to reconstruct the educational system and equalize opportunity in education for all Rwandans, regardless of ethnicity, gender, or region of origin (Habyarimana, 2015; Williams, 2014) – and most clearly articulated in Vision 2020, the national plan for development by the Year 2020 (Republic of Rwanda, 2000).

Universal education (i.e., free access to the first six years of education: Primary 1 [P1] to Primary 6 [P6]) was provided to every Rwandan child beginning in the late 1990s. This was expanded to nine years to include the first three years of secondary (Secondary 1-3 [S1-S3] or “Ordinary Level”) and called Nine Year Basic Education (9YBE) (Republic of Rwanda, 2013). The final three years of education (S4-S6 or “Advanced Level”), wherein students specialize in a particular field (Republic of Rwanda, 2013, p. 1), are currently accessed only if students are successful on the leaving exams of lower Secondary/Ordinary Level. In 2011, the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) announced plans for Twelve Year Basic Education (12YBE), and implementation of is said to be underway soon (Plaut, 2012; Williams, 2014). Nevertheless, Williams, Abbott, and Mupenzi (2014) report that “as primary school enrolment rates in Rwanda near ubiquity, completion rates remain low and repetition rates remain high” (p. 931).

The national curriculum – National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) time allocations – for all subjects across all grade levels at the time of this study is found in Table 8.
Table 8. NCDC weekly time allocation (2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Subjects</th>
<th>Lower Primary</th>
<th>Upper Primary</th>
<th>Ordinary Level</th>
<th>Advanced Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P1-P3 (40 min)</td>
<td>P4-P-6 (40 min)</td>
<td>S1-S3 (50 min)</td>
<td>S4-S6 (50 min)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinyarwanda</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2 (non-examinable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(History 2, Geography 2)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Science &amp; Elementary Technology (SET))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Physics 3, Chemistry 3, Biology 3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Science</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Paper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory (Non-Examinable)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 (non-examinable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (Music, Drama, Fine Arts)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (schools offer either Swahili or Agriculture)</td>
<td>2 (schools offer Kinyarwanda, Physics, Computer Science &amp; Fine Arts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Curricular Activities (Non-examinable)</td>
<td>4 (among Sport, Religious Studies, Music, Fine Art, Cultural Activities, Practical Work &amp; Clubs)</td>
<td>3 (among Sport, Religious Studies, Music, Fine Art, Cultural Activities, Practical Work &amp; Clubs)</td>
<td>1 (Sport, Religious Studies, Cultural Activities &amp; Clubs)</td>
<td>2 (Sport, Religious Studies, Cultural Activities, Clubs &amp; Research)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Hours</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*21 hours for Core Combinations (e.g., MEG = Mathematics 7, Economics 7, Geography 7)
Coinciding with the national education change agenda are international agency development benchmarks – the foremost of which are the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – of which Goal 2 concerns universal enrollment at the primary level. Long thought to have been on the way to meeting 100.0% target level by 2015, recent research indicates that “net primary school attendance was only 88.0% in 2012” (Abbott, Sapsford & Rwirahira, 2015, p. 117), down from the figures in the 90th percentiles that had previously been reported.

4.1.1 Language-in-education policy in Rwanda

In concert with the developments in education over the past two decades, the language-in-education situation vis-à-vis the medium of instruction (MOI) has also witnessed substantial change. From the time of Belgian colonial rule until independence in 1962, French was the sole medium of instruction in Rwandan public schools. Following independence, Kinyarwanda was introduced as the MOI for P1-P3, with French maintaining its MOI status for all subsequent years. In the late 1970s, a mother tongue1 instruction movement spread throughout Africa, and the Rwandan Ministry of Education responded by launching a “Kinyarwandisation” reform (Rurangirwa, 2010), which extended primary education to eight years (P1-P8), with Kinyarwanda as the MOI for all eight years (Ntakirutimana, 2010; Rurangirwa, 2012). Kinyarwandisation lasted until 1991, when MINEDUC announced a return to the previous language-in-education structure (Kinyarwanda as MOI for P1-P3 and French from P4 onward) following concerns about student performance on French language exams (Ntakirutimana, 2010).

Three years into the return to the previous reform, the 1994 Genocide destroyed most of the existing infrastructure, including the majority of the country’s school buildings. Post-conflict, large numbers of Rwandans living in exile in the surrounding countries of anglophone East
Africa, began returning to Rwanda, thereby changing the language-in-education needs in schools. It was at this time (in 1996) that MINEDUC announced new language-in-education reform that would mandate (a) Kinyarwanda to continue as the sole MOI for P1-P3; (b) French and English to become co-MOI for P4-P6; and (c) either French or English MOI for S1-S6, depending on the secondary school one chose to attend (Niyitanga, 2003). This system was in place until a 2008 Cabinet order declared English the sole MOI across the board – from primary through tertiary. This policy was in place until a new Cabinet order shifted the language-in-education policy once again to Kinyarwanda MOI for P1-P3, citing pressure from external development agencies (e.g., UNICEF) (Clover, 2012; Pearson, 2014).

4.1.2 Medium of instruction policy and practice in East Africa

Rwanda is by no means the first or only country in East Africa to have experienced medium-of-instruction shift. Its bordering countries of Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda have also undergone language-in-education policy reforms at certain points in the past century – with most occurring within the past 50-60 years following independence from colonial rule. Although the five nations have been geographical neighbors since time immemorial, they were divided along linguistic lines: Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda were part of the British (anglophone) Empire, while Burundi and Rwanda were under Belgian (francophone) rule. They were geopolitically divided, as well, until 2009, when Burundi and Rwanda elected to share common political and economic ground through membership with Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda in the East African Community (East African Community Portal, 2014). Notwithstanding this partnering, the EAC countries have yet to form a unified response to the “language question” (Mazrui, 1997), particularly when it comes to the question of language in education. As we’ve seen, Rwanda has experimented with the proportions of local versus international mediums of
instruction in their national curriculum, and the same can be said of the language-in-education situations in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Historically, Kenya gravitated more toward English in society and education, and Tanzania toward Swahili (Whiteley, 1971). Kenya replaced Swahili with English as its MOI in 1949; presently, English is still the MOI, and Swahili is taught as a subject (Higgins, 2009). Bunyi (2005) describes what this policy looks like in practice in Kenya:

Current medium-of-instruction policy in Kenya is that in linguistically homogeneous school neighborhoods, the indigenous language of the area is to be used from [P1-P3]; in linguistically heterogeneous school neighborhoods, such as is the case in urban areas, the national language [Swahili] or English is to be used. Where indigenous languages or [Swahili] are used as the medium of instruction from [P1 to P3] a switch to English is to be made at the beginning of [P4]. (p. 131)

In Tanzania, Swahili dominates the sociolinguistic context (Qorro, 2013). It has also dominated the educational context since 1967 (Biswa, 2010), when it was adopted as the sole medium of instruction in state schools (Higgins, 2009). In the early 2000’s, English was introduced as a subject in P3 (Vavrus, 2002). Then in 2012, the longstanding MOI policy shifted, and English became the medium of instruction for secondary and tertiary education (Qorro, 2013).

Meanwhile, according to Tembe and Norton (2008), Uganda “has been struggling to develop and implement effective multilingual policies in its schools” (p. 35) since independence from Britain in 1962. And, “in the absence of such a policy, English [served as] the sole official
[medium of instruction] for decades” (Abiria, Early & Kendrick, 2013, p. 568). However, language-in-education policies in 1989 and 2007 have expanded the use of local languages (i.e., the students’ mother tongue) in the early grades (P1-P4) (Altinyelken, Moorcroft & van der Draai, 2013; Mulumba & Masaazi, 2012, Tembe, 2008). Abiria, Early, and Kendrick (2013) demonstrate the practice of these policies:

One of the relevant local languages be selected and used as the MoI in classrooms up to [P4], after which English becomes the MoI across subject areas. In large, multiethnic, urban areas, English is used as the MoI throughout students’ entire schooling. (p. 568)

English is currently introduced as a subject in lower primary (Altinyelken, Moorcroft & van der Draai, 2013).

In contrast to the other EAC states, less has been published on MOI policy and practice in Burundi. For the most part, however, its MOI shifts have tended to coincide with the major ones in Rwandan MOI history. French was the main medium of instruction during the Belgian administration, and it was retained at independence in the early 1960s (Rwantabagu, 2011). Similar to Kinyawardisation (see e.g., Rurangirwa, 2010, 2012) in Rwanda, Burundi experienced a “Kirundisation” movement, expanding the use of the mother tongue in education in the 1970s. Although English is not widely spoken in Burundi at present, the country recently adopted a MOI scheme similar to Rwanda’s current one, with Kirundi (local language) used for the first cycle of primary and English for all subsequent years (Plaut, 2012). Swahili was also added to the curriculum following integration into the EAC (Rwantabagu, 2011).
These East African MOI policies have been studied and criticized by many researchers, most notably by Muthwii (2007) in Kenya, and Brock-Utne (2001, 2007, 2010, 2012; Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2001) in Tanzania, who contend – like a number of scholars in the region (e.g., Bamgbose, 1991, 2004; Mazrui, 1997) – that the source of language and literacy problems in sub-Saharan African schools (and thus society) stem from MOI policy decisions, namely the choice between mother tongue and English medium instruction.

4.1.3 Mother tongue instruction vs. English medium instruction

In 1953, UNESCO declared it a children’s right to learn in their first language, or mother tongue (UNESCO, 1953), which Van Dyken (1990) defines as a language “the child can speak fluently before going to school…one in which [they] can operate confidently in all domains relevant to [their] life” (p. 40). And in those 60 years, we have seen increasing evidence for its educational effectiveness – particularly in Africa, and particularly in three areas: (1) educational access and equity, (2) language and literacy acquisition, and (3) academic achievement.

Mother tongue instruction (MTI) policies have been shown to promote access to education and significantly reduce barriers when it comes to equity (Tollefson & Tsui, 2004). Ball (2010) claims that MTI provides educational equity and success in early learning for children representing “disadvantaged” groups, such as girls and children in rural areas. The literature overwhelmingly suggests that not only girls (Benson, 2005) but children in general are more likely to enroll and succeed in school if they are allowed to study in their primary language (Kosonen, 2005). Hovens (2002) has demonstrated that MTI increases access to education for children from rural and indigenous communities (in West Africa), and Mekonnen (2009) has shown MTI to reduce educational inequities between rural and urban children (in Ethiopia).
There is also considerable evidence that MTI supports the acquisition of language and literacy – in both the first language and additional ones. Brock-Utne (2007) has shown through her longitudinal LOITASA [Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa] project how well students express themselves if they are allowed to use a familiar African language [i.e., Xhosa in South Africa] and conversely the difficulty they have when forced to use a foreign language or a language they hardly hear and never use outside of school as a language of instruction [i.e., English in Tanzania]. (p. 509)

Altinyelken, Moorcroft, and van der Draai (2013) point out that MTI allows students to (a) comprehend sound-symbol and meaning symbol relationships in first language development, as well as teachers and students to (b) “interact naturally and negotiate meanings together through local languages to develop literacy skills” (p. 90). Moreover, a strong foundation in the first language including literacy in the first language serves as the basis for additional language and literacy acquisition (Baker, 2001; Benson, 2004; linguistic interdependence theory, see e.g., Cummins, 1979, 1981; Cummins & Swain, 1986). Brock-Utne (2001, 2007, 2010) has argued just how crucial this is in the African context in particular, where literacy levels of the general population remain low.

Finally, numerous scholars (Brock-Utne, 2001, 2007, 2010, 2012; Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2001; Rwantabagu, 2011) have attributed overall academic achievement to MTI. Bunyi (1999; 2005) argues that local languages are not only foundational for literacy attainment but also for development of content knowledge. In sum, “research has indicated that children...
learn better and are better able to acquire knowledge when they are taught in their mother
tongue” (Mulumba & Masaazi, 2012, p. 438).

Despite the evidence-based benefits of employing MTI in African educational settings, English is currently being used as a medium of instruction in African contexts ranging from former British colonies (e.g., Kenya, Tanzania) to countries with no British colonial past (e.g., Rwanda, Burundi). For some time now, English medium instruction (EMI) has been the language of tertiary settings in Africa, but recently, EMI is being introduced earlier and earlier throughout the continent: “In most cases, there is a desire [by African policymakers] to expand the teaching of English to the primary level” (Negash, 2011, p. 13). Although this practice is in line with the sweeping global trend toward EMI in non-anglophone countries (Dearden, 2014), it results in millions of children entering school without knowing the MOI (Brock-Utne, 2007) – which has very serious linguistic and educational implications (i.e., challenges in acquisition of both language and subject matter). Yet, at present there is a universal lack of empirical evidence to support EMI. Upon completing comprehensive British Council survey research of EMI in 60 African nations, Dearden (2014) concludes

little empirical research has been conducted into why and when EMI is being introduced and how it is delivered” and “we do not know enough with regard to the consequences of using English rather than the first language (L1) on teaching, learning, assessing, and teacher professional development. (p. 4)

Of the research that has been conducted on EMI in Africa, the conclusions do not suggest large-scale success. In her large-scale studies on EMI in Tanzanian public schools, Brock-Utne
(2001, 2007) has demonstrated that EMI doesn’t benefit poor and/or rural students – and regardless of the context (i.e., urban, rural) it promotes a wider spread in student test performance results (which would indicate greater educational inequities). Kamwangamalu (2013) declares EMI an outright failure in Africa for falling short of its key objectives of “spread[ing] literacy among and creat[ing] opportunities for the populace to participate in the socioeconomic and political development of the continent” (p. 325).

4.1.4 Purpose of the present study

Despite the work of many dedicated researchers on the ground in schools in East Africa, there still exists a great need for empirical evidence vis-à-vis the impacts of national MOI policy on local classroom contexts region-wide. This is particularly true for contexts shifting to EMI, as even the British Council has concluded that there is “an urgent need for a research-driven approach which consults key stake-holders at a national and international level and which measures the complex processes involved in EMI and the effects of EMI both on the learning of academic subjects and on the acquisition of English proficiency” (Dearden, 2014, p. 2). This is also particularly true of Rwanda, where (a) as of 2012, there was “still no definitive research on the impact of the policy to date” (Clover, 2012, para. 6), and (b) the plan for the implementation of the policy has never been particularly clear (Pearson, 2014; Rosendal, 2010). Therefore, the main purposes of this article are to (1) explore the ways in which recent Rwandan language-in-education policy (the shift toward EMI in public schools) impact local educational contexts in Rwanda, and (2) contribute to the growing body of classroom research in primary and secondary educational settings in East Africa.
4.2 Exploring the impacts of national language policy on local educational contexts

This study exploring the impacts of national language policy on local educational contexts draws on the classroom observation data of a larger *ethnography of language policy* (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007) conducted in Southern Province, Rwanda from September 2011 to June 2012. The remainder of this section offers the framework and research design through which the project was conceptualized, as well as the methods relied on to collect and analyze the data.

4.2.1 Conceptual framework and research design

*Ethnography of language policy* (ELP⁴; Hornberger & Johnson, 2007, 2011; Johnson 2007, 2009, 2010, 2013) typically combines the methods of ethnography of cultural anthropology (participant observation, interviewing, description and interpretation) with the discourse analysis of applied linguistics to “illuminate how localized language planning and classroom pedagogy interact with top-down policies” (Johnson, 2007, p. 29). Over the past decade, ELP has come into its own as both a method and theory for examining “the agents, contexts, and processes across the multiple layers of language policy creation, interpretation, and appropriation” (Johnson, 2013b, p. 44). In short, this study seeks – through an ELP framework – a situated understanding of teaching and learning within a certain language-in-education policy context – that is, EMI in Rwanda.

This multilayered, multi-sited ELP investigation (a) hinged on naturalistic classroom discourse and interaction in Rwandan public schools and (b) sought to explore EMI policy implementation at each educational level (primary and secondary) and in each context (rural and urban). Although data were collected at all four sites and analyzed, and some of the secondary school findings are presented here, the current analysis centers mainly on the primary school
data. The reason for this focus is twofold: (1) to report on an educational level of EMI in Rwanda that has yet to be featured in the literature, and (2) to turn our attention toward a large segment of the Rwandan population impacted by the EMI shift: the nearly 2.39 million students and 39,000 teachers at the primary level (2012 estimates; Republic of Rwanda, 2013). To be clear, in actuality only half of those students may have been impacted by the shift, as the Cabinet resolution was revised in 2011 to instate EMI only for the second cycle of primary (P4-P6), and as a result, only upper elementary teachers (P5 & P6) at the two schools were included in the study.

My research assistant, a Rwandese university graduate, and I, an international doctoral student, researched Rural Primary School (RPS) throughout the month of January 2012 and Urban Primary School (UPS) from the end of February to mid March 2012. At each school, we followed two teachers (n = 8) in their routine teaching practice for two consecutive weeks (i.e., 8-10 school days). (Detailed information on participants, including their teaching timetable, is presented in Section 4.3 below.) We gained access to the research sites by first securing a research permit from the Directorate of Science, Technology, and Research at MINEDUC and then (a) obtaining a list of public schools and contact information from the Southern Province Director of Education and (b) phoning school administrators and scheduling face-to-face meetings to request permission to conduct research in their schools. We then consulted the school administrators to locate two focal participants at each school meeting the following criteria: (1) having taught continuously in Rwanda since 2007, (2) being of Rwandese nationality, (3) reflective about their teaching practices, and (4) interested in volunteering for the research. In most cases, participants satisfied these requirements; however, we did on a couple of
occasions allow a less experienced teacher to participate, if no one else on staff held the desired amount of experience.

4.2.2 Methods

This classroom-based research project relies on thick description (Geertz, 1973, 1983; Ryle, 1968), holistic representation (e.g., triangulation of data sources and analysis) (Hornberger, 1994, 2002), and a dialectic perspective (e.g., openness with focal participants, transcript validation) to ensure “trustworthiness” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and transparency in reporting its findings. Below, I describe (a) the data collection procedures I undertook in-country, and (b) the data analysis measures I performed – some recursively while still in Rwanda but the majority of which I completed once I exited the field.

4.2.2.1 Data collection and preparation

Data collection methods in this ELP study comprised four main sources: classroom observation and fieldnotes; teacher and administrator interviews; curriculum and materials collection; and researcher journaling. Classroom observations were conducted for two consecutive weeks with each focal participant in order to (a) get to know them and their teaching well, and (b) ensure the collection of more naturalistic data (i.e., avoiding “demonstration” lessons).

My research assistant and I took fieldnotes each day we were at school and in every class session. The goal was to be as unobtrusive as possible (given that we were an anomaly), so we relied on low-tech data collection instruments: pencils and paper notebooks (i.e. no audio/visual equipment). In every class session, we recorded the following pieces of information at the top of the page: the date, the time, the teacher (pseudonym), grade level, subject area, number of
students present (male and female), and – once the lesson was over – our estimated percentages of time spent devoted to which languages.

Our primary task was noting classroom language use (with the assistant’s primary role to capture events occurring in Kinyarwanda). Additionally, we sought to describe the following activities, events, and behaviors:

1. Language use (which ones and for which purposes)
2. Classroom interactions (between the teacher and students and among students)
3. General happenings at school
4. General teaching methodology
5. Language teaching methodology
6. Teaching resources and materials
7. Lesson planning and evaluation practices
8. Anything related to language planning and policy in Rwanda

In order to note classroom language use in real time, we followed a modified version of Allwright and Bailey’s (1991) transcription conventions for classroom discourse, where T = teacher, S(s) = student(s), x(x) = incomprehensible word(phrase), and [] denotes comments of any kind (e.g., [K] = uses Kinyarwanda; [T writes on board]). The simple teacher-student coding dichotomy could be viewed as a limitation of the data; however, I followed others who study interactional patterns in large sociolinguistic data sets (e.g., Friginal coding his call center data ‘agent’ and ‘caller’) and decided against attempting to identify each individual student (e.g., S1, S2) when speaking, due to the challenge of transcribing classroom interaction in real time.

As for teacher and administrator interviews, my research assistant and I conducted two, hour-long ethnographic interviews (Bernard, 2002; Kvale, 1996; Spradley, 1979) with each focal participant (one toward the beginning of the first week of data collection and one toward the end of the second week) and one hour-long interview with the head teacher at each school, as well additional teacher participants who expressed an interest in participating (generally 2-3 per site).
The interviews were semi-structured (Bernard, 2002), following prepared interview guides (see General Appendix A for complete teacher and administrator interview guides). We invited participants to respond to the interview questions in any language they felt comfortable using, with my research assistant providing Kinyarwanda-English interpretation for me. All interviews were conducted in a private location (e.g., empty classroom, head teacher’s office), and they were digitally recorded.

Each data set – with the exception of the researcher journal – required preparation for data analysis. The audio files were transcribed via verbatim transcription\(^5\) in order to represent participant voices in the most authentic manner possible (Roberts, 1997), with SoundScriber (University of Michigan Regents, 1998) used to facilitate the process. In order to process the classroom data for analysis, I typed up my fieldnotes from each observation and filled in the gaps (i.e., turns taken and episodes occurring in Kinyarwanda) with my research assistant’s fieldnotes\(^6\) until a complete transcript was achieved (see Appendices A-D for complete transcript samples). The transcription and verification of the audio files and typing up and merging of handwritten fieldnotes served not only as preparation for data analysis, but as Duff (2008) points out, the “important initial phase of data analysis” (p. 154).

4.2.2.2 Data analysis and interpretation

In order to attain a holistic, multidimensional representation of educational language policy and practice in Rwanda, the data sources were “analyzed interpretively through the recursive and inductive process that is fundamental to ethnographic work” (Hult, 2012). This process began while I was still in the field, as I began working with the data in what Dörnyei (2007) calls “growing ideas” through the creation of memos, vignettes, profiles, and other forms of data display, which I regularly performed in my researcher journal.
The iterative process was continued through open (initial themes) and axial (final categories) coding of both the researcher journal entries and the interview transcripts. Specifically, constant comparison was performed in accordance with Strauss and Corbin’s (1998) procedures for developing grounded theory, wherein the themes and categories emerge from the data set – as opposed to predetermined codes. Atlas.ti (Muhr, 2013), a qualitative data management program, was utilized to facilitate the coding process.

To determine classroom language use, discourse analysis was performed on the classroom observation data. Guiding the process was Allwright and Bailey’s (1991) protocol for counting turns in classroom research; however, the classroom discourse was not analyzed for instances of code switching or code mixing, mainly because they were not salient phenomena in this data set – which may have been due to the way we operationalized turns at the time of data collection and coded them in real time. Since the turns were already coded in the transcripts, the task of analysis became simply a matter of counting. Consequently, interrater reliability was not established, as everything had essentially been double coded already by the counting stage. The counts were then useful for establishing the percentage of language use by teachers and students in the class. Such quantitative procedures are an allowable measure in ethnography (Bernard, 2002), especially for contextualizing classroom observation data of this nature.

Data interpretation relied on insight gained through the fieldwork portion of the project (and recorded in the researcher journal, notes, and memos) as well as continuous monitoring of Rwandan language policy and sociolinguistics-related issues in the news and scholarly literature beginning in late 2008. I drew conclusions by taking stock of and appraising the generated patterns and insights in order to formulate increasingly refined interpretations (Agar, 1996; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).
4.3 Language-in-education practice in two Rwandan primary schools

This section provides tableaux of two of the four research sites (the two primary schools), which depict (a) each educational context (e.g., facilities, resources, personnel, classes, students); (b) its teacher participants (e.g., background, preparation, teaching assignments, timetables); and (c) their classroom language use (i.e., percentages of languages used by teachers and students, as well as any notable linguistic or interactional patterns).

4.3.1 Rural Primary School

Roughly a 20-minute taximoto ride up a rutted dirt road from the nearest town (see Figure 19), Rural Primary School (RPS) sits nestled amongst the Southern Province hilltops. From the school grounds, all that’s visible in the surrounding banana plant-dotted highlands are a smattering of tin roofs and a few trails of smoke. Off in the distance, some cattle are lowing (researcher journal, January 9, 2012). RPS is a red clay brick and tin roof single-story structure that was built with the help of a group of missionaries awhile back (no one can recall the date). The school is home to approximately 300 children, 12 teachers (including the headmaster, hereafter head teacher), who all travel to and from school by foot – some for up to an hour each way.

Figure 19. Road to Rural Primary School
The school consists of two rows of classrooms (two for each grade level): The P1, P2, and P3 classrooms and an all-purpose room are in one row; across a small courtyard is a row of P4, P5, and P6 classrooms, plus the head teacher’s office. Green wooden shutters open out on each side of the classrooms. There is no running water (plumbing) or electricity (lighting) at the school. However, a small solar panel installed above the head teacher’s office in 2011 harnesses some energy – and is primarily used to charge teachers’ cell phones. The school is a recipient of a UN World Food Programme (WPF) “food-for-education program,” which provides school lunch [of beans and cornmeal] in “insecure districts in the southern and eastern provinces” (Nkurunziza, Broekhuis, & Hooimeijer, 2012, p. 4). RPS was chosen as a WFP recipient because of its high dropout rate. Students earn lunch by bringing firewood to school. Families are requested to pay 100 FRW (approximately USD $0.12) every term (three months) to compensate two cooks; however, some families can’t afford that amount (researcher journal, January 11, 2012).

The classroom space consists of heavy wooden desks with the benches connected (typically 3-4 students sit at one) on a brick floor; whitewashed clay walls with a blackboard on one end and the open-air windows and a door. In the red clay courtyard stand a flagpole and a wheel rim on a wooden stand that serves as the school bell (when a rock is clanged against it). In the head teacher’s office behind wax print cloth sit stacks of textbooks on shelving; they are not used much, for fear of getting “ruined,” I’m told (researcher journal, January 11, 2012). During recess, boys play football (soccer) with an umupira, a traditional ball made out of cloth and banana leaves, while girls play a rhythmic clapping and stamping game slightly reminiscent of jump rope/hopscotch. Children of either gender play a game similar to bowling by throwing a small clay brick to knock down a stack of bricks (researcher journal, January 10, 2012).
4.3.1.1 Angelique

Throughout January 2012, my research assistant and I followed two RPS teachers in their practice: Angelique and Emmanuel. Table 9 below provides an overview of each participant, including their age, the grade level and subjects they teach, the language(s) they speak, and the medium(s) of instruction they were educated in. We first followed Angelique, a 35-year-old teacher of P6. Angelique is a qualified primary school teacher, having specialized in pedagogy in TTC (teacher training college/2nd cycle of secondary school), where she took “Psychopedagogy” (Educational Psychology) and special methods courses in teaching Kinyarwanda, math, Elementary Science and Technology (EST), French, English, and drawing; she also took subject area courses in history, geography, chemistry, and physics. Angelique was educated in French, with the exception of the first cycle of primary (P1-P3), when Kinyarwanda was the MOI. Angelique had been teaching in Rwanda for nine years (since 2002). She had one year of experience elsewhere, where she taught P1; over the previous eight years at RPS, she had experience teaching P3, P4, P5, and P6. This was her second year teaching P6 (Angelique Interview 1, January 9, 2012).

Table 9: Rural Primary School focal participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Grades &amp; subjects taught</th>
<th>Languages spoken</th>
<th>MOI educated in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angelique</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>P6; Elementary Science &amp; Technology (EST), Math, Social Studies, Kinyarwanda</td>
<td>Kinyarwanda, French, English</td>
<td>Kinyarwanda (P1-P3), French (P4-S6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emmanuel</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>P5; EST, Math, Social Studies</td>
<td>Kinyarwanda, Swahili, French, English</td>
<td>Swahili (P1-P3, S1-S3), French (P4-P6, S4-S6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At the time of data collection, Angelique was teaching all core subjects in P6 – Elementary Science & Technology (EST), Math, Social Studies, and Kinyarwanda – except English (see Figure 20 for Angelique’s weekly timetable). It should be noted that my research assistant and I did not do consistent, formal observations of Angelique teaching Kinyarwanda. Instead, we often filled in for the P1 teacher who had yet to be hired (there isn’t a system for procuring substitute teachers for rural schools in this District), mostly by writing a few single-digit addition and subtraction problems on the board and going around the room to monitor student progress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOURS</th>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:20-8:00</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>EST</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td></td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00-8:40</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:40-9:20</td>
<td>EST</td>
<td></td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:20-9:40</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:40-10:20</td>
<td>Kinyarwanda</td>
<td>Kinyarwanda</td>
<td>Kinyarwanda</td>
<td>Kinyarwanda</td>
<td>SS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:20-11:00</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>EST</td>
<td>EST</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00-11:40</td>
<td>EST</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>EST</td>
<td>EST</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:40-12:40</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:40-13:20</td>
<td></td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:20-14:00</td>
<td>Kinyarwanda</td>
<td>Kinyarwanda</td>
<td>Kinyarwanda</td>
<td>Kinyarwanda</td>
<td>SS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:00-14:40</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td></td>
<td>SS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:40-15:00</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:00-15:40</td>
<td>EST</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>EST</td>
<td>EST</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:40-16:20</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Practical Work (PW)</td>
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<td>16:20-17:00</td>
<td></td>
<td>Co-Curricular</td>
<td>Co-Curricular</td>
<td></td>
<td>PW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 20. Angelique’s weekly timetable

There were 41 students enrolled in Angelique’s P6 class, although daily attendance averaged around 32. Instead of double shifting, P6 students attend both morning and afternoon sessions in order to maximize class time in preparation for the national leaving exam.

Angelique’s teaching style may be described as strict (two of her most common phrases are
“Silence!” and “Don’t make a noise!”) and teacher-centered (she does most of the talking and writes content on the board for students to quietly copy).

Over the two weeks that we observed Angelique’s practice, she used English 91.7% of the time, with the remaining 8.3% of her classroom interactions occurring in Kinyarwanda. Appendix A provides the transcript of a typical Angelique class session (i.e., one that exemplifies the aforementioned language use results). In this Elementary Science and Technology (EST) lesson on energy, Angelique introduced the concept of sound via a review of a P5 topic (electricity), speaking 55/59 turns in English (93.2%), and 4/59 in Kinyarwanda (6.7%). She used Kinyarwanda mainly to interpret/clarify what she had just said in English (e.g., [Line 115] “Because it damage our ear drum. [K] It damages our ear drum.”), although she used it once for classroom management purposes when she told a student to [Line 37] “shoo” another student back to P2. Moreover, 8/59 of the English turns she took (13.6%) are single-word utterances (e.g., “Yes?”).

The students in Angelique’s class interacted with her primarily in English in this EST class (10/14 turns); however, 100% of those were single-word responses, 7/10 of which are responses to yes/no questions – and six out of those seven were choral responses. Twenty-one times in the data set, Angelique’s use of English was met with no response. During the 40-minute class, some students may have uttered only a handful of words in either language.

4.3.1.2 Emmanuel

The second participant we followed at RPS was Emmanuel, a 41-year-old teacher of P5. Emmanuel studied at a “normal” secondary school in the Republic of Congo and graduated with his teaching credentials in 1991. He taught secondary math and biology in the Republic of Congo – through French MOI – for eight years until he moved to Rwanda in 1999, where he had been
teaching ever since. His first year in Rwanda, he taught mathematics at a high school in Southern Province; after which, he had been teaching at RPS continuously (11 years). Through interviews and informal interactions, it wasn’t possible to ascertain whether Emmanuel was qualified to teach in Rwanda (e.g., if his Congolese teaching license was valid in Rwanda). In addition to teaching at RPS, Emmanuel was serving as pastor for a parish in the surrounding community.

Emmanuel was born and educated in Congo, where Swahili was used for the first cycle of both primary and secondary (P1-P3 and S1-S3) and French for the second cycles of each (P4-P6 and S4-S6). Emmanuel’s TTC training was all done in French MOI, although they took Swahili-as-a-subject. Emmanuel reported studying English in Congo, but they only studied grammar, so he doesn’t know how to speak it (researcher journal, January 24, 2012). Emmanuel speaks four languages: Kinyarwanda, Swahili, French, and “small English.” He speaks Kinyarwanda because he is of Rwandese origin, but he had never studied it. He uses Kinyarwanda at home and for preaching. Although Emmanuel is fluent in French, he made it very clear that he no longer speaks it because, according to my research assistant’s interpretation, “there is no way of using it now” (Emmanuel Interview 1, January 11, 2012).

At RPS, Emmanuel was teaching EST, Math, and Social Studies (see Figure 21 below for his weekly timetable). Like Angelique, he was not teaching English; however, unlike Angelique, he was not teaching Kinyarwanda either (likely because he had never studied it). There were 38 students enrolled in his section of P5; average daily attendance was around 31. Emmanuel’s teaching style is high energy, playful, interactive, and encouraging: He moves around the room, speaking in loud voice, smiling and laughing as he interacts with students. One of his frequent expressions is “Speed, speed, speed!” He encourages students to go to the board; heartily slaps boys on the shoulders when they are successful; and claps to get the students’
attention or congratulate them on understanding something. I observed that Emmanuel’s role in
the classroom is similar to that of a coach, while my research assistant noted that he behaves like
a father toward the students (fieldnotes, January 19, 2012).

<table>
<thead>
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<td>EST</td>
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<td>Math</td>
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<td>Math</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:20-17:00</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Religious Ed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 21. Emmanuel’s weekly timetable*

In contrast to Angelique’s high degree of English use in the classroom, across the two
weeks that we observed Emmanuel’s classes, he used English a mere 6.8% of the time. The
remainder of the time (around 93.0%), he spoke Kinyarwanda – except for one occasion in a
math class when he said in French: “Before adding we have to write numbers in vertical order”
(fieldnotes, January 23, 2012). In order to demonstrate Emmanuel’s typical classroom language
use and allow for comparison by content area I selected the transcript from an EST lesson on
tools (see *Appendix B*). In this lesson, Emmanuel uses a larger percentage of English than is
typical for him: He takes 14/58 turns (24.1%) in English. However, 8/14 of those turns are
single-world utterances (e.g., [Line 37] “Read”) and mainly used for choral vocabulary repetition
(e.g., [Line 95] “Players” [pliers]).
With 31 turns, the students in Emmanuel’s class participated a little over twice as many times as Angelique’s students (just 14 turns). The rate of single-word responses in English by the students was very similar across the two classes (10 in Angelique’s, and 13 in Emmanuel’s). However, the unspoken rule that it was okay to use Kinyarwanda in Emmanuel’s class allowed for more interaction, as well as more student-initiated turns. Overall, Emmanuel’s instruction was marked by (a) a high degree of teacher-student interaction in Kinyarwanda (thereby ensuring more student-centeredness), with (b) key vocabulary items emphasized in English.

4.3.2 Urban Primary School

Just off a busy road at the edge of a town in Southern Province stands Urban Primary School (UPS). Behind a high wall and through an entrance gate, a large red clay schoolyard sprawls downward along the gentle slope of a hillside. When school is not in session, the schoolyard is buzzing with the sounds of children laughing, shouting, chasing, and weaving through a game of football that picks up with every recess (see Figure 22). At promptly 7:10 each morning, the school bell rings, and students arrange themselves by class like spokes extending out from a flagpole near the head teacher’s office to sing the national anthem. The bell rings again at 7:15, and students scatter to their respective classrooms (researcher journal, March 9, 2012). The school is composed of approximately 1,200 students, 19 classroom teachers, and one head teacher (UPS Head Teacher interview, March 10, 2012), who commute to school by car, minibus, or walking a short distance from the surrounding neighborhoods.

The schoolyard overlooks Mount Huye, and a series of terraced buildings form the perimeter of the educational/community complex. It houses a public primary school (with three classrooms for each grade level), a private preschool, and a community center/meeting hall (that is generally not in use in the daytime). The school buildings are built of clay brick with tin roofs.
that extend out over a concrete sidewalk encircling the inside perimeter of buildings like a courtyard (to protect from heavy rains). Bars protect the large, glass-paned windows of the structures. Like RPS, there is no running water at UPS; however, the complex does have electricity – and lighting in some of the classrooms, which they tell me is used only on extremely dark days (I haven’t seen it used it) (researcher journal, March 6 & 7, 2012).

Classrooms at UPS consist of rows of wooden desks that seat 3-4 students on their bench; exposed brick walls with many posters decorating them (some purchased, some handmade); chalkboards running the length of two opposite classroom walls; slate slab floors; and glass windows that open into the classroom, with curtains hanging on the side that faces the interior schoolyard. A teacher’s desk stands prominently at the front of the classrooms, with a cabinet filled with books and supplies nearby. In contrast to RPS, it seems there is greater access to materials in general (e.g., textbooks, poster paper, construction paper, colored chalk), and students themselves have more supplies: When taking notes, for example, “students have rulers and an array of pens [in different colors] to highlight vocab, just as the teacher does with colored chalk on the board” (fieldnotes, March 5, 2012).
4.3.2.1 Justine

From late February through mid-late March 2012, my research assistant and I followed two UPS teachers in their daily teaching practice: Justine and Peter. Table 10 below provides an overview of each participant, including their age, the grade level and subjects they teach, the language(s) they speak, and the medium(s) of instruction they were educated in. We first followed Justine, a 35-year-old teacher of P5. Justine is qualified to teach primary school in Rwanda, which she has done since graduating from a TTC with “normal primary” certification in 2000. Upon graduation, she taught for eight years in a different primary school in Southern Province, where she instructed all subjects in Grades P4 and P5. Since arriving at UPS in 2008, Justine has taught multiple subjects in P4 and P5. However, the current academic year (2012) was the second one in which she was specializing in P5 EST and Math only (i.e., teaching both sections, P5a & P5b) (Justine Interview 1, February 27, 2012).

Table 10. Urban Primary School focal participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Grades &amp; subjects taught</th>
<th>Languages spoken</th>
<th>MOI educated in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Justine</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>P5; Elementary Science &amp; Technology (EST), Math</td>
<td>Kinyarwanda, French, Swahili, English</td>
<td>French (P1-S6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>P6; EST, Math, Kinyarwanda</td>
<td>Kinyarwanda, English, French</td>
<td>Kinyarwanda (P1-P3), French (P4-S3), and English (S4-S6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Justine was the only participant in the study to receive her entire P1-S6 education through French MOI. In addition to speaking French, Justine speaks Kinyarwanda, Swahili, and English. She reported mixing French, Swahili, and Kinyarwanda when she speaks with her husband and friends at home. Justine studied English as a subject in secondary school (S1-S6) and is currently
a part-time theology student at a local university, where English is the medium of instruction. Justine stated that when she teaches, she tries to speak only English, but she sometimes has to “mix Kinyarwanda in order to be understandable of the students” (Justine Interview 1, February 27, 2016).

At the time of the study, Justine was primarily teaching P5 EST and math (i.e., both sections, P5a & P5b). She also taught a few social studies lessons each week (see Figure 23 for Justine’s weekly timetable). There were approximately 40 students enrolled in each section of P5. However, because some students/their parents didn’t respect their assignment to the afternoon shift (double shifting was necessary at UPS due to high enrollment), they came to school for the morning session – and thus the number in attendance in Justine’s class frequently topped 70. The day of the lesson in the transcript (Appendix C), the number of students present was 74. Justine’s teaching style may be described as expressive, dynamic, and interactive. She modulates her voice to capture the students’ attention and uses lots of Total Physical Response (TPR) (e.g., “Show me X”) to engage them. Despite the fact that her teaching involves less “down time” with students copying from the board than Angelique’s, Justine’s teaching style may still be described as transmittal – and thus teacher-centered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOURS</th>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:20-8:00</td>
<td>Math P5b</td>
<td>Math P5b</td>
<td>EST P5b</td>
<td>EST P5b</td>
<td>Math P5b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00-8:40</td>
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<td>EST P5a</td>
<td>Math P5b</td>
<td>Math P5b</td>
<td>Math P5b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:40-9:20</td>
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<td>EST P5b</td>
<td>EST P5a</td>
<td>EST P5a</td>
<td>Co-Curr P5b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:20-9:40</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:40-10:20</td>
<td>Math P5b</td>
<td>Math P5b</td>
<td>Math P5b</td>
<td>Math P5b</td>
<td>EST P5b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:20-11:00</td>
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<td>EST P5b</td>
<td>EST P5b</td>
<td>Math P5b</td>
<td>EST P5b</td>
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<tr>
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<td>EST P5a</td>
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<td>EST P5a</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:40-12:40</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:40-13:20</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>R</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Over the two weeks that we observed Justine, she used English 81.0% of the time in her teaching practice with the remaining 19.0% comprising Kinyarwanda use. Appendix C presents the transcript of an EST lesson that exemplifies Justine’s typical classroom language use percentages. In this lesson on the circulatory system and HIV/AIDS, Justine uses slightly more Kinyarwanda than usual 21.8% – a fact which she addressed with us afterwards, apologizing for using so much Kinyarwanda, but justifying it because of the importance of the content (HIV/AIDS; researcher journal, March 1, 2012). In all, Justine took 86/110 turns in English (78.2%) and 24 in Kinyarwanda (21.8%).

Of particular interest in Justine’s lesson is that while her English percentage (81.0%) is closer to that of Angelique in P6 at RPS (93.2%), the sheer number of turns she (110) and her students (59) take in the 40-minute block surpasses even Emmanuel (58) and his class (31) in P5 EST – who were interacting almost exclusively in Kinyarwanda. Of the 59 turns Justine’s students take, 51 are in English (86.5%); however, single-word responses in either language constitute 42.3% of the students’ turns (25/59). Justine consistently teaches with a high degree of interactivity; however, missing are opportunities for peer-to-peer interaction and elaborated response.

4.3.2.2 Peter

After Justine, we followed Peter, a 24-year-old teacher of P6, for two weeks in his teaching practice. Peter speaks Kinyarwanda, English, and French, and he reported learning in the following MOI schemes in his own education: Kinyarwanda (P1-P3), French (P4-S3), and English (S4-S6) but indicated that now as a teacher himself he “use[s] in English every time in
the class.” He admitted that he uses Kinyarwanda when talking to the other teachers, however, and that he sometimes speaks in French with the head teacher. When asked about Swahili, he said, “Peter: Ah [laughs]! Swahili, we try.” (Peter Interview 1, March 6, 2012).

Peter attended a TTC and specialized in “‘sciences-maths’ [French pronunciation],” studying math, science, biology, physics, philosophy, sociology, Swahili, entrepreneurship, computer science, and psychology (Peter Interview 1, March 6, 2012). He graduated in 2009 with “normal” certification and has taught P6 EST, Math, and Kinyarwanda at UPS ever since (see Figure 24 for Peter’s weekly timetable) – after initially filling in for a teacher who left partway through the school year (Peter Interview 2, March 13, 2012).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOURS</th>
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<td>Math P6a</td>
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<td>Math P6b</td>
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<td>Math P6a</td>
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<td>Math P6a</td>
<td>Kinya P6b</td>
<td>EST P6a</td>
<td>EST P6a</td>
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<tr>
<td>16:20-17:00</td>
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<td>Co-Curr P6b</td>
<td>Practical Work (PW) P6a</td>
<td>PW P6b</td>
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</table>

*Figure 24. Peter’s weekly timetable*

As we observed Peter over the two weeks (excepting Kinyarwanda), I never came to understand the complicated double shifting schedule (three groups were said to blend into his morning and afternoon sections on an A-B type schedule, yet the majority of students attended class in the morning – and we saw the same ones daily as we carried out observations); however, I can report that his class size averaged 58 students per session. Peter’s teaching style may be
described as casual (e.g., he sits at his desk much of the time and projects a relaxed attitude) yet authoritarian (e.g., in a harsh tone, he commands students to do things (e.g., fetch items, write and solve math problems on the board) and is quick to punish them when they don’t “behave”). It was actually somewhat difficult for me to get a good sense of his teaching persona because so much of it occurred in Kinyarwanda, as we’ll see.

In contrast to Justine’s high percentage of English use in the classroom, Peter used English just 20.8% of the time over the two weeks we observed his teaching practice – with Kinyarwanda comprising the remaining 79.2% and the majority of the English he produced occurring during math lessons. Appendix D provides the transcript not of a math lesson but of an EST lesson. It was chosen to display Peter’s routine classroom language use and while allowing for comparison across participants.

For this EST lesson on fruit salad – and its nutritional benefits – Peter selected an experiential learning format in order to convey the steps of making fruit salad and not simply explain them by requesting that each student bring a piece of fruit to contribute to the process. In implementing the lesson, Peter uses a bit more Kinyarwanda than is typical of his data set: He takes 52/60 turns (86.6%) in Kinyarwanda and just 8/60 (13.4%) in English, not producing any English until the class period is more than halfway through. In fact, Peter makes so few attempts at using English in this lesson that (a) we do not see the high production of single-word English utterances of the other teachers or the repetition of Kinyarwanda that they rely on, and (b) it is therefore difficult to discern a pattern. However, it appears that Peter uses English when presenting new material (e.g., [Line 111] “We wash dishes. After to wash the plates, I wash again the fruits. Before I cut. To finish the process”) or when sharing or reviewing the objective of the lesson with students (e.g., [Line 161] “Yes, protect us from disease. Other one?”).
The students in Peter’s class matched the degree of Kinyarwanda and English produced in their public turns (i.e., produced out loud in front of the whole class). They used Kinyarwanda 11/18 turns (61.1%) and English 7/18 turns (38.9%). Perhaps because so little of the class occurs in English, the students produce fewer single-word responses and repetition sequences than they did in Justine’s (or Angelique’s or Emmanuel’s) class.

At the end of her fieldnotes for this lesson, my research assistant summarized the lesson as follows, “Students practice how to prepare fruit salad. They eat what they have prepared. Teacher explains in [K] what he writes on board, but students didn’t practice new items of vocabulary. Students practice all steps to prepare fruit salad guide by the teacher, but they didn’t learn much in English language” (RA fieldnotes, March 6, 2012). To my mind, this lesson was a missed linguistic opportunity (for EMI): It could have looked more like a cooking demonstration, incorporating lots of realia and TPR.

4.4 Impacts of English medium instruction in Rwanda

The scenes of primary school classrooms that we just saw reveal much about the situation of EMI in Rwanda. That situation is examined further in this section, as the impacts of EMI are identified and explored. Additionally, issues related to EMI versus mother tongue instruction, as well as progress toward national education quality and international development goals are discussed.

4.4.1 Variation in teacher language use across classroom contexts

As evidenced through the four primary participants’ classes, Rwandan teachers vary greatly in the degree of EMI they implement in their classrooms. This pattern holds true across the entire data set, including the secondary teachers at Rural Secondary School (RSS) and Urban
Secondary School (USS), whose overall percentages of English use in the classroom appear alongside those of the primary schools in *Table 11* below.

*Table 11. English language use by teachers in Rwandan classrooms*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>% English</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>% English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angelique</td>
<td>RPS</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>Innocent</td>
<td>RSS</td>
<td>83.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emmanuel</td>
<td>RPS</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>Kwizera</td>
<td>RSS</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aime</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justine</td>
<td>UPS</td>
<td>81.0</td>
<td>Kagabo</td>
<td>USS</td>
<td>92.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>UPS</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>Mugisha</td>
<td>USS</td>
<td>66.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Primary</td>
<td></td>
<td>50.7%</td>
<td>Overall Secondary</td>
<td></td>
<td>70.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of noteworthiness here is that the variation in classroom language use does not appear attributable to (a) teacher age or English proficiency, (b) school setting (i.e., rural, urban), or (c) subject matter (e.g., math, history). We might make the assumption that recent TTC graduates – as the head teachers who hired them indicated in our interviews – would implement more EMI in the classroom. However, that was not the case with two of the youngest and most proficient English speakers in the study: Peter, the 24-year-old P6 math and EST teacher at UPS, used English just 20.8% of the time during instruction, and he was a recent graduate and quite proficient in English (to the point that he used only English in his interview responses). Kwizera Aime, a math teacher at RSS, was 26 years old and just finishing up his math degree (in EMI) at NUR and also quite English proficient; however, he implemented English in his classes 39.1% of the time. This finding suggests that there may be other sociocultural variables at play (e.g.,
interpersonal relations, solidarity) that limit the uptake of English in Rwandan classrooms – and ones that more teacher training might not resolve.

Elsewhere, researchers have pointed to the rural/poor-urban/elite divide that separates the educational experiences of students in East African classrooms (Abiria, Early & Kendrick, 2013; Biswalo, 2010; Brock-Utne, 2001, 2007, 2010, 2012; Bunyi, 2005; Early & Norton, 2014; Habyarimana, 2015; Higgins, 2009; Tolon, 2014). However, the results of this study demonstrate that when it comes to EMI implementation in Rwanda, the rural-urban situational factor may not be a reliable predictor. For example, while indeed English was implemented to a higher degree in urban classrooms (65.1% urban; 55.2% rural), I suspect that Rwandan officials and African educationists would find it surprising that a 35-year-old teacher in a rural P6 classroom (Angelique) would almost fully comply with the EMI policy (at 91.7% implementation), while her 24-year-old urban counterpart (Peter) would implement it only 20.8% of the time.

Finally, when the 2008 Cabinet resolution was launched, MINEDUC portrayed the MOI switch in math content to be the first and easiest transition, announcing that math teachers would receive their English language training first (Parliament, 2008). Despite the fact that they may have been trained first and their subject matter perceived to be the easiest to implement in English, the math teachers in this study, Kwizera Aime at RSS and Mugisha at USS, used English less in their classes than their social sciences counterparts, Innocent at RSS and Kagabo at USS, with 39.1% and 66.2% compared to 83.1% and 92.4% respectively. This pattern also occurred with Emmanuel at RPS, who in math taught entirely in Kinyarwanda, code switching to English only to state integers. Furthermore, the math teacher participants in this study reported wanting more training (Pearson, 2014). However, my guess is that participants want what they training in line with what academic language and literacy experts (see e.g., Gibbons, 2009, 2012;
Zwiers, 2008; Zwiers, O’Hara & Pritchard, 2014) are pressing for in the literature of late: the syntax and discourse of math – and not simply the academic vocabulary of math, which is only part of the discipline-specific language equation.

4.4.2 Non-acquisition of language and content

The classroom observation data in this study demonstrate not only wide variation in teacher implementation of EMI but also several indicators that the “classroom talk” that Rwandan primary teachers use may actually discourage student acquisition of English. Students are routinely exposed to a variety of English composed of complex vocabulary and simple syntax/grammar (e.g., Justine’s “Show me your pectoral.”). This phenomenon is likely due to the effect of the textbooks, which provide little language support beyond labeling.

Bunyi (2005) reports that when teachers in Kenya and elsewhere in Africa do not have a sufficient command of the MOI, it results in a “highly structured classroom talk,” featuring linguistic routines, choral responses, and “strict IRF [initiation-response-feedback] episodes.” Hornberger and Chick (2001) characterize these types of classroom routines as “safetalk,” which Heller and Martin-Jones (2001) define as “classroom talk that allows participation without any risk of loss of face for the teacher and the learners and maintains the appearance of ‘doing the lesson’, while in fact little learning is actually taking place” (p. 13). For example, we see safetalk utilized in Angelique’s lesson (Appendix A) beginning on line 100:

100   T: When there noises sound, we keep our ear to don’t hear it.
      T: Yes?
      Ss: Yes!

We also see safe talk in Justine’s class (Appendix C) beginning at line 82:

82    T [approaches diagram on board & traces the movement]: It sends blood to the---
      Ss: Lungs
      T: In order to get---
85   Ss: Oxygen
    T: To distribute what to the organs?
       [no response]
       T: Nutrients!

These kinds of linguistic routines (e.g., choral responses, IRF episodes) represent some of the more dominant linguistic and educational practices in four teachers’ classrooms observed in this study. Moreover, these patterns result in a high degree of teacher-centered instructional strategies and passive learning – which may also be the “chalk and talk” legacy of the Belgian colonial educational system (Malu, 2009), perpetuated by the fact that “teachers in Rwanda teach the way they were taught. They lecture and write up their notes on the blackboard for the students to copy into content designated copy books” (p. 185). When students do not have a chance to use the language in meaningful contexts, there is little hope of actual acquisition.

More alarmingly, however, is that the data appear to indicate that not only are the students not acquiring English, but they are likely not acquiring the subject matter through the EMI either. For example, 21 times in the data set, Angelique’s use of classroom English was met with “no response.” Thus, we can assume either the linguistic or cognitive demands – or both – were too high and prevented students from responding. Therefore, we need not simply ask “Are students acquiring English through EMI?” but rather, “Are students learning important content (e.g., Justine’s HIV/AIDS lesson) through EMI?”

Overall, it appears that strict adherence to EMI policy may detract from learning either language or content – or both – and once again resulting in potential disparate student access to education.
4.4.3 Detraction from quality education goals

A teacher-centered approach in Rwandan schools has been well documented in recent years (Bakirdjian, 2012; Habyarimana, 2015; McLean Hilker, 2010; Rurangirwa, 2012; Samuelson & Freedman, 2011). Therefore, one of the first steps in reaching quality education goals, perhaps, will necessitate moving away from teacher-centered instruction and toward student-centered education.

In education circles in East Africa – and around the developing world, a current buzzword is “child-friendly education.” Under the topic of ‘quality’ education, the Republic of Rwanda and MINEDUC’s “Education Sector Strategic Plan” (2010) defines child-friendly schools as those that are “inclusive, safe and protective, health promoting, gender sensitive, academically effective, and involved with the community” (Republic of Rwanda, 2010, p. 22).

According to Randall (2011), 36.0% of the students in her research investigating two rural Rwandan schools walked more than one hour to school (S. Randall, personal communication, IPAR Conference, December 9, 2011), which would not be in line with child-friendly school initiatives. And, MINEDUC themselves admit that there have been challenges in implementing child-friendly strategies: They claim such challenges “may impact negatively on quality in the short term…However additional support and training have been provided to teachers and school heads to combat [them]” and that “Key principles of the child-friendly schools approach have begun to be mainstreamed to improve quality and overall learning achievement” (Republic of Rwanda, 2010, p. 22). Simpson and Muvunyi (2013) also note that the child-friendly approach is currently being supported through teacher training efforts.
Yet, a child-friendly approach is the very minimum on the continuum toward child-centered education and UNICEF’s (2007) Right to Quality Education (see Figure 25). Students need to be prioritized and considered at each phase of the teaching and learning cycle: from planning to implementation to evaluation. Based on my findings at two primaries and two secondary schools, at present Rwandan students are given relatively no time to actively explore topics or even read. Until more active learning practices – that is, “academically effective” learning practice – are in place, including those that employ MTI in educating young learners, the attrition rates, I’m afraid, may continue to increase.

**Figure 25. UNICEF’s (2007) Right to Quality Education**

Obligations to ensure the right to quality education

- Develop children’s personalities, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential.
- Promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and prepare children for a responsible life in a spirit of peace, tolerance, equality and friendship.
- Promote respect for the child’s, his or her parents’ and others’ cultural identity, language and values.
- Promote respect for the natural environment.
- Ensure the child’s access to information from a diversity of sources.
- Ensure that the best interests of children are a primary consideration.
- Promote respect for the evolving capacities of children in the exercise of their rights.
- Respect the right of children to rest, leisure, play, recreation, and participation in arts and culture.

4.5 Conclusion

When it comes to EMI in Rwanda, it is quite apparent that medium of instruction does not automatically equal medium of learning. And, as long as there is no articulated language-in-education policy, there will remain uneven implementation across educational contexts – which poses a sincere problem for the millions of Rwandan public school teachers and learners as they carry out their educational lives and attempt to reach the national (e.g., Vision 2020) and international goals (e.g., MDGs) set for them.

Dutcher (2014) critiques the World Bank’s (2011) Education Strategy 2020 “Learning for All,” claiming that they do not even address the issue that medium of instruction presents and instead simply advocate for universal access to education. For Dutcher, it is not enough to provide students the opportunity to sit in a desk day in and day out and not understand what the teacher is saying (2014, p. 8). That, she claims, is education for all but not learning for all. Therefore, universal access to education coupled with EMI may actually be a setback in achieving educational quality – an issue Dr. John Simpson, Language and Education Adviser for the British Council Sub Saharan Africa, who works closely with MINEDUC acknowledged in a 2012 interview. When I asked him about the unstandardized quality of education that EMI may promote, he replied, “Now that we have 90.0% of students in school, we have to look at what kind of education are we providing them” (J. Simpson, personal communication, January 20, 2012).

Finally, in an online interview in 2011, Dr. Charles Murigande, the Minister of Education at the time (the one who signed the Cabinet resolution on MOI in 2008 and oversaw MINEDUC until 2011) responded to a question concerning the most significant changes in Rwanda in the last 17 years (post-Genocide) as follows:
By far the most significant change has been democratisation and equal access to education. Before 1994, education in Rwanda was reserved for the privileged few, but over the last 17 years access to education has increased tremendously. Today a child born in Rwanda is guaranteed a minimum nine years basic education, six at primary and three at secondary school. The number of students at primary level has more than doubled, there are almost nine times more students in secondary and those in higher education are a massive 17 times more than before. The corruption that used to determine who could pursue his or her studies has been eliminated and the only thing that determines how well a student does in school is their own hard work. (Government of Rwanda, 2011, para. 1)

Given the evidence presented herein and throughout, I argue that hard work is not the only determinant. Children should be at the center of educational policy decisions, particularly when decisions impact their access to a quality education, which should include instruction in a language the child can understand. That is what is meant by “child-friendly” and “child-centered” education, and according to UNICEF, constitutes a fundamental children’s right.

4.6 Notes

1 *Mother tongue* is the term most commonly employed in Africa when referring to first language or L1.

2 Instances of Kiswahili have been replaced with Swahili in order to standardize discussion and easily distinguish it from references to Kinyarwanda.
EMI originated as a term for English medium instruction at the tertiary level. I adopt it here to contrast with MTI (mother tongue instruction). Elsewhere, English medium instruction at the primary or secondary level may be referred to as English medium education (EME).

ELP is used in this article to efficiently refer to *ethnography of language policy*; this acronym is not found elsewhere in the literature.

Interviews were transcribed by a professional translator in Rwanda and validated by the researcher (with the exception of Kinyarwanda).

My Rwandan research assistant’s handwritten fieldnotes were typed up by an American undergraduate research assistant whose work was funded by a GSU Dissertation Grant.

### References


Altinyelken, H. K., Moorcroft, S., & van der Draai, H. (2013). The dilemmas and complexities


4.8 Appendices

4.8.1 Appendix A: Lesson transcript – Angelique

P6 Elementary Science & Technology - RPS
Friday, January 13, 2012 (3rd day observing Angelique)
11:00-11:40 AM
33 students

1 T: Now is the time of science. Close your notebooks of science. In P5, you have learned a chapter which is called electricity.
[no response]
T: Yes or no?

5 Ss: Yes
T: Yes. What is electricity?
S: [K] Electricity
T: No. In English. What is electricity?
[no response]

10 T: All of you. What is electricity?
[no response]
T: No one?
S: [K] Power
T: Say it in English.

15 S: Light
T: No. What is electricity?
[no response]
T: No? No one? No one knows electricity?
[no response]

20 T: Electricity is the form of energy that is used by many people in the world.
[T writes on board: electricity]
T: What is the use [yuz] of electricity?
[no response]
T: Electricity is used for watching television. Electricity is used for what?
[no response]

25 T: [K] Do you know what electricity is used for?
[no response]
T: Heh? [to a S] Go and write.
[S goes to board and writes: iron]

30 T: Oh, that is appliance [French pronunciation] that uses electricity. But I wanted to know the importance of electricity in our life. Other use of electricity? If electricity in our class, it is used for---
T: In P5, we study light and heat. What is the meaning of light?
S: Torch

35 T: Light is used for lighting up our house.
[S from another class peeks through the window to see researchers]
T [to a S]: [K] Shoo him away. Send him back to P2.
T: Now follow me.
[T strikes a hoe with a hammer]
40 T: Do you get something? [K] Do you get something?
T: Which part of our body catches something from here?
[no response]
T: [K] Which part of our body catches the sound produced here?
Ss: [K] Ears!
45 T: Say in English. Nobody knows how to say [K] ears [E] in English?
S: Ears.
T: Ears. Who know to sing? Who know to do it?
[no response]
T: No one?
[no response]
T: No one?!? Me, I was going to help you.
[turns on transistor radio]
T: Do you hear something?
[no response]
T: Do you hear something? There is a kind of hearing.
[T turns off radio]
T: You hear something. It is the same when I hit hammer and hoe.
[T strikes hoe with hammer again]
T: You hear a hammer bounce on a hoe. [K] What do you hear?
60 S: [K] Noise
T: There’s a sound. What is a sound?
[no response]
T: In Kinyarwanda, what is a sound?
[no response]
65 T: In Kinyarwanda, sound is [K] sound. [E] In English, sound is something that you hear through ears. Sound is vibration that travels through air.
T: Someone could come in front and produce a sound? You hear many kinds of sounds.
And you were here when I produced many kinds of sounds.
[no response]
70 T: No one cannot come and produce a sound?!
[no response]
T: Come here. [to a S] Come here, please.
[boy goes to front and stands]
T: Do you hear something? I want someone who come here and produce a sound.
75 T [to boy at front]: Why someone do not catch your sound?
[no response]
T: [K] Produce a sound.
[boy claps 5 times]
T [to class]: Do you hear sound?
80 Ss: Yes!
T: Yes! Fabrice produced a sound.
[boy returns to seat]
T [class]: Go and produce.
T: Using other part of your body. [K] Using other parts of your body.
[S goes to front and stomps]
T: Do you hear?
Ss: Yes!
[S returns to seat]

T: Good. Another.
[S goes to front and drops pen on wooden riser]
T: Do you hear?
Ss: Yes!
T: [K] Congratulations!

[S goes to front]
S [loudly]: Lo, lo, lo!
[T and Ss laugh]

T: By using different methods, we can produce sound. There is many different types of sound.

T: When there noises sound, we keep our ear to don’t hear it.
T: Yes?
Ss: Yes!
T: But we have many different way classify our sound. [K] But we have many different ways of classifying the sounds.

[T draws T-chart on board with sound on one side and noise on the other]
T: We have ringing telephone. We have some noise for jerry can. We have hammer falls on… hmm? There’s two types. Classify. Help me. We have ringing of telephone. We have speaking of someone. We have noise of moving table. And so on. Help me to classify sound. Ringing of telephone. Here or here?

T: Noise. Because it damage our ear drum. [K] It damages our ear drum.

T: When I speak, my sound is damage your ear drum?
S: Yes
T: Yes?! When I speak, my sound is damage?!?
Ss: No

T: It’s noise? If you follow me… I don’t remember well what is a sound. Help me to know what is a sound. Who can help me come and produce a sound?

T: No one?! You already forgot how to produce a sound?! You already produced a noise sound. No one?!

T: [K] You already produced sounds. [E] What is a sound?
[S makes a sound with his desk]
T: You make a sound, but I wanted to know what is the definition of a sound. It is something we hear through our ear or ear drum. Now you will take your notebook and
you will take some notes.
T [to a S]: Clean the blackboard.
[S erases the board]
[T writes on board: Air & sound; Definition: Sound is what is heard when someone speaks or when animal cries.]

135
[bell rings]
T: Time is for lunch break. [K] Hurry home because they couldn’t find anyone to cook lunch for you today.
[End of class]
Appendix B: Lesson transcript – Emmanuel

P5 EST - RPS
Monday, January 23, 2012 (3rd day observing Emmanuel)
11:00-11:40 AM
38 students

1 [Ss are finishing copying their K lesson from the board]
   S: [K] Teacher, may I go out?
   T: [K] No, you are coming from the break right now.
   T: [K] Clean the blackboard.

5 S: [K] We are still writing.
   T: [K] You are still writing?
   [T exits classroom]
   T [yelling back into classroom]: [K] I’m coming. I’m going to see if I can find science textbooks.

10 [Ss chat in K]
   [T returns with a stack of science textbooks]
   [Ss get excited & start shouting in K; they want a copy of the textbook]
   Ss [snapping]: Me teacher, me teacher!

15 T: [K] You have to share.
   [T distributes textbooks]
   T: [K] Don’t make noise and clean the blackboard.
   [S cleans the blackboard]

20 S: [K] No don’t clean Kinyarwanda notes!
   T: [K] The others, too. Clean all.
   [S cleans entire board]
   [Ss are eagerly flipping through textbooks]
   T: [K] Take your textbooks.

25 S: [K] At which page, teacher?
   T: [K] At the first page
   S: [K] This textbook is for English not Science.
   T: [K] Are you sure?
   [S shows book to T]

30 [T takes book back; has Ss shuffle books around so each table has one]
   T: See the first page.
   T: [K] What do you see at the first page?
   [no response]
   T: [K] The title only. What is the title? Do you know the title?

35 Ss: [K] No
   [T explains in K]
   T: Read.
   [no response]
   T: Read the title. [K] Read the title.
S: Tools used by a mechanic and a blacksmith.
T: [K] What is [E] mechanic?
Ss: [K] Mechanic
T: [K] What is [E] blacksmith?
S: [K] Tools

45
T: [K] It is a person. Who is that?
[no response]
[T explains in K what a mechanic and blacksmith are and what they do]
T: [K] In P4 we studied tools. What are they?
[no response]

50
T: Name the tool of blacksmith.
[no response]
T: [K] Tell me tools used by a blacksmith.
S: Clampa
T: Huh? Clam?

55
T: [K] What is [E] clam?
S: [K] Clamp
T: [K] What is it used for?
[S explains in K]
T: [K] Another tool
[no response]
T: [K] Look at the picture.
S: Hammer
T: [K] In Kinyarwanda.
S: [K] Hammer

60
T: [K] What is it used for?
[S explains in K]
T: [K] Another tool.
S: Anvil
T: [K] What is it used for?
[S explains in K]
T: [K] What is [E] anvil in Kinyarwanda?
S: [K] Anvil.
T: [K] Are you sure? I have to find the appropriate word in Kinyarwanda, and I will tell you later. What is that last tool?

75
S: [K] It is not the last. There are others on the other page.
T: [K] What are they?
S: B-low [bellows]
T: In Kinyarwanda.
[Js can’t find the right word in K]

80
T: [K] Bellows
[T explains what bellows are used for]
T: [K] Another tool
S: Plies [pliers]
T: [K] What is that?

85
S: [K] Pliers
T: [K] What is it used for?
[S explains the use of a spanner]
T: [K] That is the use of one of the blacksmith’s tools.
[T draws the blacksmith’s tools on the board and explains how they are used]

90 [Ss are talking in a lively manner in K]
Ss [repeating in enthusiastic manner]: Clam!
T: Un-ville
Ss: Un-ville!

95 T: Players
Ss: Players!
T: Hummer
Ss: Hummer
T: B-lows
Ss: B-lows!

T: [K] What is one on the second page – the tools of the mechanic?
T: [K] What is a mechanic?
[no response]
T: [K] Mechanic

100 T: [K] What do you see?
[no response]
[T quizzes Ss about the meaning/function of items in K]
T: [K] Another tool from the book.

105 S: Hummer.
T: [K] What’s the difference between the mechanic hummer and the blacksmith hummer?
[no response]
T: [K] Explains in K]

110 [S asks permission to leave]
T: Say can I get out?
[no response]
T: Repeat can I get out?
S: Can I get out?

120 T [to class]: Page 4. Letter A. [K] Say the word.
Ss: Players!
T: Picture B
Ss: Un-ville!
T: Picture C

125 S: Clam!
[“bell” (rock on tire rim) rings]
T [K]: You have to know all of these tools used by a mechanic and blacksmith and their uses. Is it difficult?
[no response]

130 T: [K] Is it difficult?!
Ss: [K] Yes! [end of class]
P5 Elementary Science & Technology - UPS
Thursday, March 1, 2012 (4th day observing Justine)
10:20-11:00 AM
74 students

1 T: [K] It's EST. You can continue to write your notes after. Okay, clean the blackboard.
   [3 Ss go to erase the board]
   [Rene sits down]

5 T: Okay. What are the main parts of your body?
T [to a S]: [K] Are you here? [E] Stand up. Speak loudly. What are the main parts of your
   body?
S: Head, number, body.
T [to class]: Number?!?

10 Ss: Head, members, and trunk.
T: We have three main parts of our body. A head, a trunk and---
Ss: Members
T: Okay?
Ss: Yes

15 T: Okay. What are the parts of the head?
[no response]
T: Of a head?! [points to own head] This is your head! What are they?
S: Nose
T: Nose

20 S: Ear
T: Ear
S: Ease
T: Eyes!
T [to a S]: Show me your eyes.

25 [no response]
T: Eyes!
[S looks around and sees classmates touching their eyes. S touches his eyes.]
T: Ears
[S touches ears]

30 T: Nose
[S touches nose]
T [to a S]: What are muscles of your trunk? Show me your trunk.
[S points to torso]
T: Yes. Show me your legs.

35 [S points to legs]
T: Yes. Show me your arms.
[S shows arms]
T: Yes. What are the muscles of the trunk?
Ss [clamoring to be called on]: Me teacher, me teacher!
T: [K] Don’t say me teacher, me teacher.
Ss [shout out answers]: Abdominal muscles. Pectoral muscles.
[T writes on board: Abdominal muscles, pectoral muscles, dorsal muscles]
[T stops what she’s doing and calls to the front a girl (who was making noise?); indicates for her to kneel in the corner; hits her 5 times with a stick.]

T: [K] Go back to your seat.
T: And dorsal--
Ss: Muscles
T: Okay? Last time we studied circulation. Circulatory system. In P4, what are the systems you studied?

S: Digestive system
S: Respiratory
S: Adjective system
[T laughs snidely]
T: What is the main part of the circulatory system?

Ss: Heart
T: What are the other parts of the circulatory system?
Ss: Veins [veins] and arteries
T: Repeat arteries.
Ss: Arteries!

T: Okay. What is the role of blood vessel? What is the use? What is the role, yes?
S: Blood vessel serve in the transport of blood.
T: Blood vessels serve in the transport of blood…to our organs!
T: What is the role of the heart? Show me your heart.
[no response]

T [pointing to her upper right abdomen]: It’s here?
Ss: No!
T [pointing to the inside of her wrist]: Look at here. It’s beat.
T: [K] Touch here to feel your heart beat.
T: What is the role of the heart?

T [points to her heart]: [K] Where is the heart located? At the left side of the chest.
[touches left side of her chest]
T: What is the role of heart?
[Ss shout out random things; room gets loud]

S: The heart plays a role of the pumps.
T: What is a pump?
S: Bicycle
T: Yes, the pump of a bicycle. You are right. [K] Who can show how a bicycle pump is used?

T [approaches diagram on board & traces the movement]: It sends blood to the---
Ss: Lungs
T: In order to get---

Ss: Oxygen
T: To distribute what to the organs?
[no response]
T: Nutrients!
T: [K] Explains the circulatory system

90 T: To the organs to distribute
T: [K] Explains ‘distribute’ and gives an example, “For example, to distribute electricity in our village.”
T: Okay, we have a big circulation and a---
Ss: Small circulation

95 T: How is big circulation done and by circulation you can differentiate small and big.
S: To the heart and the lungs.
T: I don’t understand.
S: Small circulation carried out from the heart to the lungs.
T [to whole class]: And big circulation is?
S: Carried from the heart to the organs.
T: From the heart to the organs.
T: Okay, look at here.
[T points to a picture in a textbook and walks around the classroom]
T: What do you see?

105 S: Persons
T: Yes, persons.
S: I see a person with broken leg.
T: Very good!
S: Nurse

110 T: Nurse, yes.
S: Children
T: Yes, look at here. How many people are they in this picture?
S: Five
T: Yes, five. What is this? [points to something in the illustration in the textbook]

115 S: In Kinyarwanda?
T: Yes
Ss [attempting to explain what they see in the textbook]: [K] Needles. Hospital tool.
T: A serin [syringe] for five people. Is it good?
Ss: Me teacher, me teacher!

120 T: Ah! One person. One student.
S: One is sick, and one is not sick.
T: Then is contaminate. What is that disease?
S: VIH
T: Eh! HIV!

125 T: What is HIV?
[no response]
[T explains in K]
T: Who can come and write HIV?
[S comes to the front and writes CIV on the board]

130 T: Is it true?
Ss: No!
[T writes A B C on board]
T: Read.
Ss: A, B, C

135 T [pointing to the S’s mistake]: CIV. Is it true?
T [to another S]: Write HIV.
[S writes HIV]
[T adds /AIDS behind HIV.]
T: Read.

140 Ss: Ides [aydz]
T: Aids!
Ss: Aids!
[T speaks for a long time in K; explains HIV/AIDS in K; writes Human Immunodeficiency Virus on board]

145 T: HIV is Human Immune Virus. AIDS is Accurate [sic] Immune Deficiency Syndrome [san-drome (like French pronunciation)].
T: HIV/AIDS is a disease the same of malaria. HIV is dangerous, you know?
Ss: Yes!
T: Okay. What are the ways of transmission?

150 T: [K] It is not good to use some instruments which are used by others. [E] Because HIV can transmit through what?
[no response]
T: Through what?!!?
Ss: Blood

155 T: Through what?!!
Ss: Through blood!
T: [K] When you go to a hospital and you have anemia. And you need someone’s blood. It can be contaminated with that disease. A doctor can check if the blood is contaminated.
T: A doctor can check if that blood contain HIV or not. Another ways of transmission

160 HIV?
T: [K] Another way of transmitting HIV?
S: In English?
T: In English? Yes, try!
S: Through blood.

165 T: Another way!
S [quietly]: Through the sex.
T: Yes, through sex. Do you know your sex?
Ss: Yes.
T: Show me your sex.

170 [Ss laugh]
T: Show me your ear.
[Ss touch ear]
T: Show me your eye.
[Ss touch eyes]

175 T: Show me your nose.
[Ss touch nose]
T: Show me your sex.
T: It’s very simple. It’s a part of our body.

T: [K] How can we transmit HIV through sex?
S: [K] When you go to the salon, the man who removes your hair can give you AIDS.
T: Is it through sex? [laughs dismissively]
T pointing to a S: You. Stand up.
[S stands]

T: Show me your sex.
[S points to the crotch of his pants]
[Ss scream with laughter]
T: Is his [other S’s] example through sex? His example is not through sex. It’s through---
Ss: Blood!

T: [K] How can HIV be transmitted through sex?
[2 Ss try to explain in K, but they provide examples of transmission through blood]
[T and Ss discuss in K the different ways of HIV transmission]
[T goes to the board and writes: Sexual intercourse]
T: Sexual intercourse. Repeat sexual intercourse.

Ss: Sexual intercourse!
T: There is other ways. [K] There are other ways.
S: [K] A mother can contaminate a child.
T: [K] Through a mother to a child.
[T writes on board: Through mother to child]

[T explains in K how that happens]
T: [K] It is possible to avoid HIV?
Ss: Yes!

[T’s phone rings; she motions for S to bring it to her]

[T exits classroom to talk on phone]
[Ss beginning chatting in K]
[T re-enters classroom]
T: [K] Do you have any questions?
S: [K] What does ‘through’ mean?

T: Ah, it is a preposition. [K] Preposition. Through.
S: [K] Is HIV/AIDS from a dog?
T: [K] I will tell you tomorrow, [E] yes?
Ss: Yes!
[end of class]
Appendix D: Lesson Transcript – Peter

P6 Elementary Science & Technology - UPS
Wednesday March 7, 2012 (2nd day observing Peter)
1:20-2:00 PM
55 students

1 [Ss are shouting in K as they wait for T to arrive]
   [T enters]
   T: [K] You are making noise in the presence of our visitors?
   [Ss continue chatting in K]
   [T flips through a textbook]
   [Ss begin taking fruit out of their bags and putting it on their desks]
   [T takes out a pineapple]
10 Ss: Whoo! [laugh]
   [T exits the classroom to take a phone call]
   [Ss chat loudly in K while T is out]
   [T returns and Ss get quiet]
   T: [K] Where is the student I asked to bring a plate?
15 S: [K] She is not here.
   T: [K] Someone who didn’t bring anything: Stand up.
   [A few Ss stand]
   T: [K] Sit down. I have brought something for you.
   [T puts bananas on his desk.]
20 Ss: Cheer
   T: [K] Don’t be happy about what you are seeing here. Be happy about what you are going to study.
   [Ss whisper excitedly in K]
   T: [K] Students who bring bananas: Put them here.
25 [Ss go and put bananas on the T’s desk]
   T: [K] Students who bring mangoes
   [Ss go and put mangoes on the T’s desk]
   T: [K] Students who bring papaya
   [Ss go and put papaya on the T’s desk]
30 T: [K] Students who bring oranges
   [Ss go and put oranges on the T’s desk]
   T: [K] Students who bring avocado
   [Ss go and put avocados on the T’s desk]
   T: [K] Students who bring passion fruit: Put them here.
35 [Ss go and put passion fruit on the T’s desk]
   T: [K] I asked someone to bring soap. Where is she?
   [S walks to the front and puts a bar of soap on the T’s desk]
   T: [K] I asked a student to bring water. Where is he?
   S: [K] She is still outside.
[Girl enters with heavy jerry can of water]
T: [K] Put away all notebooks in your desks. Shhh! Be quiet. [claps hands twice]
[T calls 2 girls to the front]
T [to girls]: [K] Everyone here is going to wash hands.
T [to class]: [K] Each of you: Wash your hands using soap and clean water.
[Ss begin taking turns washing hands]
[Copying from the textbook, T writes on board:
I prepare a fruit salad
In our families, fruits are generally eaten by children. However, everyone must eat fruits because they protect us from diseases.
They facilitate digestion and have a pleasant taste.
I proceed as follows
I clean, I wash, I dry the ripe fruits.
I peel, I cut in small regular pieces.
In a serving dish, I put a layer of each types of sliced fruits.
After each layer, I spread on a little sugar.
At the end, I sprinkle with lemon juice.
And I leave it to rest
I serve cold
Note: The fruit salad is rich in protective foods. Generally, it is not consumed alone; it accompanies body building and energy foods during the meal.]
[Room is getting noisier and noisier]
[T turns around and addresses the class]
T: [K] What were you doing?
S: [K] Washing hands.
T: [K] You have washed your hands. What do we do next?
S: [K] We are going to eat!
T: [K] No! We have to wash the plates.
T [to a group of 3 Ss]: [K] Wash the plates and the knife.
[Ss wash the plates and the knife]
[T asks 2 students to go the front.
A group of 5-6 students goes to the front]
T: [K] I said two students.
[2 Ss stay at the front; the others return to their seats]
T: [K] We have also to wash our fruits.
[The 2 Ss wash off the pineapple and bananas]
T [to one of the 2]: [K] Peel the pineapple.
T [to the other one]: [K] Peel the bananas.
T: [K]Step 1: I clean, I wash, I dry the ripe fruits. [E] I clean, I wash, I dry the ripe fruits!
Ss: I clean, I wash, I dry the ripe fruits!
T: [K] Who can come and cut the avocado in small pieces?
Ss: Me teacher, me teacher!
[S goes to the front, washes hands, and cuts the avocados]
T: [K] You didn’t wash your hands before?
S: [K] No.
T: [K] But everyone here had to wash his hands! [to class] Continue washing your hands
while we are preparing fruits.

[Students continue washing hands one by one as the 3 students prepare the fruit salad.]

T [to one of the 3]: [K] Cut the pineapple in small pieces.

[S begins to cut pineapple]

90  

T: [K] Small.

[The other 2 Ss are cutting the avocados]

[Some Ss wake up a S who is sleeping when it’s his turn to wash hands; everyone laughs]

T: [K] We have small pieces of pineapple, bananas, and avocados. We are going to put passion fruits.

95  

[Classroom gets noisy]

S: [The boy across the aisle from Pam gets her attention and says]: Fruits are delicious.

[the Ss around him erupt with laughter]

P [quietly]: Fruits are delicious, yes.

[Classroom gets noisier and noisier]

T: Shhh! [K] Who can tell me steps that we have finished while preparing fruit salad?

Ss: Me teacher, me teacher!

T: [K] Where are others? I want to see many hands. Xavier.

S: [K] I clean, I wash, I dry the ripe fruits.

T: In English

100  

S: I clean, I wash, I---

Ss: Me teacher, me teacher!

T: After to wash our hands?

Ss [shout answers at random]: Clean! Wash! Cut!

T: [K] After washing hands, what have we done?

[no response]

105  

T: We wash dishes. After to wash the plates, I wash again the fruits. Before I cut. To finish the process.

T: [K] After that, we spread on a little sugar. And we sprinkle with orange juice.

[While T explains these steps, the student helpers are doing it.]

110  

T: After putting orange fruit [K] after putting the orange, we wait for one minute. After that, we eat. This is the process of preparing fruit salad. [E] Process.

[Ss are chatting in K]

T [loudly]: After sugar you put---

Ss: Orange!

115  

T: You need the juice. After orange, after that we eat. [K] Now we eat.

[Ss go crazy]

T: This is the process of preparing fruit salad. What is the role of fruit salad? [points to board]

T & Ss [reading]: The fruit salad is rich in protective foods.

120  

T: [K] The fruit salad is rich in protective foods.

T [to the 2 girls] Serve every student.

[The girls take the trays around and Ss take only one piece]

[Not every S takes a piece]

T: [K] In every society, people eat together. Are you ashamed of eating? In secondary school, everyone eats with his or her own plate. Are you going to be ashamed to eat with others? Be ashamed of committing sins, but don’t be ashamed of eating.
[T explains in K why everyone needs to eat fruit.]
T: [K] Next work is for boys.
[T calls 2 boys to the front and asks them to cut the remaining fruits in small pieces and share with other students.]
[boys don’t begin]
T: [K] You didn’t see how girls have prepared fruit salad?
T: Shh! [K] Let’s see if these boys know to prepare food. I know there are girls also who don’t know to prepare food.
140
Ss: [K] We know it, teacher!
[Some Ss raise hands]
T: [K] Who is seeing for the first time to prepare fruit salad?
[Some Ss are drinking water from the jerry can]
T: [K] I want to hear one voice. Others sit down.
S: Facilitate digestion.
145
T: [K] We have seen the role of fruit salad. What is the role?
S: [K] Protect us from diseases.
T: Yes, protect us from disease. Other one?
Ss [raising hands, snapping & rising out of seats]: Me teacher, me teacher!
T: [K] Everyone takes one piece of each fruit, such as banana and avocado or pineapple.
[One S refuses to take a piece]
T: [K] Why don’t you want to eat with others?
150
S: [K] He didn’t wash his hands.
T: [K] Go to wash your hands.
[S shakes his head]
T: [K] You don’t want to eat with students who are younger than you?
[S stands up and goes to wash his hands]
[Ss storm the trays for the last pieces]
T [shouting]: [K] You are making noise! I want to find everyone in his/her own seat!
[Ss return to seats and the class calms down]
T: [K] Let us review the role of fruit salad. [E] They protect us from---
Ss: Fruit salad!
180  T: [annoyed tone] They protect us from---
Ss: Disease.
[Bell rings]
T: [K] Break time
[end of class]
5 OVERALL CONCLUSION

5.1 Shifting linguistic and educational landscape

Through this dissertation, I was afforded the opportunity to explore the linguistic and educational landscape at a particular “moment” in Rwandan history and society. I followed the English medium instruction (EMI) shift in Rwanda from 2008 – when I first heard about the policy – to the point that I entered the field in 2011, where I studied it intensively until 2012, and continued to follow it over the ensuing few years as I analyzed the data I gathered in country. Through an ethnography of language policy (ELP) approach (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007), I set out to answer four research questions concerning various aspects of language policy and planning (LPP) in relation to national EMI policy in post-Genocide Rwanda. The degree to which each of these questions was answered through the research process will now be assessed.

5.1.1 Retrospective on the research process and outcomes

Research Question 1 (RQ1) asked, “What is the current linguistic ecology of Rwanda?” This question was formulated in order to establish the wider societal context for the policy (i.e., beyond the schools and classrooms where the bulk of the research would take place). It was based on similar questions asked in previous LPP doctoral work in international contexts (e.g., Hult, 2007; Rosendal, 2010) and, therefore, relied on similar methodology – that is, linguistic landscape analysis (LLA) of storefront signage. My findings (reported in Chapter 2) pointed not only to (a) a dramatic shift toward English – and/or away from French – in public spaces in Rwanda between the years 2006-2007 and 2011-2012 that appear to converge with national policy initiatives, but also to (b) the utility of diachronic comparative analysis in LLA, by comparing the findings of research conducted prior to the enactment of the EMI policy (Rosendal, 2009; 2010) to those of the present study for the purpose of illustrating trends across
time. To facilitate the discussion of the language shift trends I discovered, I relied on an *ecology of language* (Haugen, 1972) metaphor, which takes into consideration the complex relationships among languages, social contexts of languages, and speakers of languages in multilingual contexts (Garner, 2004; Hornberger, 2002; Hornberger & Hult, 2008; Hult, 2007, 2009). If time and circumstance had allowed, I would have performed LLA in Kigali as well, thus providing a more complete map of language use in public spaces in Rwanda for the years I was in country; however, as I resided in Butare (two hours outside the capital) and did not wish to dedicate more than a few weeks of my 9-month stay to surveying the linguistic landscape, I decided to forego that (potential not proposed) dimension of the project. Even at that, I believe the Butare LLA data coupled with diachronic comparative analysis and contextualized through scholarly and journalistic reports of the dynamic sociohistorical, sociopolitical, and sociolinguistic terrain provides as comprehensive a look as possible at the linguistic ecology in Rwanda at the time of fieldwork.

RQ2 inquired about the nature of the 2008 Rwandan Cabinet resolution for English medium instruction (EMI) in public education in Rwanda, and how the objectives of the policy and the procedures for its implementation were envisioned by policymakers and administrators. RQ3 asked how the Cabinet resolution was interpreted and appropriated (e.g., adopted, adapted, resisted) by Rwandan classroom teachers in their day-to-day practice, as well as the extent to which their practice converged with the 2008 Cabinet resolution mandating EMI. These two questions were included in the research design as a means of (a) exploring the policy landscape at the nexus of the shifting linguistic and educational landscape and (b) bridging (i.e., serving as a point of connection between) the data targeting the shifting linguistic landscape (RQ1, Chapter 2) and that focusing on the shifting educational landscape (RQ4, Chapter 4). Together, they were
intended to facilitate demonstration of the multilayered nature of LPP in the Rwandan context (i.e., the ideological and implementational layers and spaces in Rwandan MOI policy and practice). And, for all of the rich data I was able to collect to provide an examination of the policy implementation from the bottom up (e.g., through the ethnographic data collected through classroom observation and teacher interviews), I fell short in retrieving equally robust data to shed light on the process from the top down. Specifically, I wasn’t able to secure interviews with key policymakers at the national level who could have provided vital information regarding how they envisioned the objectives of the policy or the procedures for its implementation – but not for lack of trying. As I describe in the “Methodological matters” section at the outset of this dissertation, I pursued interviews with government officials at many points in time and through various channels over the course of my stay in Rwanda. However, my efforts were largely met with resistance or avoidance – and as such, the perspective I provide on the policy objectives and implementation as envisioned by those at the top (e.g., policymakers and administrators at the national level) is somewhat tangential (i.e., provided by individuals other than direct representatives of MINEDUC, REB or NCDC). Despite that disappointment, I contend that Chapter 3 provides a fairly complete and bidirectional account of the policy layers and spaces in Rwandan LPP post-enactment of the 2009 Cabinet resolution on MOI.

The fourth and final RQ – “How does national language-in-education policy (EMI in public schools) impact local educational contexts in Rwanda?” – drove the development of third article (Chapter 4). In order to answer RQ4, I performed multi-sited ELP (i.e., primarily classroom observation and teacher interviews) to gather data on the ways the 2008 Cabinet resolution on EMI in Rwanda affected the educational landscape at the school level and (critical) discourse analysis to analyze it. The process yielded novel insights into such policy impacts as
(a) classroom language use, including the tension between EMI and mother tongue instruction (MTI); (b) heavy reliance on teacher-centered models of instruction, despite the surrounding discourse of “child-centeredness” in education in Rwanda and elsewhere in the region (due to international development initiatives); and (c) unpredictable patterns of education “quality,” as operationalized as disparate access to content and language depending on students’ individual circumstances. Admittedly, the article reports on the primary (school) data to a far greater degree than the secondary (school) data. However, the decision to emphasize the primary level in the article was intentional and based on two main factors: (1) the ability to compare cases across the same subject area (Elementary Science and Technology), which wasn’t possible in the secondary data (since all but two of the participants taught in different fields), and (2) fidelity to the research design (i.e., no concessions were made to participant recruitment criteria at the primary level, whereas secondary teachers without the five years of desired experience were allowed to participate when no other participants could be located).

In retrospect, I sincerely hope this dissertation research process has delivered a product that satisfies the majority of the research outcomes I set out to achieve in my proposal.

5.2 Taking stock of the 2009 language-in-education policy

5.2.1 Constraints, contributions, and future directions

Throughout this document, I have taken care to address limitations encountered during the research process. In the general introduction, for example, I disclosed the limitation in personnel (i.e., research assistant turnover), and in the articles, I discussed shortcomings specific to each study (e.g., the potential discrepancy in the operationalization of Butare town limits in the first article and the simplistic coding dichotomy in the third article). However, there are a
couple of larger issues constraining the performance of social sciences research in contemporary Rwanda that I feel obligated to mention before closing – specifically, the challenges of conducting ethnography in a culture of governmental authoritarianism and interpersonal mistrust.

To begin, the laws against divisionism (2002) and genocide ideology (2008) (c.f., the general introduction and the second article) overlying a culture of low trust (Ibuka, 2011), may have constrained the research process even more than I had anticipated. Before arriving in Rwanda, I knew that it was illegal to ask questions of ethnicity and insensitive to ask questions about family, and then Professor Evariste made me aware that asking where someone was born or from could make them “uncomfortable.” To that end, time and again, I witnessed Rwandans evade personal questions – and even lie – as a self-preservation strategy, such as in this example of my friend attempting to engage our tour guide in “casual” conversation:

Friend: Where’d you grow up?
Guide: Oh, to say where one grew up is a very complicated matter.
Friend: Yeah, but where were did you spend most of your childhood?
Guide: Indeed, that is a very good question. (researcher journal, March 2, 2012)

One evening a few weeks later, I was showing a group of friends something interesting I had seen at school that day – how Rwandans set up their division problems in math differently from the way we do in the U.S. Upon seeing the way we write the bar for long division, our guide (with whom I had subsequently become friends) blurted out, “That’s how we did it in Congo,” thus betraying the fact that he grew up in exile. I’m not sure he even realized he said it, but it confirmed to me the reason that he had avoided my friend’s question a few months earlier when we first met: That directly answering the question could have allowed us to ascertain his
ethnicity – or in the least might have prompted follow-up questions that would have resulted in us testing the limits of legality.

According to Samuelson and Freedman (2010), violating the laws of divisionism or genocide ideology is punishable by “up to 20 years in jail” (p. 200), and the fear of getting caught is very real, due to a surveillance network that monitors Rwandans as they go about their day-to-day lives. In an article in the Globe and Mail article earlier this year, York (2016) reported on the realities of the current Rwandan “regime”:

Village informers. Re-education camps. Networks of spies on the streets. Routine surveillance of the entire population. The crushing of the independent media and all political opposition. It sounds like North Korea, or the totalitarian days of China under Mao. But this is the African nation of Rwanda. (para. 1-2)

As time went on during my stay in country, I, too, became increasingly aware of the culture of surveillance in Rwanda. Friends – Rwandan and non-Rwandan – reported to me about the pervasiveness of spying in Rwanda: about the spies at the university that routinely report on student comments and activities; about umudugudu (village; smallest administrative grouping in Rwanda) leaders who monitor and report on the daily lives of people living in their jurisdiction; and about the estimated 25.0% of Rwandan citizens who are on the government payroll for reporting on their fellow citizens’ activities. There is even a saying in Rwanda, “If you are with 1-2 others, there’s a chance that one of you is spy. But if you are with three others, then one of you is a spy.”
Thus, I grew to question whether I was placing my participants and research assistant in a compromising role. For instance, I started to wonder if our observations and interviews might cause them to witness—and thus be compelled to report—things that they otherwise wouldn’t have encountered. For instance, in retelling stories about his days in primary school, one participant stated, “After school was out for the summer, we all went to the highlands to look after cattle because we were abatutsi (Tutsi)” (Interview 1, name and date withheld to protect anonymity). Instead of translating the term matter-of-factly, my research assistant said, “He said they were… I’m not sure how to say that word in English. But they were a group of shepherds of cattle. Yes, I will found the exact word for it later—just the exact word for it in English later” (researcher journal, date withheld to protect anonymity).

In light of the authoritarian context, I have taken great care to protect the identities of my participants. And, while I can’t reveal their positionalities in this co-constructed enterprise, I must reveal certain aspects of mine in order to recognize the role my umuzungu (a white person or westerner) status played in the research process. In response to Johnson’s (2013b) reminder that while ELP “can both provide thick descriptions of, and contribute to, policy processes to validate and promote language diversity as a resource in schools and society…ethnographers of language policy still need to interrogate their own agency in the contexts in which they study” (pp. 45-47), I now briefly address a couple of ways that my personal background and identity may have influenced data collection and interpretation.

Although I was always completely transparent about my role as a researcher in Rwanda and the goals of my research, my outsider status may have raised suspicion among Rwandans as to my “actual purpose” for being there, as in this excerpt from a conversation I had at the home of one of my Rwandese friends:
Friend’s brother: What are you doing here [in Rwanda]?
Me: I’m doing research.
Brother: Why?
Me: Because I’m in a PhD program back home.
Brother: Which one?
Me: Applied Linguistics at Georgia State University.
Brother: Why did you choose Rwanda?
Me: Because I read about the medium of instruction shift in schools and wanted to learn more about it.
Brother: That’s good. What are you really doing here?
Me: Just that.
Brother [to my friend]: She’s good. (researcher journal, April 15, 2012)

Given Rwanda’s colonial past and history of Genocide (c.f., general introduction), high suspicion of outsider involvement permeates the culture in Rwanda. In order to mitigate that effect and establish myself as a legitimate researcher in Rwanda – as well as to comply with Fulbright requirements – I secured a research permit from the Directorate of Science, Technology, and Research through the Ministry of Education (c.f., the general introduction), which I fear now may have sent a very different message from the one of legitimacy that I had sought. In hindsight, I have come to see my official affiliation with MINEDUC perhaps not as a permit but as a license to conduct research – and one that couldn’t be refused. As someone who values voluntary participation, it troubles me to think that any of my participants felt coerced to participate in the research for fear of acting against the wishes of the Administration. For that reason, too, I have been extra cautious about protecting participant identities.

Toward the end of my time in Rwanda, I learned from my research assistant that some of the teachers at our research site had been asking him what my “double mission” was.
Apparently, they just couldn’t believe that I could be an independent researcher at a school in rural Rwanda and thus assumed that I was working on behalf of the Rwandan government. Upon hearing that, it occurred to me that this narrative may have been present all along and just not brought to my attention by my previous research assistant. Therefore, the dynamic of suspicion may also overlay the findings. That said, I don’t second-guess the results of my research. I simply report what was reported to me and acknowledge that this project is and has always been a product of my subjectivity. And, other than attempting to avoid the topic of ethnicity, nor do I consider that I engaged in self-censure at any point in this research process, although I am certainly aware of the constraints that others such as Scott Straus, veteran Rwanda researcher, describe:

If you depart from official scripts or question the country’s direction, the typical reaction is not engagement, but attack, dismissal, and name-calling…. [And] if you go public with your criticism, you risk denunciation and, ultimately, access. That dilemma leads many of us, including myself, to practice self-censorship. The reaction to Remaking Rwanda will thus likely reinforce a tendency for scholars to avoid certain topics or to remain quiet if they hold views that they know would jeopardize their ability to conduct research in the country. (Seay, 2012, para. 3-5)

It may appear at this point in the discussion that the constraints call into question the suitability of utilizing ethnographic methods in Rwanda whatsoever. However, I actually view my outsider status in conducting observations and interviews not as a limitation of this work but rather as its main contribution. As an outsider, I was able to raise questions, voice concerns, and
offer interpretive angles in ways that “insiders” could – or should – not. This outsider contribution to the research process has also been substantiated by Samuelson and Freedman (2010), who claim that “in the case of current-day Rwanda, outsiders or expatriate Rwandans have the luxury of speaking critically about Rwanda’s current language policy, whereas Rwandans living within the borders of their country do not” (p. 211).

Another contribution of this project was the scope of empirical evidence it generated through fieldwork. When I applied for my research permit from abroad, I stated:

Academically, I hope to make a contribution to the fields of English language education, teacher education, and language planning and policy; practically, I hope to contribute to the linguistic and educational shift in Rwanda in whatever ways I can (e.g., sharing my findings, working closely with MINEDUC and other agencies). (research permit application, August 25, 2011)

However, I wasn’t sure at the time whether I would be able make an actual contribution. That changed when I arrived in country and visited the U.S. Embassy employee (a Rwandan national) who helped me get my visa and research permit. She told me that she really liked my project and that it would contribute a lot to the development of Rwanda. She said, “That’s why we ranked your proposal #1. Because everybody here is talking, but nobody knows” (researcher journal, September 8, 2011). From that point forward, I viewed this dissertation as making a contribution to the policy process in Rwanda – if only a meager one.

Prior to leaving Rwanda, I shared some of my general findings with the Director of Science, Technology, and Research (I tried to book appointments with others in MINEDUC to
no avail), and since returning to the U.S., I have published and presented on the topic. At CIES (Comparative and International Education Society) 2016, I had the opportunity to speak with a fellow Rwanda EMI researcher who has been studying the impacts of the policy in recent years. He claimed that he’s been citing my work and that “some of the powers that be [in Rwanda] have been listening” (T. Williams, personal communication, March 7, 2016). In particular, I hope “the powers that be” hear the message of linguistic and educational struggle that I have reported herein, and then work to alleviate it in some tangible way.

When it comes to theory, this project has offered findings in a relatively new field (LPP), through an innovative approach (ELP), and of a hereto under-researched phenomenon (EMI shift in Rwanda). Moreover, the product of an interdisciplinary field (applied linguistics), it has seamed together concepts and methods from traditionally distinct areas of inquiry (e.g., education, linguistics, anthropology, cultural geography, sociology, policy studies) and reframed them in a series of unique theoretical perspectives and insights, which may be of interest to scholars in the aforementioned fields and possibly beyond (e.g., area studies, political science, political philosophy, history, law, economics). I hope the result is an argument for contemporary knowledge creation through multidisciplinary approaches to research in a dynamic world.

As for future research directions, I have considered pursuing related yet novel lines of inquiry, such as (a) conducting research in teacher training colleges in Rwanda to learn how pre-service teachers receive preparation to teach in EMI and promote child-centered instruction; (b) complementing this work by adding student interviews to the research (they were intentionally omitted from this project in order to secure international IRB clearance as a graduate student); or (c) carrying out comparative work in other contexts in the region and/or in other EMI shift contexts around the world (we need more research at the primary and secondary levels to
counterbalance investigations being done at the tertiary level). But before initiating any of those projects, I would want to extend the findings of this dissertation in the following ways: By (1) analyzing student achievement data (e.g., on national leaving exams) in relation to the EMI policy (as they become available over the next few years); (2) authoring an exploration of my positionality, as well as the challenges associated with doing classroom-based research in international contexts; (3) conducting a corpus analysis of the classroom data to uncover the quantitative nature of English used in Rwandan classrooms; and (4) performing an analysis of emic (research assistant) and etic (my own) perspectives in the research (i.e., places in the data set where we provided discrepant interpretations about classroom situations).

Finally, if at some point in the future I am afforded the opportunity to extend this research in Rwanda, the focus of my work will necessarily move beyond the descriptive and interpretative and into the critical. As Ricento (2006) has said of language policy work in applied linguistics, “[it] is not just an exercise in philosophical inquiry; it is interested in addressing social problems” (p. 11). Now that I know the linguistic and educational landscape in present-day Rwanda, I would feel compelled to take on some of the more critical aspects of it, such as linguistic (human) rights, linguistic imperialism (i.e., the global spread of English), decolonization processes, and (language) identity politics – all depending, of course, on whether I would ever be granted another permit to conduct research in Rwanda again.

5.2.2 Coda

After eight years of work on this project, it is time to bring it to a close. But that does not mean that I am finished exploring the shifting linguistic and educational landscape of the region. I will continue to monitor Rwanda for updates on the 2008 Cabinet resolution on MOI policy; I will watch Burundi, where a similar MOI shift is now underway (Look & Shryock, 2012;
Plonski, Teferra & Brady, 2013); I will follow Gabon, who has announced that they intend to follow Rwanda’s “switch to English” (Clover, 2012); and I will keep an eye on South Sudan, who is in the process of joining the EAC and will need to adopt EMI if membership is ratified (Plonski et al., 2013). However, it is with even greater interest that I will observe Tanzania, who recently shifted away from EMI in favor of Swahili as a MOI (Mjama, 2015) – because one shift on a continent can set in motion a wave of others. Therefore, in conclusion, I’ll say, as T.S. Eliot once wrote, “to make an end is to make a beginning” (1942). So ends and begins my journey.
GENERAL REFERENCES


Blackwell.


Johnson, D. C., LaMare, H., & Williams, T. (2015). What does the process of language education policy development look like at the state level and why is it important within the context of the Common Core State Standards? In Valdes, G., Menken, K., & Castro, M. (Eds.), *Common Core, bilingual and English language learners: A resource for educators* (pp. 108-109). Philadelphia: Caslon Publishing.


The University of Wisconsin Press.


GENERAL APPENDICES

General Appendix A: Ethnographic interview guides

Teacher Interview 1: Background (beginning of first week of observation; 1 hour)

A. Personal
1. Tell us about yourself.
2. What language(s) do you speak and for what purposes?
3. Tell us about your experiences in primary school. What was/were the language/s of instruction?
4. Please tell us about your experiences in secondary school. What did you study? Which language(s) were used in secondary school, by whom and for what purposes?
5. Did you attend university or do you plan to attend? If so, where did you attend, and what did you study? If not but you would like to, what do you hope to study?

B. Teaching
1. What subject(s) do you teach?
2. How did you decide to become a teacher?
3. What kind of teacher training or teaching qualifications do you have? Do you have any additional training or qualifications?
4. How long have you been a teacher (at this school)? If you have taught elsewhere, where else did you teach? Which subject(s) and how long?
5. Where do you get the curriculum and materials for the classes you teach?

C. Wrap up
1. What questions do you have for us?
2. What else would you like to tell us?

Teacher Interview 2: Rwandan Language Policy & Teaching Practices (during second week of observation; 1 hour)

A. Policy & practice
1. When and how did you hear of the 2008 policy shift to English as a medium of instruction? What did you think about it then? What did you and your fellow educators say?
2. Why do you think the Cabinet enacted the shift to English?
3. Did the policy impact your teaching right away (in 2009)? If so, how? If not, why not?
4. What kind of training or support did you receive from MINEDUC or your school to assist you with this conversion?
5. Did you participate in a training course (e.g., during the 2009/2010 holidays)? If so, what did the training cover (e.g., English language, ELT methods)? How did it impact the way you teach (if it did)?
6. Have you been supplied with self-directed training materials or been provided school-based mentoring? If so, please tell us about them.
7. Do you feel you have sufficient English skills to teach your content area? Why or why not? How much time do you spend teaching in English would you estimate?
8. Which language(s) and what skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) are your students proficient in?
9. Do you feel students have sufficient English skills to study in your content area? (Can students express themselves in English?) Why or why not? Which language(s) do students use at school and in class? Is there are difference (e.g., BICS & CALP)?
10. How have you adapted your instruction (e.g., strategies) for teaching in English (if you have/do)?
11. How has the new language-in-education policy impacted your students’ learning?
12. What kinds of teaching materials in English were you given in order to implement the policy in your classroom (e.g., curriculum, textbooks)? What materials (if any) do you still need/want?

B. Wrap up
1. Overall, how has the 2008 language of instruction policy affected your teaching practice?
2. How do you feel about the policy now? What do you and your fellow educators say today?

Administrator Interview: Rwandan Language Policy & Teaching Practices (during second or third week on site; 45 minutes)

A. Background
1. Tell us about yourself
2. Teaching experience
3. Administrator experience
4. What are your main duties/major priorities in administration?

B. School administration vis-à-vis language policy
1. How does MINEDUC inform you of educational policy changes?
2. How did you learn of the 2008 policy to implement English as a medium of instruction?
3. What did you think about it? What did your teachers say?
4. Why do think the policy was created?
5. How important do you think it is for Rwandan students to learn in English? Explain.
6. How has the policy impacted teachers and students at your school?
7. As you walk around the school, what would you expect to observe in terms of language of instruction practice?
8. Have there been challenges associated with implementing the policy? If so, what are they?
9. How has MINEDUC helped support the shift to English as a medium of instruction?
10. What will happen to teachers who don’t follow the policy?
11. Can you share with us student results on the national exam/success in school before and after the policy?
12. What do parents say about the policy? What do students say about the policy?
13. Do you have any concerns with the policy?
14. Is there anything that your teachers need to more effectively implement the policy?

C. Wrap up
1. Overall, how has the 2008 language of instruction policy affected your school?
2. What questions do you have for us?
3. What else would you like to tell us?
General Appendix B: Nine-month research timeline (by month & week)

September 2011
Week 1: September 5-9 – Orientation at U.S. Embassy in Kigali
Week 2: September 12-16 – Getting established in Butare
Week 3: September 19-23 – Getting established in Butare
Week 4: September 26-30 – Getting established in Butare

October 2011
Week 5: October 3-7 – Making contacts; learning Kinyarwanda
Week 6: October 10-14 – Visiting schools, seeking access, recruiting participants
Week 7: October 17-21 – Linguistic landscaping; learning Kinyarwanda
Week 8: October 24-28 – Linguistic landscaping; learning Kinyarwanda
Week 9: October 31-November 4 – Linguistic landscaping; learning Kinyarwanda

November 2011
Week 10: November 7-11 – Holiday begins (public schools are closed until January)
Week 11: November 14-18 – Data preparation & research in Kigali (policy documents)
Week 12: November 21-25 – Data preparation & research in Kigali (interviews with officials)
Week 13: November 28-December 2 – Data preparation & research in Kigali

December 2011
Week 14: December 5-9 – Data preparation & learning Kinyarwanda
Week 15: December 12-16 – Data preparation & learning Kinyarwanda
Week 16: December 19-23 – Winter break
Week 17: December 26-30 – Winter break

January 2012
Week 18: January 2-6 – Rural Primary School, Participant 1
Week 19: January 9-13 – Rural Primary School, Participant 1
Week 20: January 16-20 – Rural Primary School, Participant 2
Week 21: January 23-27 – Rural Primary School, Participant 2
Week 22: January 30-February 3 – Urban Secondary School, Participant 3

February 2012
Week 23: February 6-10 – Urban Secondary School, Participant 3
Week 24: February 13-17 – Urban Secondary School, Participant 4
Week 26: February 27-March 2 – Urban Primary School, Participant 5

March 2012
Week 27: March 5-9 – Urban Primary School, Participant 5
Week 28: March 12-16 – Urban Primary School, Participant 6
Week 29: March 19-23 – Urban Primary School, Participant 6
Week 30: March 26-30 – Exam week (no data collection); interviews in Kigali
April 2012
Week 31: April 2-6 – No school (Genocide commemoration); linguistic landscaping
Week 32: April 9-13 – No school (Genocide commemoration); linguistic landscaping
Week 33: April 16-20 – No school (Genocide commemoration); linguistic landscaping
Week 34: April 23-27 – Data preparation & research in Kigali
Week 35: April 30-May 4 – Rural Secondary School, Participant 7

May 2012
Week 36: May 7-11 – Rural Secondary School, Participant 7
Week 37: May 14-18 – Rural Secondary School, Participant 8
Week 38: May 21-25 – Rural Secondary School, Participant 8
Week 39: May 28-June 1 – Member checking/farewells at each site

June 2012
Week 40: June 4 – Departure from Rwanda/return to the U.S.
Title: Language Policy in Rwanda: Shifting Linguistic and Educational Landscape

Principal Investigator: Dr. Diane Belcher
Co-PI: Dr. Gayle Nelson
Student PI: Pamela Pearson

Sponsor: The Fulbright Program

I. Purpose:
You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of the study is to investigate the impacts of national language of instruction policy on teachers in local contexts. You are invited to participate because you are Rwandan, have taught for more than five years, speak some English, and are reflective about your teaching practice. A total of eight participants (two at four schools) will be recruited for this study. Participation will require three hours of your time in addition to normal classroom teaching over the course of five months.

II. Procedures:
If you decide to participate, you will be observed and interviewed. Ms. Pearson will observe you teaching for a total of two weeks in one semester. She will not video or audio record your classes, but she will take notes. You will also be interviewed for a total of three hours in one semester. Ms. Pearson will interview you once the first week, once the second, and once at the end. Each interview will last approximately one hour. The first interview is a life history. The second is a language policy and teaching practices interview. The topic of any others will depend on what you say in your first interview and what Ms. Pearson observes in your classroom. All interviews will take place at school and outside class hours. Ms. Pearson is the only researcher you will meet in this study. You may also meet a research assistant. A total of three hours outside your normal teaching time is requested in this study.

III. Risks:
In this study, you will not have any more risks than you would in a normal day of life.

IV. Benefits:
Participation in this study may benefit you personally. You might improve your spoken English skills as a result of giving three hours of interviews with a native English speaker. Overall, we hope to gain information about language education policy and practice in Rwanda.
V. Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:

Participation in research is voluntary. You do not have to be in this study. If you decide to be in the study and change your mind, you have the right to drop out at any time. You may skip questions or stop participating at any time. Whatever you decide, you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

VI. Confidentiality:

We will keep your records private to the extent allowed by law. Dr. Diane Belcher, Dr. Gayle Nelson, and Ms. Pamela Pearson will have access to the information you provide. Information may also be shared with those who make sure the study is done correctly (GSU Institutional Review Board, the Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP), and the Fulbright Program). We will use a false name you choose rather than your real name on study records. The information you provide will be audio recorded with a digital recorder, downloaded to Ms. Pearson’s password and firewall protected computer, and transcribed. Then, the original audio file will be deleted. Only Dr. Belcher, Dr. Nelson, and Ms. Pearson will have access to the transcripts. Your name and other facts (e.g., school name) that might point to you will not appear when we present this study or publish its results.

VII. Contact Persons:

Contact Dr. Diane Belcher (dbelcher1@gsu.edu), Dr. Gayle Nelson (gaylenelson@gsu.edu), or Pamela Pearson (ppearson1@gsu.edu) if you have questions about this study. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this research study, you may contact Susan Vogtner (svogtner1@gsu.edu) in the Office of Research Integrity.

VIII. Copy of Consent Form to Subject:

We will give you a copy of this consent form to keep. If you are willing to volunteer for this research and be audio recorded, please state your pseudonym (false name) and today’s date now.

__________________________________________________________________________  __________
Pseudonym (false name)  Date

__________________________________________________________________________  __________
Principal Investigator or Researcher Obtaining Consent  Date
General Appendix D: Republic of Rwanda research permit

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA  

Kigali, 9/8/2011  
N° 2027/12.00/2011

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
P.O. BOX 622 KIGALI

Pamela J. Pearson  
PhD Candidate  
Georgia State University  
Fulbright Fellow, Rwanda 2011/2012

RE: Approval to conduct research in Rwanda under the project title: Language Policy in Rwanda: Shifting Linguistic and Educational Landscape

Following your letter of 25th August 2011 requesting for research permission to carry out research in Rwanda, I am pleased to attach a copy of research clearance which has been granted to you to conduct research on the above project title.

I wish to remind you that the research permit number should be cited in your final research report, the research should be carried out under the affiliation of the National University of Rwanda under the supervision of Dr. Evariste Ntakirutimana. Also a copy of the final research report is to be given to the Ministry of Education of Rwanda.

I wish you success in your research study.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Marie Christine Gasingirwa  
Director General Science, Technology and Research  
Ministry of Education

cc:  
- Minister of Education  
- Minister of State in Charge of Primary and Secondary Education  
- Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education  
- Advisor, Science and Technology, Ministry of Education  
- Prof. Silas Rwakabamba, Rector NUR  
- Dr. Evariste Ntakirutimana, NUR
Permission to Research in Rwanda

No: MINEDUC/S&T/0048/2011

The Permission is hereby granted to Pamela Pearson of the Georgia State University, USA to carry out a research on: Language Policy in Rwanda: Shifting Linguistic and Educational Landscape

The research will be carried out in Rwanda and interviewees will include Teachers and administrators, Ministry of Education Officials, and policy makers, observation of classes teaching will also be carried out. The research will be carried out in different schools in and around Butare.

The research will be carried out during the period between 15th Oct. 2011 to 30th June 2012.

The reference number of this letter shall be cited in the final research report as follows:

‘Research conducted under permission No: MINEDUC/S&T/0048/2011’

Please allow Pamela Pearson any help and support she might require to conduct this research

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Marie Christine Gasingirwa
Director General Science Technology and Research
Ministry of Education
General Appendix E: Permission for reuse of second article