

**AN EXPLORATION OF EDUCATIONAL
LANGUAGE POLICY ON SELECTED
LEARNING EXPERIENCES IN TWO POST-
COLONIAL SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING
STATES**

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Abstract

This research explores selected learning experiences of educational language policy in Mauritius and the Seychelles. The study aimed at (i) analysing the definition of language policy; (ii) understanding the forces that influenced language of instruction; and (iii) exploring the perception of learning experiences of who had experienced language policy.

Insights into the experience of participants, guided by a phenomenological approach, were gained from 24 participants by means of a Written Reflective Exercise and two semi-structured interviews. An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method was employed to analyse the data.

It emerged from the study that both countries faced several challenges in the choice of an educational language policy. The findings reveal that English enjoys a high status in both states despite the presence of other languages. Whilst there are differences in language policies in both nations, the use of English as the language of instruction in the post-independence period was a way of safeguarding the stability of the education system. Participants' experiential descriptions of educational language policy revealed they went through two phases: initially, there was bafflement and confusion related to learning in English, and secondly an awareness of the importance of English, hence, their developing methods to cope with both learning English and learning in the language. The initial phase was characterised by different forms of anxiety that hampered learning when English was used exclusively for teaching. This led to what is termed as "double cognitive overload", the challenge participants faced when simultaneously processing information and learning new concepts in English. At the same time, further outcomes reveal a paradox regarding English and the mother tongue: English symbolised access to commodities in the educational and economic domains whereas the mother tongue was recognised as beneficial for scaffolding learning.

The findings have implications for educational language policy in both small states including clarity regarding the role of the language of instruction and greater understanding of the stages where the mother tongue could be used as a facilitator for teaching and learning.

Keywords: Educational language policy, language anxiety, English medium instruction

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Glossary

ECCEA	Early Childhood Care and Education Authority
Edd	Professional Doctorate in Education
KM	Kreol Morisien, the mother tongue of most Mauritians
MIE	Mauritius Institute of Education
MOE	Ministry of Education, Seychelles
MOEHRSTE	Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Scientific Research and Tertiary Education, Mauritius
PVE	Pre-Vocational Education
UniSey	University of Seychelles

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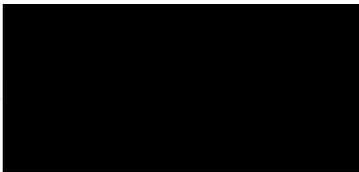
Author's Declaration

Declaration

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree, and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.

Signed:

Signed



Dated: 18 December 2019

Dated: 18 December 2019

Chapter One

Overview of the Study

1.0 Introduction

The overarching aim of this study was to deepen understandings around the experience of educational language policy in Mauritius and the Seychelles, two small island developing states located in the Indian Ocean. Both small states share the same patterns of colonisation, having been both French and British colonies at one stage of their histories. Another similarity between both islands is the presence of Creole languages (Mauritian Creole and Seychellois Creole) alongside French and English that are used by the population for various purposes. English is the language of administration in both states. It is the medium of instruction in Mauritius and in upper primary and secondary education in the Seychelles. The study set out to explore the experience of educational language policy by those who attended school in Mauritius or the Seychelles.

In this chapter, I outline the background to the study and the reason for wishing to undertake research in this area. The research concerns and the purpose of the study are presented along with an overview of the research contexts: Mauritius and the Seychelles. I present their educational settings and explain the ways in which schooling and education are organised from pre-primary to secondary levels. I conclude by providing an overview of the chapters that make up this dissertation.

1.1 Background to the study

Education is central in all societies. For Amartya Sen (2004, 1985), education can be equated with capability since it boosts individuals' abilities and transforms them into jubilant beings with the capacity to do things. Educational languages have key roles in teaching and learning (Cummins et al., 2012) and therefore in helping individuals develop educational capabilities. The assumption that that

the medium of instruction influences student attainment (Pinnock, 2009) has emerged in concerns about the quality of education in small states such as Mauritius and the Seychelles. The language of instruction is different from that of the home (Tirvassen & Ramasawmy, 2017; Zelime et al., 2018) in both islands.

The Global Education Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2016) and the recent World Bank Report on Education (2018) highlight that children learn most effectively when the language of instruction is their home language. UNESCO's report (2019) argues that any language-in-education policy needs to be related to the targets of the education system and should support the nation to reach the set objectives in terms of learning outcomes and language proficiency. The language-in-education policy scenarios in Mauritius and the Seychelles are comparable to those of other postcolonial nations. In Mauritius and the Seychelles, the reality of the education system departs substantially from what is recommended by UNESCO. The language of the former coloniser has been preserved as the medium of instruction. English is used to teach and assess learning in both small states despite their having their own respective mother tongues. Mauritian Creole and Seychellois Creole are the first languages of the majority of the population and in Mauritius and the Seychelles. Similar to many other postcolonial states, the language of instruction and that of administration is a colonial legacy (Latin & Ramachandran, 2016). The adoption of the former colonisers' languages leaves little space for local languages in the education systems (Canagarajah & Silberstein, 2012; Wolff, 2017) and disregards what is efficient in terms of pedagogy (UNESCO & UIL/ADEA, 2011). The result of neglecting the learner's mother tongue may result in confusion and frustration that impede upon learning (Brutt-Griffler, 2017).

1.2 My professional and personal interest in language of instruction

This study is grounded in my personal and professional interests. I have experienced the disparity between the home language and the language of instruction during my primary and secondary schooling. I developed a liking for languages when I joined secondary school and I was guided by this passion at the

start of my career to be a teacher of English and literature. During the time at which I taught English, I became aware of the challenges of learning English as a language and the difficulties associated with English grammar, writing, and comprehension. At a later stage of my career as a school leader, while working on remedial educational plans for learners with different subject teachers, I understood the ways in which the use of English as the medium of instruction impeded upon students' learning.

I gained deeper insight into the importance of the language of instruction during Stage 1 of the Professional Doctorate in Education. I conducted a small-scale study, which explored the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in prevocational education class. The prevocational stream admitted students who had not met the requirements for the end of primary cycle examinations. They were thus channelled to the stream as a preparation for them to undertake vocational education at a later stage. Findings from that study deepened my understanding around the complexity of the medium of instruction in school contexts. The conclusion shed light on the ambiguous status of the mother tongue for teachers and students. Teachers struggled with the use of the mother tongue as a pedagogical tool. Students, for their part, viewed the use of the mother tongue as a facilitator for they readily understood the concepts being taught in Creole.

Professionally, I was keen on exploring education language policy. Today, in my professional life, I contribute to the formulation, implementation and monitoring of policies related to pedagogy, curriculum and school management. Informal conversations with colleagues would often turn towards the impact of using English as a mode of instruction for learners with extreme learning difficulties and how they struggled with the language. I was thence motivated to explore the experiences of the language of instruction of those who had completed their schooling. I wanted to understand the impact of the educational language policy on their learning experiences.

In order to build a more complex understanding of the impact of educational language on learners in small states, I opted for a micro-social analysis (Canagarajah, 2000) and a phenomenological approach, aiming to

unravel the largely unconscious lived experiences of learners in relation to their experiences of languages used in during their schooling. In short, while language policy is about how things ought to be (Canagarajah, 2006), a phenomenological approach was adopted to provide insight into how it has been (Lavery, 2003). The areas of concern at the outset of this study: how would educational language policies be defined in postcolonial states; what motivated decisions about languages used in education and, what would learning experiences be in such contexts.

I chose two educational language contexts for this study: Mauritius and the Seychelles. Both are postcolonial small states located in the Indian Ocean. They share similar patterns of history having been French and British colonies in the past, prior to their gaining independence from the Empire. English is the medium of instruction in primary and secondary education in both small states. In each island, French is studied at school as a subject and assessed at the end of both the primary and secondary schooling. Each island has Creole (Seychellois Creole and Mauritian Creole) as its mother tongue. My decision to study Mauritius and the Seychelles was motivated by the similarities of both contexts. I therefore decided to investigate the experiences of those who have lived educational language policies in Mauritius and the Seychelles and understand their learning experiences.

1.3 Rationale for the study

In Mauritius, research on language policies has been mostly restricted to multilingualism (Tirvassen & Ramasawmy, 2017), language choice and language shift in relation to ancestral languages (Bissoonauth & Offord, 2001), language and ethnicity and languages of instruction and instructed languages (Sambajee, 2016; Sonck, 2005b). In the Seychelles, limited research is available on educational language policy itself. The state of 'trilingualism' has been researched by Laversuch (2008). Bollee (1993) investigated the implications of language policy in line with the development and status of Creole language in the Seychelles. Although some research has been carried out in the field of languages in both islands, there is no reported empirical investigation on educational

language policies in relation to the experience of learning. This is one gap that my study has sought to address.

In the studies mentioned above, there is a lack of clarity about the factors that influenced decisions regarding educational language policies. These contexts are moreover yet to be fully explored in terms of research (Crossley, 2008). Both countries have specific educational needs and approaches that are different to those of western societies (Crossley & Jarvis, 2010) and these are not addressed in the literature.

Language issues have been signalled in both contexts. The use of English as the medium of instruction is seen as problematic for students who find learning the language challenging. Little is known about the experience of educational language policy in small states such as Mauritius and the Seychelles and there is limited reported research on the issue and ways in which language of instruction influences learning experiences.

1.4 The Mauritian and Seychellois contexts

Mauritius and the Seychelles are former French and British colonies located in the Indian Ocean. Mauritius was initially a Dutch, then later, a French colony lost to the British Empire in 1810 (Teelock, 2001). The island was uninhabited when it was first discovered by the Dutch and was populated by slaves brought from Madagascar (Day-Hookoomsing, 2011). When French colonisation began in 1767, there was already a well-established mode of communication between these slaves. Later, exposure to the French language led to what is termed today as a French-based Creole (ibid.). In 1810, France lost Mauritius to the British Empire. Mauritius remained a British colony until 1968 when it gained its independence (Prithipaul, 1976).

Mauritius is situated in the Indian Ocean, at 890 km to the east of Madagascar, between 19°50' and 20°32' of South Latitude and 57°18' and 57°46' of East Longitude. The Mauritian territory spreads over five subsidiaries: Mauritius (mainland), Rodrigues Island, Agalega, St Brandon and Diego Garcia that make up 1.9 kilometres of marine territory (Mariaye, 2016a). Mauritius

today has a population of 1,265,700, equally of multi-cultural and multi-religious and multi-ethnic composition.

Discovered by the Portuguese Vasco da Gama in 1505, the Seychelles archipelago remained uninhabited except for pirates (Bollee, 1993). The collection of islands became a British possession in 1810 (Fleischmann, 2008) after having been disputed between France and the British Empire (Baker, 2008). It constituted one of the most remote of Britain's colonial stations and was administered as part of the colony of Mauritius. 1964 witnessed the formation of the first political parties namely the Socialist Seychelles People's United Party by F. Albert Rene, and James Mancham's pro-business Seychelles Democratic Party (Fleischmann, 2008).

The Seychelles is a collection of 115 tropical islands scattered over some 500,000 Km² of the Indian Ocean, approximately four degrees south of the Equator. The country has a land area of approximately 450 square kilometres and is located 1600 kilometres from the coast of East Africa (Franda, 1982). The population of the Seychelles is around 90,000 (Seychelles National Statistics Bureau) of multi-ethnic and multicultural mixture (Laversuch, 2008).

1.4.1 Languages in Mauritius and the Seychelles

The sociolinguistic situation in Mauritius and the Seychelles is complex. There are fifteen languages spoken in Mauritius (Central Statistics Office, 2011). These may be broadly categorised into European languages (English, French and other European) and Ancestral languages, referred to as Asian Languages, (Arabic, Bhojpuri, Cantonese, Gujarati, Hakka, Hindi, Mandarin, Marathi, Mandarin, Tamil, Telugu and other Oriental languages) and Mauritian Creole, a lingua franca of the island. Arabic, however, is mainly used in religious education and domains (Bissoonauth, 2011). Despite the existence of numerous languages, English has remained a language that is synonymous with prestige and education whereas French symbolises high social status. English is the official language of the National Assembly. It is the language for written communication in state institutions such as the Court, Ministries and the National Assembly.

Mauritian Creole has long been relegated to the status of a pidgin language (Sonck, 2005b). The language is not recognised in the Constitution of the island which mentions that English should be the medium of both spoken and written communication. Creole is the mother tongue of most Mauritians (Sauzier-Uchida, 2009; Sonck, 2005b) and is the most common vehicle of verbal communication in the country (Auleear Owodally & Unjore, 2013; Bissoonauth, 2011; Mooneeram, 2007). The policy to initiate Creole in Mauritian schools dates back to 2012 when Creole was introduced as an optional subject in primary schools (Primary cycle: six years, school age: 5 years to 11/12). With the effect from 2017, Mauritian Creole is offered as an optional subject in secondary schools (Ministry of Education Mauritius, 2017).

The Seychelles has three national languages, namely Creole, English and French. This is prescribed in Article 4 of the Seychellois Constitution (1992). Seychellois Creole is the mother tongue of the islanders and is a widely used language for oral communication in the administrative domain. In an urge for nation building, Seychellois Creole was made the third official language in 1976 (Choppy, 2017) and introduced in the school system, as an official medium of instruction, making of the Seychelles the first Creole speaking country in the Indian Ocean to give Creole such status (Scarr, 2000).

Today, both Mauritius and the Seychelles are members of the African Union and the United Nations. They are members of the Commonwealth, a voluntary association of 53 independent and equal sovereign states, having been former British colonies. Mauritius and the Seychelles are members of the La Francophonie, as they share the presence and use of French language in the islands through their colonial past as former French colonies.

1.4.2 Mauritius and the Seychelles today

Mauritius obtained its independence from Britain in 1968 after holding general elections in 1967. The island achieved the status of Republic 24 years later, in 1992. The Seychelles became an independent Republic in 1976 following

elections and negotiations with the British. Today, both islands have grown economically and rely on different sources of income.

Similar to other small island developing states, international tourism is now the predominant industry driving growth in Mauritius and the Seychelles. The economies of the two small states rely heavily on the income from the tourist industry which promises an escape to the sea and the sun in an all-inclusive holiday in a luxury hotel or resort (Lee et al., 2014). This industry is labour intensive and has generated employment, foreign direct investment, and income for the islands. On the down side, it brings with it dependencies which are borne from the transnational ownership of the all-inclusive accommodations. This includes the risks from exogenous factors - many of which are tied to the wider security of the global system as well as the domestic economies in the source markets for tourism, that is, mainly Europe and North America.

The neoliberal development policies advertised by the governments of Mauritius and the Seychelles generally attempt to attract more and more tourists to the islands. The strategic documents for tourism (Republic of Mauritius, 2018b; Republic of Seychelles, 2018) spell of the importance of opening the market to the rest of the world. These strategies have implications for the languages that are spoken on the islands where the importance of English and French, two of the languages spoken by the majority of tourists visiting the islands, cannot be undermined. Crossley et al. (2009) draw our attention to the priorities of small states. Being vulnerable economically, environmentally, culturally and politically, small states rely on human and financial resources to enable stability and sustainable growth. The citizens need education to live up to challenges in their own societies and in the world at large. Education is an important means to address such challenges. Educational language policies are hence expedient in helping small states such as Mauritius and the Seychelles achieve this.

1.4.3 The education systems in Mauritius and the Seychelles

Mauritius

The education system of Mauritius is based on the British model of education. Whilst state-run schools have provided free primary education since 1968 and

free secondary education since 1977, the Mauritian Government now provides free undergraduate studies for those who opt to study in local universities in Mauritius. Schooling is compulsory in Mauritius from the age of 5 until of 16 since 2005 (Republic of Mauritius, 1957a) and the Mauritian Government provides free transport to and from school for all students. Students who come from low-income families and who are registered at the Ministry of Social Security benefit from social aid. Their families are provided with monthly financial allowances. For this to be possible, their families need to submit their application with relevant documents as support and obtain the approval of the Ministry of Social Security.

The curricula for the primary and lower secondary levels (ages 5/6-12/13) is prepared by the Mauritian Ministry of Education. That of the upper secondary school (ages 14/15-18/20) follows the University of Cambridge curriculum for all subjects (Ministry of Education and Human Resources, 2016). All secondary school students sit for the Cambridge O-levels and A-levels at the end of five years and seven years of secondary schooling respectively. Languages used in for pre-primary education are not clearly defined in policy documents in Mauritius. It is, however, advised to allow each child to express him/herself in their home language (MIE & ECCEA, 2010). As children progress to primary education, all subjects are taught in English. English and French are compulsory subjects. In addition, each child may choose to study either Mauritian Creole/Kreol Morisien or an Asian Language (Hindi, Marathi, Urdu, Telugu, Tamil, Modern Chinese) or Arabic as an optional language (Ministry of Education, 2015). All the other core subjects (Mathematics, ICT, Science, Geography, History) are taught and assessed in English.

In secondary schools the medium of instruction is essentially English (Ministry of Education Mauritius, 2017). Several subjects offered within the curriculum and that include the sciences, technology studies, Mathematics, social sciences are taught in English. English language and French language are taught as subjects, and the latter is taught in French. Mauritian Creole and Asian Languages (Hindi, Marathi, Urdu, Telugu, Tamil, Modern Chinese) or Arabic is offered as an optional language.

There are three examinations that students sit for in secondary schools: the Grade 9 (age 13) National Assessment at the end of the first three years in secondary schools; the Cambridge School Certificate at the end of Grade 11 (age 11); and the Cambridge Higher School Certificate in Grade 13 at the end of their secondary schooling (ages 18 – 20). Figure 1 below presents the structure of the education system in Mauritius:

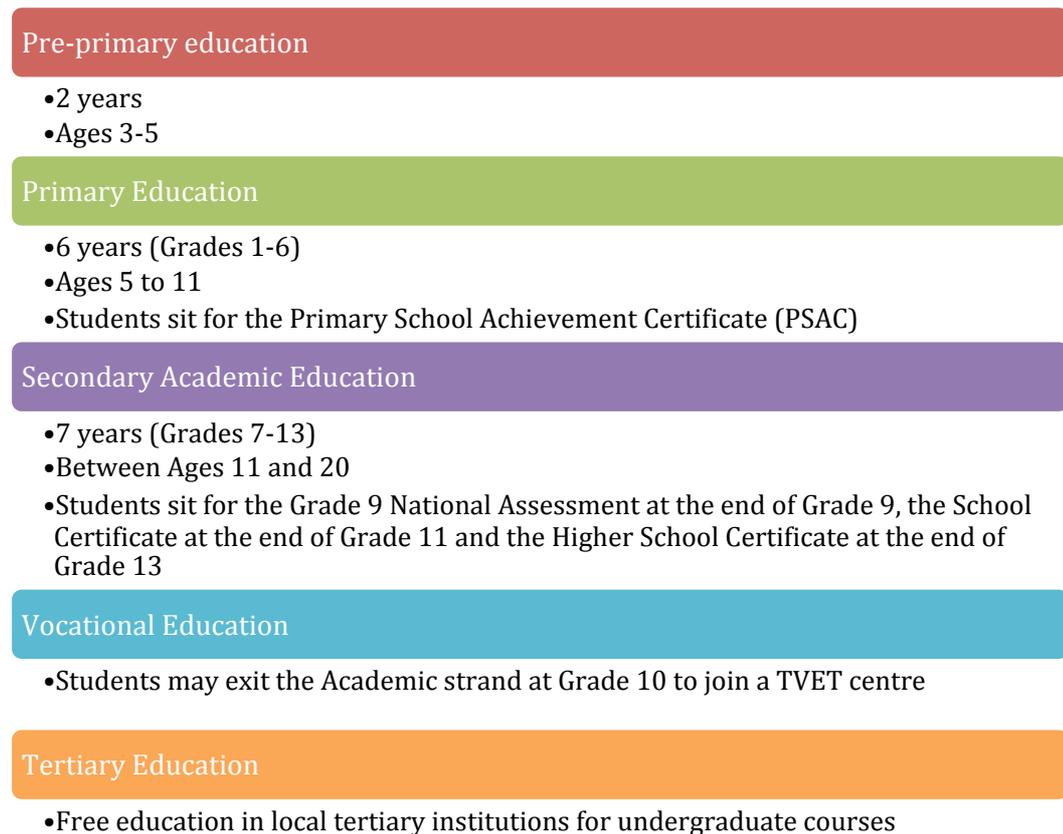


Figure 1: The structure of the education system of Mauritius

At the end of the three years of lower secondary education, the Grade 9 National Assessment evaluates students' progress (Ministry of Education Mauritius, 2017). Students sit for the Cambridge School Certificate (O-Level) after five years of secondary education and usually complete their schooling with the Cambridge Higher School Certificate (A-Level). With the current reforms in the education sector, students are required to complete nine years of continuous basic education and may opt for either the academic or the vocational strand after these nine years (Ministry of Education Mauritius, 2017).

The Seychelles

The Seychelles' education system is based on a comprehensive policy of education for all (Republic of Seychelles, 2004). The education system makes provision for 11 years of compulsory schooling preceded (from the age of 6) by two years of Early Childhood education (ages 3_{1/2} to 5_{1/2}) which are not compulsory, but which most children attend (Ministry of Education Seychelles, 2000). Progression is divided into four key stages of goals and expectations, which serve as markers to map out the learners' different rates of progress and achievement (see Figure 2 below):

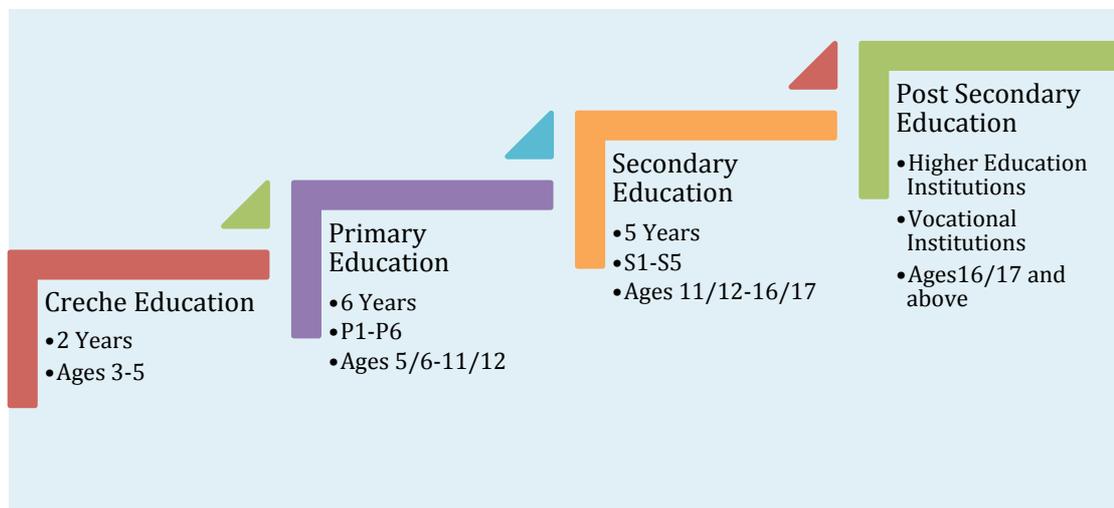


Figure 2: The structure of the education system of the Seychelles

Seychellois Creole/Kreol Seselwa is the primary medium of instruction from crèche to primary two (ages 3_{1/2}-8). Seychellois Creole is taught as a language subject from primary one to primary six. The presence of Seychellois Creole as a school subject is offered until primary six. From primary three onwards the medium of instruction changes to English (ages 9 and above) and all subjects, except for French, Seychellois Creole, physical education and arts and crafts activities, are taught in English. English is learnt as a subject whereas French is essentially taught as a foreign language from primary level onwards (Ministry of Education Seychelles, 2000; Ministry of Education Seychelles, 2014). Seychellois Creole is removed entirely from the system as an academic subject and as

medium of instruction in secondary education. In other words, primary six constitutes the final point of literacy development in Seychellois Creole.

Secondary education is compulsory from secondary one (ages 11-12) to secondary four (ages 15 to 16 years), whereas Secondary five (ages 16-17) is not compulsory. The national curriculum in the Seychelles is based on both academic and technical education, which are offered during the first three years of the secondary cycle. The inheritance of the British model of grammar school education allows students to sit for the Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) at the end of their fifth year of secondary education.

Higher education in the Seychelles consists of post-secondary education and training institutions that offer courses ranging from one-year certificates to four-year diplomas. The same is true for the Seychelles School of Adult and Continuing Education and the National Institute of Education (NIE), which was given charge of improving the country's literacy rates through the Adult Literacy Unit.

Mauritius has been criticised for its failure to implement a genuine decolonisation of the education system in terms of educational language policy (Alladin, 1990; Bunwaree, 1994; Tirvassen, 1998). Auckle (2017) makes an analysis of vernacular languages in the English-dominant Mauritian education system. She argues that linguistic differences can at any moment crack the "rainbow island's" sense of stability. Moreover, the report on performance of the students submitted to the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (2017) by Mauritius highlights that the majority of students are not exposed to English outside school. The report recommends strategies for improving proficiency in English to improve literacy (Dwarkan, 2017).

The education system in Seychelles has followed an exemplary path for a small island developing state of limited means (Main et al., 2016). The use of the mother tongue in the initial years of education made it possible to provide access to students and has had positive results for literacy and numeracy (Leste & Benstrong, 2011). Yet, there is still cause for concern according to some

researchers (Snook & Buck, 2014) since learners still face some issues resulting from the use of English as the language of instruction in secondary education. The educational language policies of both Mauritius and the Seychelles are seen to be problematic in their own ways.

1.5 Outline of the thesis

In this introductory chapter, my professional and personal interests in the field of educational language policies, the rationale and aim of the study have been outlined. The thesis is structured into six further chapters. In chapter two the theoretical perspectives underpinning the research are outlined. Relevant literature relating to the research context, educational language policies and planning, as well as theories that later inform the discussion of the data are reviewed. The research questions are presented at the end of this chapter.

The third chapter focuses on methodology and outlines my ontological, epistemological and methodological positioning. It explains the approach adopted for data collection and analysis. The rationale for collecting data from three main sources is given. Data analysis procedures are explained.

In chapter four, findings from both the documentary analyses of policy papers and data collected from the Written Reflective Exercise and the semi-structured interviews are presented. These are organised into categories and themes that emerged from the data.

The fifth chapter discusses the findings in relation to relevant literature. The themes derived from the categories presented in the previous chapter are organised thematically.

In the concluding chapter, I reflect on the research in relation to my professional life and situate the findings in relation to the strengths and limitations of the research. I present my contribution to knowledge and discuss the implications of the study in relation to my professional practice, policy and potential research in the future as well as my ambitions for broader research in the area.

1.6 Summary and conclusion

The introductory chapter has highlighted the context for this research and my motivation for undertaking it. The initial research questions and aims of the study, as well as the research contexts have been introduced. In the next chapter, consideration is given to literature relevant to the field of study and theories that underpin the research are presented.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Perspectives

2.0 Introduction

The literature discussed in this chapter focuses on perspectives related to key issues that this research addresses. First, this chapter seeks to explore the meaning and interpretations of what a 'small island state' is in line with the context of the study (2.1). The approaches to language that lie at the heart of the research are then examined (2.2). The section that follows (2.3) provides an overview of language ecology and post-colonialism as a discipline to support understanding the language ecosystems in postcolonial small states. The main sections of this chapter discuss the literature on language policy and educational language policy (2.4 and 2.5) while delving into issues related to culture and the choice of the medium of instruction and multilingualism. The literature on learning experiences in relation to the language of instruction is presented (2.6) and the final part of the chapter looks at cognitive load theory (2.7). At the end of this chapter, the research questions that guided the study, in the light of the literature discussed, are presented (2.8).

2.1 Small island state context

Mauritius and the Seychelles are small island states. A small state is itself conceptualised differently from other bigger states. This section presents the characterisation of a small state and its implications.

2.1.1 The notion of smallness

The classification of small island states is theoretically contentious but there is general agreement on the common characteristics relating to the size and to the number of inhabitants (Crossley et al., 2009) living in these water-bound states.

The threshold of 1.5 million inhabitants is adopted by the Commonwealth (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2015) to define the small state. However, the definitional dilemma stretches beyond size and population to include the level of development (Vital, 1969), insufficiency in military power and the inability to defend itself on its own (Rothstein, 1968) or the relatively lack of threat that such states represent to their neighbours (Goetschel, 1988).

A different stance is proposed by Fukuyama (2004); Maass (2008) and Roth & Lee (2007) who consider a small state as having limited government involvement in society. A small island state is conceptualised as along specific environmental, cultural and social factors. These are suggestive of particular conditions and challenges that small states face (Mariaye, 2016b). While being evocative of spatial and ecological characteristics, the notion of smallness has more to do with the economic status and social ecology of small states (Mariaye, 2016b). Within academia, a small state is referred to as one having modest visibility in the discourses of comparative and international education (Crossley & Sprague, 2014).

In the light of the numerous definitions and interpretations of what a small state is, Mayo (2008) asserts that characterisations are subjective whereas Henrikson (2001), Maass (2008) and Bonello & Morris (2019) agree that there can be no internationally established or academically agreed upon definition of what a “small state” is. Whilst an all-encompassing definition of the small island state is difficult to reach, Fukuyama (2004) believes that a ‘small state’ should have different meanings according contexts. In this study, Mauritius and the Seychelles are viewed as small island states firstly, on the grounds of their population. Mauritius has a population of 1,265,577 as at 1st July 2018 (Republic of Mauritius, 2018a) whereas the Seychelles have a population of about 98,000 as of July 2018 (Government of Seychelles, 2019). Secondly, the two states are insular and surrounded by the sea and are geographically small. They compare to the criteria of being vulnerable in terms of economy and geography and do not pose any threat to their surrounding neighbours, thus corresponding with the Goetschel’s (1988) conceptualisation of the small state.

2.1.2 The place of small islands in the global landscape

The idea of the small island state brings to the fore the notion of “islandness” (Anckar, 2008; Conkling, 2007). “Islandness” is a construction that reflects feelings of isolation, disconnectedness, singularity and dissimilarity (Elman, 1995). It is evocative of centre and periphery, with islands lying far from the Europe/the centre (Clark, 2004).

The cultural, psychological and socio-political perspectives are important in defining isolation (Broodbank, 1999). Rainbird (1999) argues that islands are social constructs whereas Barrowclough (2010) believes that “Islandness is open to cultural negotiation and thus variation in space and time” (ibid., p.29) in his study of the Isle of Ely.

The Seychelles and Mauritius are insular with respect to their geographical location. Both small states are isolated from the coast of Africa and stand in the middle of the Indian Ocean. The notion of “islandness” as presented above by Rainbird (1999) and Barrowclough (2010) has other implications for education and for educational language policies. There is a hint at dependency on the rest of the world in various ways, be it in terms of economic development, diplomatic ties or for socio-political and educational issues. The aloofness and loneliness of both states may however be challenged in the face of the “modern world being an interactive system” (Appadurai, 1996, p.27). Today’s world is one of cultural interactions and mobility of goods and of people for various reasons. Appadurai (1996) refers to this movement as “cultural traffic” (ibid. p.28) and comments on the new world order as being driven by “forces of cultural gravity” (ibid. p.28). Hence, the explosion of technologies and the perspective of the world as a global village, implies a new condition for “neighbourliness” (ibid.). Today, the world is rhizomic. Small states that are geographically isolated and alienated from the rest of the world are integrated in the global landscape benefit from electronic proximity.

“Islandness” and “neighbourliness” are contrasting in outlook but enable us to understand the current status of small island states. The history of postcolonial small states such as Mauritius or the Seychelles deconstructs the

idea of remoteness in the face of the various ties that both small states have maintained with former colonisers and the rest of the world. Chief amongst these is the residual presence of languages from the former colonisers in their respective educational landscapes. Whilst colonial education was selective and elitist with the dominance of the coloniser's language and the resistance that ensued, language planning today is concerned with the ambiguous role of the colonial language in relation to globalisation and cultural politics (Tikly, 2001). Pennycook (1998) speaks of western hegemony through the use of English in education while arguing that access to English means access to global networks. Both small island states embody the controversial and paradoxical issue of being disconnected physically and geographically but being connected through what could be described as a "language-scape" where linkages with the rest of the world are sustained or challenged by the presence of European languages.

There are other connections that the small states privilege with the rest of the world. The close diplomatic bonds with the world are one example. A second example would be networks of transport with the inflow of tourists from various other countries to these small islands. The vulnerability of small states such as Mauritius and the Seychelles is reflected in their positioning themselves as receivers. One question that arises is whether small states such as Mauritius and the Seychelles are in the recipient mode equally when it comes to educational language policies. Hence, the ways in which external forces coalesce with internal histories and cultural ecologies are problematic.

2.2 Understanding language as a concept

This study focuses on the experience of learning in relation to educational language policy in two multilingual small states where the medium of instruction is English. Before unpicking educational language policy and the medium of instruction as concepts, it is important to understand the complexity of roles, values and attitudes, social and cultural norms that language embodies. An initial review of literature on language suggests that language can be considered in terms of 'langue' and 'parole' (Wright, 2016a). "Langue" denotes

the perfect and standard structure of language whereas “parole” refers to performance that constantly evolves according to time and circumstances. The meaning assigned to “langue” is comparable to the presentation of the scientific tradition where language is presented as standard and regulated. This outside or external world is referred to as a paradigm prescribed by academies (Wiley et al., 2014) and, which regulates and guides the use of language. Within this paradigm, language is seen as a set standard that follows rules regarding grammar, spelling and syntax. Tickoo (1991) speaks of standard language as appertaining to educated people. This posits language as the product of formal education and bestows upon it both prestige and status where mastery of language is an authoritative example of correctness and quality.

Saussure’s reference to language as “parole” (1916) is analogous to what Bickerton (2003) proposes about language having the potential to be moulded by individuals to serve particular purposes. Language is thus, not static but changes according to circumstances, people, and situations. Similarly, Rassool (2004) points out that language does not exist in a vacuum but is intricately connected to individuals’ experiences of learning and to the reproduction of culture in society. Language encompasses norms and beliefs of a community (Tollefson, 2013), carrying with it notions of culture, history and location. Fairclough (2015) posits language as an inherent part of society and as a socially conditioned process. Language is hence characterised by its use, not by rigid rules described in the “parole” paradigm. A prominent figure here would be Vygotsky (1962). His socio-cultural theory of language and learning was constructed on the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), or the level of language development a child or learner is capable of when interacting with an adult or a more advanced peer or proficient learner. Vygotsky’s (1962) ideas can be compared to those of Fairclough (2015) in that he brings to the fore language as mediated and socio-culturally constructed action. Vygotsky (1962) and Fairclough (2015) see language as essentially a social activity where language is a living and socially mediated entity. This provides an essential link between the cultural, historical, and institutional setting on the one hand and the mental functioning of the individual on the other.

Language is defined by the functions that are allocated to it. It is primarily a means of communication that involves the punctilio mode of address and knowledge of structure and its application in various contexts (Rassool, 2004). If we consider culture and thought to be connected (Gadamer, 2004), it may be assumed that language is related to the thinking processes as propounded by the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (Sapir et al., 1958). The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is known as the linguistic relativity hypothesis. It proposes that the language one speaks influences the way in which one thinks about reality. Linguistic relativity stands in close relation to semiotic-level concerns. Patterns of language use in a specific cultural context is believed to influence ways of thinking and thought (Lucy, 2001). This would imply that the medium of instruction involves adopting the worldview connected to and the assimilation of cultural subtleties that the language carries.

In view of the kaleidoscope of perspectives on language, the argument that language reflects ideology calls for careful translation and interpretation. In the sections that follow, language will be discussed as part of policy and planning and in relation to the context of small island states.

2.3 Language ecology and post-colonialism

In this section, the multi-layered context surrounding the learner is presented. One of the layers pertains to post-colonialism, a highly contested site in academia. Language of instruction is discussed in the light of the issues related to post-colonialism. Ecology in multi-lingual sites and focuses on the educational context is then analysed. Power in relation to language of instruction is looked into.

Postcolonial contexts

In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on education and postcolonial contexts. Post-colonialism itself is sited within a highly controversial political and theoretical domain. Rizvi et al. (2006) refer to post-colonialism as the remainders and lasting effects of European colonisation. This

postcolonial viewpoint has, however, been criticised for being too political an approach (Narismulu, 2003). Radical subaltern perspectives perceive postcolonial contexts as lying at the intersection of re-visiting knowledge and unpicking social identity that have been defined and warranted by western discourses of colonialism and western supremacy (Prakash, 1994). When linked to the ecology of language, post-colonialism draws attention to the ways in which language has acted as a vehicle for colonisation and for the development of expansive discourses and cultural practices.

There are two significant strands relating to the ecology of language that were identified in the literature. The first one is political and speaks of inequalities and oppression through language, thus the idea of inequality associated with colonialism (Hall, 1996b) where local languages of colonies have been inhibited (Phillipson, 1992, 1997). The second strand can be interpreted as an equilibrium that is established or upset by the language of the coloniser. Hence, the coloniser's language is promoted at the expense of, but without eliminating, local languages. Both situations, it is to be noted, speak of the power relationship between the coloniser's language and other local language(s) in the colonies.

The coloniser's language is a powerful vestige of colonialism that has perpetuated its authority in the field of education. Former colonisers' languages are prominent in the discourse on educational language in postcolonial contexts (Taylor, 2009). This is reflected in contexts such as Mauritius and the Seychelles where English as the medium of instruction can be interpreted as both a colonial legacy as well as a rationale for enabling learners to enter the economically competitive market (Canagarajah, 2005; Opoku-Amankwa, 2009). The language of instruction is thus the site of social and linguistic reproduction, and of the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes which are central to the process of creating hierarchies (Phillipson, 1997).

Hanna (2011) speaks of the challenges that postcolonial policy makers face regarding the medium of instruction in today's era of globalisation. English-medium instruction, the delivery of education in English in contexts

where the language is not the language commonly spoken, dominates the educational landscape in many nations, including former British colonies (Dearden, 2014; Young, 2012). Soruç & Griffiths (2018) demarcate between content and language integrated learning. These give attention to language as well as subject content (Coyle et al., 2010) when the medium of instruction is not the home language. Research, however, points out that at for many students living in societies where the home language and medium of instruction are different, the latter stands as a barrier to engagement with the curriculum and learning (Brock-Utne et al., 2010).

One question arising is whether there has ever been any decolonisation in Mauritius or the Seychelles. These two small states, like many other African countries, pursued assiduously a policy to remain close to past colonisers because they considered it as in their interests to keep these relationships for economic and political reasons. Another significant observation is that the colonisers did not totally “leave” these countries. They set up a state bureaucracy to replace them after they left the islands. This state bureaucracy was inevitably educated and converted to the language of the colonisers. On the other hand, they had to pursue the nationalistic agenda at home which meant giving official recognition to their own languages.

Today, despite calls to resist what Canagarajah (1999) names as the evils of “linguistic imperialism” (ibid., p.41), English is increasingly used as a language of instruction at all levels of the education system worldwide (Liddicoat, 2016). The choice of English medium instruction (EMI) is explained by Dearden & Macaro (2016) as the wish for internationalisation and for obtaining a global profile which is often achieved through proficiency in English (Johnson & Swain, 1994). Milligan & Tikly (2016) critically analyse the issues of English as a medium of instruction in postcolonial contexts at secondary and tertiary levels and conclude that educational language policies are guided by the assumption that English is a driver and a key indicator for set economic development goals (Casale & Posel, 2011; Crystal, 2003; Dearden, 2014).

Whilst colonialism reflected the imposition of a language on a nation, post-colonialism witnessed the emergence of nation state philosophy and the rejection of the language of the coloniser (Ashcroft et al., 1998). Decolonisation

refers to resistance to English or other colonial languages, with the building of an independent nation state (Canagarajah, 2005). It may be said that post-colonialism and globalisation stand at opposite ends of a spectrum in the history of language of instruction. Globalisation presents language of instruction differently. There is a voluntary and conscious effort to preserve English for it is the language that gives access to the world (Tikly, 2001). Globalisation brings the world together with porous national borders. It has involved the re-instatement of English, the former coloniser's language of many previous colonies, as an essential language (Hamid et al., 2014). Knowledge and proficiency in English, the global "lingua franca" (Dewey, 2007; Hornberger & Vaish, 2009) are seen as having cardinal importance.

Today, according to Canagarajah (2013), there is a tension between decolonisation and globalisation. Decolonisation is not a major concern for Mauritius and the Seychelles. Small states like Mauritius and the Seychelles face a different tension. This is translated in their need to integrate the global economy with language as a tool for accessing it. At the same time, they face the dilemma of maintaining their language ecology. Whether English as a medium of instruction is appropriate for the learners in these two states is debatable. The choice of the language of instruction gives rise to other questions about how it influences learning and if it is an effective means through which learners are to be taught.

The educational context

Bronfenbrenner (1976) describes the ecology of a child's educational environment as active. It is layered by his immediate environment and larger social structures. This may be conceptualised in terms of concentric circles, with the child at the centre. Relationships and social activities are shaped within this dimension of the environment. The other layer is broader and more complex and consists of society and culture. This ecology gains in complexity when post-colonialism and globalisation are considered as being part of the structure. In Mauritius and the Seychelles, the language of instruction lies outside the immediate structure of children's environment.

When the educational language is different from that of the home, it places the child in an environment where s/he has to put aside his/her home language in favour of a language s/he would not use outside the formal educational setting. There is a disruption of the language that the child is familiar with. The educational structure in Mauritius and the Seychelles positions the student within wider ecologies shaped by the history of the islands. Within the micro-, meso-, exo-systems of the overarching values assigned to English, language of instruction policies are seen as directed and limited by forces on an influencing education.

Haugen's (1972) theoretical framework for studying the ecology of language which he conceptualizes as, "the study of the interactions between any given language and its environment" (ibid., p. 325) provides an understanding of language of instruction policy against Bronfenbrenner's educational macro-spheres. Hornberger (2002), similar to Haugen (ibid.), sees languages as dynamic and refers to them as having the potential to develop, grow, transform themselves and to live and die in an environment. When we extend Hornberger's (2002) idea to the language of instruction in postcolonial contexts, it implies that the learner dwells in an even more complex linguistic ecosystem. One layer of this ecosystem involves the school where the language of instruction is lived through learning experiences. Another layer would touch upon historical events that led to the language of the former coloniser being employed to teach and learn. The interplay of the two layers creates different conditions for students. One problematic, though, refers to understanding and developing fluency in the medium of instruction so as to be able to be evaluated in the language during formal examinations (Hanna, 2011).

Notion of power

The number of English language speakers is in the expanding circle (Kachru, 1986). This suggests that the hegemony of the European 'centre' still dominates. The language of instruction may be seen as a vehicle for the increase in the number of users of the language. In many countries such as Mauritius and the Seychelles, this supremacy is manifested through external

examining bodies that perpetuate the control of learning in the former coloniser's language. In Gramsci's concept of hegemony, power and control exercised by an authoritative and influential class in society is sustained through the blessing of the masses (Pizzolato & Holst, 2017). Gramsci's perspective highlights the multifarious dimension of language ecologies within post-colonialism. It is replicated in the use of international tests that benchmark learning. External examining bodies from the former coloniser who validate access to international education contribute to multi-layering the language ecology in postcolonial nations such as Mauritius and the Seychelles. This is a different form of educational dominance where western countries, the centre, provide educational norms and benchmarks for educational standards of former colonies. Postcolonial countries are not totally free. Educational language policies are the very thread that fastens such postcolonial small states as Mauritius and the Seychelles to their former coloniser. Education was not decolonised but rather used as a space for maintaining power even by the new natives who inherited the replacement bureaucracy from past colonisers (Mariaye, 2016a). Kachru (1991) refers to this as the commanding dimension assigned to language. Similar to the potential for change that is proposed by Saussure (1916). Kachru (ibid.) argues that changes are consequential and reflect the power of language, especially when it comes to the spread of that language.

There are two key assumptions about language and its power when we look at these arguments closely. The first one relates to the motivation to use a particular language due to its international role and it being considered superior to others (Jespersen, 1905). The second assumption highlights the various ways through which language acquires power over time by other socio-historical, economic and cultural factors, and through the mobility of culture (Appadurai, 1990). Gramsci (1971) holds a different assumption about languages. He argues that they possess historical remnants that carry ideas of power, status and hegemony. This assigns cultural and social meanings to language. For Gramsci (1971), language creates meaning through metaphorical development with respect to previous meanings initially assigned to it. Within this dynamic process of development, new meanings replace prior ones:

The new 'metaphorical' meaning spreads with the spread of new culture, which furthermore coins brand-new words or absorbs them from other languages as loan-words giving them a precise meaning and therefore depriving them of the extensive halo they possessed in the original language. Thus, it is probable that for many people the term 'immanence' is known, understood and used for the first time only in the new 'metaphorical' sense given to it by the philosophy of praxis. (Gramsci, 1971, p. 452)

The power vested in language may explain its transgressing geographical barriers. Whilst history has witnessed the internationalisation of English and other European languages through colonisation, the advent of new modes of communication and movement of people has increased language's mobility across the globe (Dearden, 2014). Language is not neutral, but as Bakhtin (1981) reminds us, every word belongs to contexts with its own charges of history, culture and social practices. Seen in this light, language refers to a locus of linguistic dominance and power (Phillipson, 2003; Phillipson, 2004) and a carrier of culture (Ngugi, 1981). It is one of the indispensable and universal features of cultural systems of all societies (Mahadi & Jafari, 2012). This school of thought led Gadamer (2004) to suggest that language shapes and influences individuals while introducing them to a particular attitude and relationship to the world.

2.4 Perspectives on language policy and planning

Ahead of the discussion of concepts surrounding educational language policy, this section presents the dominant 'waves' and research in the field. To understand the purpose of educational language policy, the aims of language and purpose of language policy and planning are reviewed.

2.4.1 An overview of the three waves in language policy and planning

Schiffman (2013) presents language policy and language planning as overlapping in definition and in their aims since much of the literature on policy addresses planning issues and that on planning, addresses policy. Hornberger (2015) believes that this connection between planning and policy makes

'language policy' as a designation a useful one for it enables the encompassing of the range of interconnected traditional language planning areas and of language policy (Darquennes, 2014). I therefore use the term 'language policy' in this dissertation to refer to language policy and planning.

The inception of language policy research in the 1960s witnessed the emergence of three waves of research and terminologies. Tollefson (2013) and Wright (2016b) trace back the initial conceptualisation of language policy as course of study to the 18th and 19th centuries. Language policy during that period developed with the advent of nationalism and focused on codification and standardisation of language(s). The main aim of language policy was linked to nation building. This entailed a polity for one nation, with one language and one people (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997).

A second wave of research is located in the wake of decolonisation and developed into a domain of active academic enquiry with a focus on sociolinguistics (Wright, 2016b). During this second wave, research in language policy related to the postcolonial period where studies focused on methodologies to reflect a diversity of worldviews and looked at language policy through the lenses of various disciplines such as Feminism, Black, Cultural and Developmental studies with attention to social, economic and political effects of language contact (Rassool, 2007b; Wright, 2016a). Research was motivated by migration and its impact on language use and dealt with issues of multilingualism among migrant groups and on their assimilation of language in education.

There are two different views on the third wave of language policy research. Ricento (2000) and Darquennes (2014), locate the third phase of research of language policy in the mid-1980s. They, however, argue that it is challenging to characterise this third wave since it is still in its developmental stage. On the other hand, Wright (2016b) and Rassool (2007), present this third wave as linked to the phenomenon of globalisation, the fall of communism and the advent of capitalism and the rise of America and American culture on a global scale.

One way of discerning the third wave is by looking at research orientations in the field in the post 1980's. This throws into prominence several themes and issues that were of concern to researchers. Fairclough (2015), for example, motivated by the need to preserve languages of minority groups, focused on language regeneration and language rights. This is correspondingly reflected in the works of Phillipson (1992, 1997) who analyses the links between the foisting of imperial languages and the outcome on indigenous languages and cultures around the world. Phillipson (1997) uses the term "linguistic imperialism" to invoke the

"ideologies and structural relationships ... within an overarching structure of asymmetrical North/South relations, where language interlocks with other dimensions, cultural . . . economic and political" (Ibid, p.239)

"Linguistic imperialism" implies unequal rights for speakers of different languages. In many postcolonial small states like Mauritius and the Seychelles, language is often subtractive. Proficiency in the coloniser's language has involved its consolidation at the expense of other languages (Phillipson, 2004).

Educational language policy posits itself as a vector and a means through which power is divided and studies of dominations and explorations of what Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) calls "linguicism" to refer to the politics of linguistic domination. "Linguicism" is linked to the extinction of numerous indigenous languages and the marginalisation of a number of languages through economic and ideological means, and through suppression of languages from the educational or administrative domains (Phillipson, 1997). The interest of both Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) align with Wright's (2016) argument that the third wave of research shows concern for the advent and impact of globalisation on language policies. Within the third wave of research, scholars including Pennycook (1998) and Canagarajah & Silberstein (2012) explored varied contextualised and historical descriptions of events and practices (Ricento, 2006). Nevertheless, Ng (2017) argues that the three waves of research focus on issues pertaining to language policy at macro level and emphasise the need to focus on the micro dimension of language policy.

2.4.2 The complexities of language policy

A synthesis of the various definitions and perspectives on language policy has been challenging to reach. The literature agrees that there is no consensus in definitions, thus, the absence of a unified theory of language policy (Ricento, 2000; Ricento, 2006; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). Darquennes (2014) advances that the difficulty in delimiting or defining language policy result from the various approaches that dominate the field, namely sociolinguistics, anthropology, economy, political science, political philosophy, legal studies and translation studies. In a similar vein, Cooper (1989b) speaks of language policy as having different viewpoints whereas Hao (2018) who makes a review of the literature and research in the 21st Century advances that language policy definitions vary from scholar to scholar.

Context emerges as a powerful factor within the formalised and regulated perspective of language policy (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). They present language policy as a

body of ideas, laws and regulations (language policy), change, rules, beliefs and practices intended to achieve a planned change....in the language in use in one or more communities. (ibid., p.3)

One issue that is discerned in the proposal of Kaplan & Baldauf (1997) is the intention for language to be used in a standardised and regulated form in more than one community. This assigns an authoritative dimension to language policy. It compares to the discussion of language as paradigm prescribed by academies (Wiley et al., 2014) presented at section 2.2. Baldauf (2006) perceives language policy as is being authoritative and top-down. The same idea is presented by Lo Bianco (2010) who says that language policy aims at:

- i. The modification of the corpus of language through standardisation and elaboration of its grammar, lexis and orthography;
- ii. Influencing the social status and the functions of a language;
- iii. Giving more prestige to the language; and
- iv. Increasing the number of users of the language through its acquisition.

Seen from this perspective, language policy is seen as a deliberate action, as concerned with the spread of a specific standard language. What is proposed by Baldauf (2006) and Lo Bianco (2010) leads to the assumption that one language is privileged over another. Another interpretation is that an increase in the number of might be result in a decline in the use of another one.

The macro-social and the micro-linguistic levels

The literature reveals a dichotomy between the macro-sociological level and the micro-linguistic level of language policy. Ricento & Hornberger (1996) as well as Lo Bianco (2010) present the macro-sociological as the corpus ideas, laws, rules beliefs and practices that aim at planned change in a community. The macro-sociological aspect is objective-driven and led by governmental ideological beliefs (Ager, 2001; Hao, 2018; Jernudd & Neustupny, 1987). Kaplan & Baldauf (1997) define the macro-sociological goals of language planning as concerns for language purification, language revival, language reform, language standardisation, language spread, lexical modernisation, terminological unification, and language maintenance.

The micro-linguistic level explores the connections between individual behaviour. It does not necessarily call upon an identification of language problems in discourse for language policy to occur (Ng, 2017). For Kaplan & Baldauf (1997), the micro-linguistic aspect looks at improvements in relation to gaps in language policy that are noted by individuals (Jernudd & Neustupny, 1987). Ricento & Hornberger (1996) unpick the micro-linguistic as multi-layered constructs of language policy from the interpersonal to the institutional language policies in society.

The relationship between the macro-social and micro-linguistic is explored and expanded upon by Canagarajah (2005) who speaks of post-colonialism and globalisation as two major historical events that have affected language policy. Today, globalisation represents a new form of pressure that is impressed upon societies (Lin & Martin, 2005) through the drive for a common language. Both colonialism and globalisation have impacted on language policy and the research in the field (Ng, 2017). Thus, apart from the macro-social and

the micro-linguistic dimensions, the ecology of language policy is seen as complex.

It was earlier stated that language policies are inherent to societies in terms of regulations and laws governing the use of language(s). Kaplan & Baldauf (1997) and Lo Bianco (2010) argue that language policies are dynamic for they are acted upon with the aim of changing language status and/or use in society. Once again, context emerges as an important factor. One aspect this context is described by Canagarajah (2005) as linked to history. Decolonisation warrants resistance to the coloniser's language in the building of an independent nation state whereas globalisation has made borders amongst nations porous with increased movement of languages within a transnational landscape (Appadurai, 1990). Language policy cannot be defined in terms of the macro-social only if we consider the fluidity what Vertovec (2007) refers to as "superdiversity", where languages subvert national barriers and time through increased use of virtual networks. Language policy is thus informed by economic importance assigned to language in terms of diplomacy, economics, trade and access to job opportunities and sharing of knowledge. As small states, Mauritius and the Seychelles rely extensively on the external world. Education is the means to reach the external world and for opening the doors of communication for trade and transfer of goods and know-how. Educational language policy is important in developmental strategies in small states like Mauritius and the Seychelles.

The onion framework

One problematic of language policy is its multi-layered, multi-faceted quality (Hao, 2018; Ng, 2017; Taylor-Leech, 2016). This intricacy is comprehensively theorised by Ricento & Hornberger (1996) in the "onion" framework. Language policy is presented as a fourfold-multidimensional matrix. These are status, corpus and policy, cultivation, society and language. The "onion" framework brings together the macroscopic and the microscopic levels of language policy. Ricento & Hornberger (1996) argue that language policy deals with society and nation-related matters at the macroscopic level and is mainly concerned with standard language, whereas the cultivation-planning approach deals with issues

relating to language/literacy is mainly concerned with literary language at the microscopic level.

The “Onion” framework supposes that multiple language policy actors and agents engage in a diversity of practices. These occur at different but intertwined levels and shape actual language planning and practices (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007). Whilst the framework acknowledges the various layers of language policy activities at national levels, (the interpersonal, the institutional and the national), it is criticised for ignoring external forces that influence language policy processes such as colonisation or globalisation.

Spolsky’s perspective on language policy

Spolsky (2005) presents language policy as a choice, comprising three components, namely, practice, beliefs and management. These choices might be made on specific sound, expression or variety of language. Spolsky (ibid.) puts forward a language management framework for “language choices on the basis of internal forces, derived from language practices, language beliefs and language management” (ibid., p.6). Spolsky (2005) further proposes a three-way division of language policy into language practices, language beliefs and ideology, where explicit plans and policies are the outcome of language management or activities that have been planned to change practices and ideologies of a community.

The second dimension of language policy looks at elements of language such as pronunciation, lexical choice, grammar and style as well as the quality of language. The third dimension corresponds to the context in which language policy operates. Spolsky’s theory (2005) connects language policy to the social, political, religious or communal groups and neighbourhood. The fourth notion that Spolsky (ibid.) presents is the ecological relationship that language policy shares with linguistic and non-linguistic elements.

Spolsky’s tripartite language policy definition is critiqued by Albury (2015) in a study on language in Iceland. Albury makes a critique of Spolsky’s theory for being incompatible with contemporary discourse on language policy.

He argues in favour of the onion framework of Ricento & Hornberger (1996) and its focus on the various interrelating levels and methods of language policy is. Spolsky's theory does not claim to accommodate the critical angles offered by the 'onion' model but instead focuses on language policy at state level.

Spolsky (2009) proposes that language policies at national levels are directed by four common and co-existing forces: national ideology and claims of identity, the role of English as a global language, a nation's sociolinguistic situation and the growing interest in linguistic rights in human and civil systems. National ideology and identity refer to structures of beliefs and principles pertinent to a shared consciousness that may be discerned in language policy. The role of English relates to what Spolsky (2004) calls the 'tidal wave of English that is moving into almost every sociolinguistic repertoire' (ibid. p. 220) throughout the global language ecology. Spolsky argues that English, as the language of global communication, is evocative of broad-based societal and economic mobility. Economics is once again seen as a driver for language policy.

Referring to the sociolinguistic situation, Spolsky (2004, 2007) speaks of the variety and kinds of languages and values assigned to these. There are both the factual setting and the subjective perceptions about the importance of certain languages. Ricento (2006) cautions about accepting any sociolinguistic situation uncritically since sociolinguistic situations are often the result of "political processes and ideologies of state formation" (ibid., p.15). This brings out the interconnectedness of the three components and the importance of analysing language ideologies in language policy in the light of the gaps between perceived and sociolinguistic situations by the disclosures of socio-political provisions and ideologies.

2.4.3 Limitations discerned in language policy perspectives

Approaches to language policies have been criticised especially by African academics for being Eurocentric (Deumert, 2000). There is limited reported research that has emerged in postcolonial nations such as Mauritius and the

Seychelles or other small states where few governments have specified explicit language policies. In small states, as Bröring & Mijts (2017) argue, language policy is strongly determined by the former coloniser's state tradition. In view of the local languages and citing the examples of the Caribbean islands, Bröring & Mijts (2017) advance that small states encounter special challenges in the development of language policies. This is more prominent when it comes to the development of educational language planning. A comparison of the viewpoints of Bröring & Mijts (2017) and Cooper (1989a) leads to the conclusion that language policy is too vast to be contained into a theory that looks only at planning activities conducted by a central authority. In practice, language policy seldom corresponds to this ideal and is more of "a messy affair, ad hoc, haphazard, and emotionally driven" (Cooper, 1989, p.41). Research relating to the viewpoint of those who live policies is not thrust into the limelight in research and limited research reports exist on this issue. My research therefore addresses this gap in research.

2.5 Educational language policy

The position and nature of language in the field of education is an essential feature of the relationship between language and social life. It informs the choices and decisions that govern language policy. Planning the use of language in educational settings is usually referred to as a language-in-education policy (Baldauf, 2006; Baldauf & Kaplan, 1999), or acquisition planning (Cooper, 1989a). Liddicoat (2004) contends that educational language policies influence pedagogies by making recommendations about the methods to be used in classroom practices. Taylor-Leech & Benson (2017) who analysed language policy in development aid discourse argue that education is the vehicle for enacting language planning decisions. Education language policy has both direct and far-reaching impacts on people's access to information, learning and employment opportunities (ibid.). Yet, as Kaplan (2011) highlights, language planning as well as language-in-education planning are hardly visible on the agenda of most of the low-income countries.

Ball's (1993) perspective of "policy as text and policy as discourse" (ibid., p.10) is an interesting starting point for understanding educational language policy. Ball (ibid.) warns against making a simple assumption of "policies as 'things'" and insists that "policies are processes and outcomes" (ibid., p. 11). These outcomes may be interpreted through students' learning experiences. This is a field that is yet to be explored in Mauritius and the Seychelles.

The line of reasoning of Levinson & Sutton (2001) concurs with that of Ball (1993). Levinson & Sutton (2001) view educational language policy as "a complex social practice, an on-going normative cultural production constituted by diverse actors across diverse social and institutional contexts" (ibid, p.1). Johnson & Johnson (2014) refer to the need for harmony of the various levels of workings of policy in education for learning to be successful. Hornberger & Johnson (2007), on the other hand, assert that it is important to segment the onion to enlighten the associations across the various layers which is an everlasting challenge (Hult, 2010). Education language policy is thus a multifaceted blend and interaction of policies, the curriculum and pedagogies (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). This raises questions about the levels of policies addressed in the educational language policy research. This dimension of educational language policy is problematised in Shohamy's (2003) analysis of school policies at national and macro-level. Shohamy (2004) suggests that current policies could be concealed. They involve hidden lines of action in relation to the language in education policy imposition. Thence, Shohamy (ibid, p. 53) postulates that when language policies and language in education policies are not explicitly articulated, they need to be derived through an examination of the variety of de facto practices.

Whilst some governments have developed systematic policies that oversee the language of instruction, this is not the case in many countries, such as Mauritius. Rather, educational language policy is implicitly represented in different documents that include curricula, assessment papers and other documents that relate to teaching and learning (Liddicoat & Curnow, 2014). Liddicoat (2004) argues that, as a result, research in the area of language-in-education has tended to focus on language choice and language policy decisions (Latin & Ramachandran, 2016; Soruç & Griffiths, 2018). The learning

experience of students in relation to the educational language policy has been given little attention by both planners and researchers. This is an area that calls for further investigation.

2.5.1 Medium of instruction

Medium of instruction refers to the language used when delivering the content of lessons in subjects other than language learning (Lo & Macaro, 2012). The medium of instruction has a prominent epistemological function (Prah, 2002) for imparting knowledge and skills transfer (Shahzad et al., 2013). Students are taught concepts and subject knowledge in the language of instruction. Their knowledge and understanding of various subject areas are assessed in the language of instruction. The debate on the importance and choice of the language of instruction looks at the issue in two different ways. Proponents of the use of the mother or home language as the one for instruction include Prah (2017) who explains that the language of the masses are most “creative and innovative [for] the languages which speak to them in their hearts and minds most primordially” (ibid., p.2). Rassool (2007a) and Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) contend that it is important to use the languages that people know and can relate to during learning since this is significant for both obtaining skills and knowledge and for language maintenance and cultural reproduction. This brings to the fore questions about what therefore happens when the medium of instruction differs from the home language and how does the use of a language of instruction impact on the experience of learners.

Several studies have focused on the use of English as the medium of instruction at university level and its impact on learning (Chapple, 2015). Here again, it is noted that there is scant research on language-in-education and its impact on learner experience. Two recent studies in language-in-education policy include those of Soruç & Griffiths (2018) and Taylor-Leech & Benson (2017). Soruç & Griffiths (2018) looked at the strategies developed by university students whose mother tongue is not English but who follow courses in English. Their study concludes that there is a huge pressure on students

whose mother tongue is not English to adapt to learning in the language. Inadequacies in students' mastery of the language of instruction which is English simply sets them up to fail (Macaro, 2017). Their findings show that there is a close connection between the demands of higher education in terms of the use of English as the medium of instruction and the importance that is assigned to the language at secondary education level. A similar idea is echoed in the study conducted by (Evans & Morrison, 2017). Their research on the use of English as medium of instruction as well as language policies and practices in Hong Kong indicate that school children's experience of school impacted on their ability in English. This had implications on their ability to adjust to university education. Their study highlights that "English-isation" (p.320) of higher education has a consequential impact on the quality of students' experiences. Those who lack proficiency in the language of instruction are placed in an awkward position.

Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) and Prah (2017) speak about the disparities in education language policies between western industrialised societies and developing nations. Western societies use the language of the masses in education. This is in keeping with national culture and cultural heritage. In developing nations, there is a disparity between the home language and the languages used for teaching and learning (Bröring & Mijts, 2017). Taking into consideration the arguments of Gadamer (2004) who speaks of "conversation as a process of coming to an understanding" (p.385), it follows that the teaching and learning necessitate an efficient communication and a bond between the teacher and the learner. This leads to reflection on how students live the use of a language of instruction in contexts like Mauritius and the Seychelles.

Gadamer (2004) advances the following:

Thus, it belongs to every true conversation that each person opens himself to the other, truly accepts his point of view as valid and transposes himself into the other to such an extent that he understands not the particular individual but what he says. What is to be grasped is the substantive. Tightness of his opinion, so that we can be at one with each other on the subject. Thus, we do not relate the other's opinion to him but to our own opinions and views. (p. 387)

Gadamer's (2004) description of communication and its relation to pedagogy brings to the fore the relationship between the teacher and the learner. In a case study conducted on migrants' learning in a language that is different from their mother tongues, Hajisoteriou & Angelides (2016) consider this relationship to relate to empathy. One of the conclusions of their research is that teacher-learner relationship is a determining factor in the classroom. Moreover, the language that is used by the teacher has a bearing on the interest and the motivation of learners. Hajisoteriou & Angelides (2016) argue that educational language policy should be mindful of the links between language and culture and acknowledge the importance of intercultural communication. Their views are applicable to classroom situations where communicative competence in the language of instruction is seen as a facilitator for pedagogy.

2.5.2 The mother tongue as the language of instruction

A salient decision of language education policy concerns the choice of language of instruction (Tollefson, 2013). There two schools of thought that dominate the language of instruction scholarship. On the one hand is the suggestion that a child learns best when the language of instruction is the mother tongue and on the other, the view that English is necessary as a medium of instruction for it is a means to better opportunities in various fields (Arya et al., 2015). The view that the mother tongue of the child is the most appropriate language of instruction is triggered by the 1953 UNESCO Committee report. It advises that a child should be taught in the language that s/he most comfortable with. King & Benson (2004) contend that employing a language known to the learners is in itself a proof of effective pedagogy since it facilitates learning and communication within the formal classroom setting, thus supporting Gadamer's (2004) view on the importance of the relationship between the teacher and the learner. Findings from empirical research point for example that of Bamgbose (1976): *"Mother tongue Education: The West African Experience, Paris: UNESCO,* is one of the landmark projects that point out to the importance of enabling a

student to use his/her mother tongue since it allows the him/her to voice out and to interact more naturally with the teacher and his/her peers.

Three studies which focus on the effect of the language of instruction include that of Arthur Shoba (2013) who investigated Scottish classrooms and teachers' approaches to language argues that languages and their related cultures are important resources. They have implications on the value placed on language values. Batsalelwang & Kamwendo (2013) examined Mozambican educational programmes where mother tongue is used alongside Portuguese, and Asker & Martin-Jones (2013) research focused on the use of the mother tongue in multilingual classrooms in Libya. Findings from these three studies highlight the importance of using mother tongue in classroom settings for the benefits it holds in helping learners grasp concepts.

The field of mother tongue use in formal educational settings and its benefits has been widely researched (Hadjioannou et al., 2011). Early research on mother tongue has concentrated on its benefits for the learner. Proponents of the use of the mother tongue, Graham (2010), Parke & Drury (2001), Cook (2000a), Macaro (2001) and Turnbull (2001). They all argue that the use of the mother tongue leads to the development of metalinguistic awareness. Young learners are believed to develop knowledge of second and other languages through their already acquired skills. Cummins (2001) asserts that the use of mother tongue at school helps to scaffold learning in that it recognises and acknowledges a learner's identity. Another helpful aspect is that the mother tongue helps him/her develop flexibility and literacy through connections between prior knowledge of language and other languages that s/he is exposed to. Hélot & Ôlaoire (2011) contend that teachers' use of mother tongue in classrooms is a most valuable means of certifying students' progress in learning new languages and other subjects in the curriculum.

Cook-Gumperz (2006) asserts that the formal institution of the school should extend knowledge and skills of learners in scheduled directions. Cummins (1999) argues that prior knowledge of concepts and linguistic aptitudes enable learners to understand new complex concepts. In line with what Cook-Gumperz (2006) states, a learner is able to apply already acquired

knowledge of syntax, grammatical rules and of tenses as s/he studies. Cook (2000b) who researches language English as a foreign language, points out that like nature, the mother tongue interferes and dominates the student's thinking and learning despite all the best intentions of using other languages in class.

Gorter & Cenoz (2016) refer to the tensions that arise in the home-school partnership when the home language and the medium of instruction differ. A phenomenological study conducted by Wesely (2016) on parenting a child whose language of education differs from the home language in Canada reveals that it was difficult for parents to help their children at home. This was more prominent in cases where they were not proficient in the medium of instruction. It was equally difficult to communicate with the school through email journals. Whilst the context of my research is not similar to that of Canada, a multilingual migrant context, the idea of Wesley could be borrowed to be applied to such contexts where parents are not proficient in the medium of instruction and how this may be a constraint to the education of their children such as Mauritius (Auleear Owodally, 2010) and the Seychelles (Ministry of Education, Seychelles).

Recent studies have emerged from, and focused on Asian and African settings as well as minority languages in multilingual contexts (Omoniyi, 2013). Butzkamm (2011) addresses the issue of the role of the mother tongue in an article on teaching and learning and concludes that the mother tongue is most helpful for beginners and intermediate learners as opposed to more advanced learners. They can stay within the confines of a foreign language as the language of instruction. If placed in contexts where the language of instruction is foreign to the learners, it may thus be assumed that learning would be dependent upon the proficiency of these learners in that language.

2.5.3 Bruner's theory of constructivism

Learning is an essentially a social and cultural activity (Bruner, 1996). This is true of the use of a specific language for teaching students for language carries with it, words, concepts, values as well as expressions that relate to specific

cultural backgrounds. Interaction in the language of instruction would influence the ways in which learning takes place (Holliday, 1997). This connects to Bruner's theory of constructivism which encompasses the idea of learning as an active process wherein students are able to formulate new ideas based on what their current knowledge and on their past knowledge. Bruner (1996) describes this process as spiralling. A student selects, modifies, transforms data, builds hypotheses and makes decisions by relying on schema and mental models to do so (ibid.). Spiralling disallows the notion of a steady, incremental and stepwise accumulation of knowledge. Rather, it encourages the principle of moving backwards as well as forwards and revision of understandings through re-visits.

Bruner's idea of spiralling is significant when related to the medium of instruction since it recognises the value a learner's cognitive and linguistic development. It considers the learner's ability to understand and develop knowledge and apply it. When the medium of instruction is seen through the perspective of Bruner (ibid.), it highlights the links between a student's prior knowledge and its connection to the '*what*' and the '*how*' of learning experiences at school. This is relevant to and closely linked to the principle behind the use of a specific medium of instruction in the teaching-learning process. Bruner's constructivist theory presents teaching and learning as concepts to be represented as multiple modes simultaneously, such that barriers among subjects are pulled down and teaching "allows concepts to be mentally represented in multiple modes simultaneously" (Schunk, 2004, p. 454).

2.5.4 The place of culture

Language of instruction and culture are closely related. According to Sapir (1929) there is a close relationship between language and culture. The one cannot be understood and realised without knowledge of the other. Whorf (1946) explored Sapir's theory further and took into consideration the mother tongue, arguing that language shapes ideas and guides mental activity for

synthesising information and memorising it (Hussein, 2012). Fishman's (1960, 1972) discussion of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis claims that if speakers of a language have certain words to describe things and others lack similar words, then there is a disparity in the ways in which information is processed and understood or re-expressed. Technical terms used in various science disciplines are cited as an example of this disparity (Fishman, 1960; Fishman, 1972).

One of the drawbacks of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is that the languages and cultures upon which Sapir and Whorf based their idea were Indo-European and native American Indians (Baoya, 2001). The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis would not be fully applicable in a study of multilingual contexts where the language of instruction is English and where Creoles are the mother tongues. Yet, their argument cannot be neglected for culture cannot be neglected in language.

2.5.5 Educational language policy and power

Language is essentially a social phenomenon where meanings are co-constructed by those engaged in conversations during social exchanges (Ahearn, 2001). These social interactions are not simple but there are implications of power. To take the words of Gramsci (1971):

Language is *transformed* with the *transformation* of the whole of civilisation, through the acquisition of culture by new classes and through the hegemony *exercised* by one national language *over others*, etc., and what it does is precisely to absorb in metaphorical form the words of previous civilisations and cultures. (my emphasis, p 452)

Gramsci talks of "hegemony" which hints at the supremacy of one language over others. When educational language policy is investigated with the words of Gramsci (ibid.) in mind, the non-isomorphic nature of languages in education and their status are apparent. This implies that one language may be given more importance than another one within education and may have effects on learning experiences of students.

Power is inherent to any policy however democratic the institution (Levinson et al., 2009). Policy is understood as an on-going social practice that

set norms for cultural production by actors across various contexts which leads Levinson et al. (2009) to see education as a practice of power. This opens the perspective on the language of instruction that perpetuates the reproduction of culture that is contained in language(s). This leads to the assumption that language policy lies at the nexus of power within the educational system. Ball (1993) draws from Foucault (1981) to argue that

Policies typically posit a restructuring, redistribution and disruption of power relations, so that different people can and cannot do different things; again "relations of power are not in a position of exteriority with respect to other types of relationships (economic processes, knowledge relationships, sexual relations), but are immanent in the latter..." (Foucault, 1981, p.94). Power is multiplicitous, overlain, interactive and complex, policy texts enter rather than simply change power relations. (p.84, quoted in Ball, 1993, p.13)

Ball (ibid.) argues that the effect of policy is essentially "discursive" (p. 15) for it limits the responses of those who live the policy and enact it. Approaches of policy makers reflect power relationships for such policies are decided authoritatively. Power is inherent in the ways that those who live educational language policies are given a voice to express their concerns. As Ball (ibid.) says,

...it does not matter what some people say or think, only certain voices can be heard as meaningful or authoritative (p.16).

The language of instruction contributes to what Giddens (1979) calls the "duality of structure" (p.77). One example given by Giddens (ibid.) is the articulation of a simple English sentence which reproduces the English language as a whole. This is an unintentional result of the speech but that is united indirectly to the repetition of the "duality of structure" (p.77). The language of instruction is the means and a pedagogical vehicle. It is through linguistic exchange that learners express their thoughts, their knowledge and their understanding.

Giddens' (1979) theory of structuration centres on the understanding of people's actions that are shaped by the social structures that these actions support. This results in a recursive loop that is made up of actions influenced by social structures and social structures that are (re) produced by actions. Central to Giddens' theory is the understanding that people's actions are shaped

(in both constraining and enabling ways) by the very social structures that those actions then serve to reinforce or reconfigure. Given this recursive loop consisting of actions influenced by social structures and social structures (re)created by actions, the question of how social change can occur is crucial and is taken up below in the context of other practice theorists.

Similar to Giddens, Bourdieu (1984) speaks of the social contexts and believes capital and habitus modify people's practices. Habitus is a process that brings about and induces practices and representations determined by the "structuring structures" from which they emanate. It is a system of representations of perceptions that social actors use to steer their way through the social world. Habitus moderates practices and together these identify a person's position or class within society (Lizardo, 2011). Children inherit capital from their parents. The parents had themselves inherited it from the social class they belong to. Capital is cultural, social, economic and symbolic. This inherited capital underpins the development of one's habitus. These schemas develop through experience and time with childhood and adolescence being significant (Walther, 2014). If we consider Bourdieu's argument, language can be interpreted as capital, one that speaks of status, with an inherent potential for empowering or alienating the individual, thus the very notion of language being power (Fairclough, 2015). According to Bourdieu (1984), language should be viewed not only as a means of communication but also as a medium of power through which individuals pursue their own interests and display their practical competence. Whilst Bourdieu has been criticised for being essentially Eurocentric in his approach (Go, 2013), there are aspects of his theory that can be applied to small states and postcolonial contexts, namely the status of language within "structuring structures", his argument that those who receive similar capital would have a tendency to develop habitus expressing similar tastes, values and behaviours.

The ideas of both Giddens (1979) and Bourdieu (1984) are of interest when we look at educational language policy and the medium of instruction in relation to the experience of students. One assumption is that those who live in shared social spaces would tend to communicate and or understand each other more easily. This raises a question on experiences related to the use of a

language of instruction that is different from the home language. The school is a space with its own social interactions and structures. Bourdieu states that language is not only way of communicating but is also used as a mechanism of power. Would a language used in classroom situation have a similar status patterns and create dichotomies between those who master it and those who do not? If we use language to differentiate humans, then different uses of language reiterate positions and status.

The notion of power as presented by Bourdieu (1984) and Fairclough (2015) suggest connections with Giddens (1979a) duality structure that assumes social life as recursive and grounded in social practices. Structure is both the medium and the outcome of the reproduction of practices with human action both being shaped by and shaping the structure. As Ahearn (2001) interprets it, the structure of a social system is created by human action and concurrently determines forthcoming action.

In their ethnographic research on power and agency in language policy appropriation, Johnson & Johnson (2014) consider educational language policies to be filled with notions of power without, however, expanding on the forms of power that languages of instruction encapsulate. To take the idea of Bourdieu (1991), language can be characterised as a form of cultural capital where the languages acquired and used in particular contexts are related to the acquisition of varying degrees of power and economic resources. Language itself is seen as potential currency to the labour market and other economic opportunities. This is true of the case of postcolonial states where language(s) of the former coloniser is considered as a source of power and providing access to further opportunities in education or economics or as a symbol of status and social mobility. However, too little attention has been paid in research on how students might have lived issues of power that are inherent in the language of instruction.

Poststructuralist discourse presents language as power. Bourdieu & Passeron (1977) draw our attention to the importance of power in relation to language, especially in structuring discourse. For Bourdieu, the use of language is a social and political practice in which an utterance's value and meaning is determined in part by the value and meaning assigned to the person who

speaks. The ascribed value of a person or group may vary depending on situations or contexts (in Bourdieu's terms, 'fields'). Bourdieu (1977) sees linguistic discourse as "a symbolic asset which can receive different values depending on the market on which it is offered" (ibid., p. 651). In Bourdieu's argument, dominant usage is associated with the class that is influential. Equally pertinent in his view is the prominence of power in constructing discourse where there is an imbalance between speakers as far as equal speaking rights are concerned with 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' speakers being distinguished by their differential 'rights to speech' or their 'power to impose reception' (ibid., p. 648).

Language is power as much as language empowers people, implying that there is the potential for unequal power relations which can result in and be the outcome of symbolic violence (symbolic power, symbolic domination), which, Bourdieu (1991, p. 170) maintains occurs when individuals mistakenly consider a standard dialect or style of speaking, (and in my argument, a specific language or languages) to be truly superior. Seen from this perspective, language has cultural functions with social manifestations of people's daily routine and struggles and embodies relations of power embedded in people's interactions and mobility (Tollefson & Tsui, 2017).

2.5.6 Multilingualism

The system of education in both Mauritius and the Seychelles are multilingual. Two or more languages in the curriculum (Cenoz, 2012). The medium of instruction is English (Mahadeo-Doorgakant, 2012) but in reality, there are code switches to French and the mother tongues in the classroom (Sonck, 2005b). Blommaert et al. (2005) present multilingualism as the potential that individuals have in speaking more than one language while, however, being incapacitated because they have no mastery of the languages they speak. Stavans & Hoffmann (2015) present the ecology of languages in multilingual education systems as an advantage for communication, culture, cognition, curriculum, finance and career. They, however, contend that multilingual education has become an urgent concern.

To address multilingualism and education within the contexts of this study, it is important to note that the aims of the education system in both islands depart from the very definition of multilingual education as proposed by Cenoz (2012) and Stavans & Hoffmann (2015). The authors present multilingual education as the use of two or more languages in education provided that schools aim at multilingualism and multi-literacy (Cenoz, 2012). This entails the exclusion of the home language at school. When considering the perspective of Blommaert et al. (2005) above, it is noted that questions about the time allocated to the languages in the curriculum are not addressed in the literature on multilingual education.

The situation regarding the use of the mother tongue alongside other languages is ambiguous in both islands, as pointed out by Mahadeo-Doorgakant (2012) and Laversuch (2008). The dynamic nature of multilingualism is enacted in various ways and practices and involves challenges for various individuals. If language has implications for thinking as is proposed by the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (O'Halloran, 1997), it follows that language plays an important role in cognition. The human mind is biologically able to acquire, process and use more than one language (Bloch et al., 2009). It is important to understand, how language of instruction is processed and experienced in multilingual contexts where the medium of instruction is not the language used by learners outside schools. Two main highlights of Sapir's linguistic relativity hypothesis are that the language we speak and think in shapes the way we perceive the world and the existence of the various language systems implies that the people who think in these different languages must perceive the world differently. van den Noort et al. (2013) who carried out neurolinguistic research on multilingualism conclude that distinct response patterns exist for each language in a multilingual person (Fabbro, 2001). They support the idea that different languages may have different demands on the individual in processing language (Wattendorf et al., 2001). This warrants attention concerning ways in which learners' experience of learning may accordingly be influenced.

2.6 Learning as an experience

Learning is an experience and a social activity (Bruner, 1996). It calls upon the learner to come into contact with the curriculum, teaching, knowledge, thinking and processing of information. Schools are the microcosm of society (Teodorović, 2011) where language(s) are represented and have a very prominent role, not only in teaching and learning, but also in the experience of learning. In this respect, language is connected to both epistemology and rights as presented by (Darquennes, 2014) in his analysis of language policy and planning.

Dewey's (1939) definition of experience is a starting point for understanding experience as a concept. Experience includes intimate interaction with the environment (Dewey, 1939) and this philosophy provides a comprehensive framework for understanding learners' perspectives on the enactment of language policy regarding and their experience of the language used for teaching and learning at school. Studies about student learning (Pritchard, 2014) and about the social nature of the classroom echo of Dewey's ideas of experience. Dewey considers that learning occurs when teaching and learning are a continuous process of reconstruction of experience (Dewey, 1939), implying that experience is not a passive, mental condition but is constructed through interaction with the outside world, and involves adaptation and adjustments to the environment.

A parallel may be drawn here with the views of Illeris (2015) about interaction between the environment and how the ensuing experience is processed and internalised by the learner. Illeris (ibid.) presents learning as an integrated process of external interaction between the learner and his/her social, cultural or physical environment and an inner psychological process of knowledge development. Jarvis (2015) problematises learning and asks five questions: namely whether learning is always cognitive and explicit; or whether learning begins with experience; and if we would be aware of these experiences, if implicit knowledge seems to be learned tacitly in some instances and what is the nature of the person who is learning.

Bruner (1996) touches upon the interface of the outer and inner in what

he proposes as spiralling involved in teaching and learning. Seen from this perspective, the context of the classroom involves continuous interactions and adaptation, where meaning is constructed from teachers' and learners' experiences. These compare to Dewey's principle of continuity whereby past and future experiences are presented as connected and where what we experience shapes the quality and our perception of future experiences.

In his analysis of Dewey's philosophy, Garrison (1995) links experience to perceptions that emerge from continuity among events, impressions and observations. In this light, language within the formal classroom setting as prescribed by the curriculum, connects to what Dewey calls the principle of interaction. This involves the shaping of individuals through contact, thus my belief that the language of instruction is central to all teaching and learning actions. Language leads to varying degrees and layers of change, whereby experience becomes an active process, where one changes the environment and is changed by it (Glassman, 2001). It is clear from Dewey's philosophy (1933) that the individual is constantly active, with the ability to think, respond, resist, adjust and accommodate to the language. Within these, lie experience that is constructed at each and every action (Dewey, 1939).

The aim of education and learning is cognitive development. During this process, the mind creates from experience "generic coding systems that permit one to go beyond the data to new and possibly fruitful predictions" (Bruner, 1957, p. 234). The language of instruction is a pedagogical tool (Holliday, 1997) and reflects the rapports and understandings between the learner and his teacher. The importance of the language in instruction is highlighted by Bruner (1996) who considers that the language used in teaching plays a crucial function in learning for the learner selects, modifies, transforms data, builds hypotheses and makes decisions by relying on schema and mental models to do so (Bruner, 1996). Bruner's (ibid.) theory of constructivism describes the process of spiralling where the learner constantly returns to previous learning and understandings in the light of new learning and experiences. Spiralling disallows the notion of a steady, incremental and stepwise accumulation of knowledge. Rather, it encourages the principle of moving backwards as well as forwards and to revise understandings through visiting it again. Experience

plays a key role in this process. This is an interesting aspect of learning that speaks of the construction, the processes involved, and which may be applied to the study of the experience of educational language policy. Learning is not seen as a passive activity, but rather as a complex one which involves the use and application of languages, to teach and process information.

Moore (2000) points out that a key aspect of Bruner's theory is that it acknowledges the links between what exists for the learner outside the school and looks into the "*what*" and the "*how*" of their learning inside the school. This is relevant to and closely linked to the language of instruction. Bruner's constructivist theory presents teaching and learning as concepts to be represented as multiple modes simultaneously, such that barriers among subjects are pulled down so that teaching, "allows concepts to be mentally represented in multiple modes simultaneously" (Schunk, 2004, p. 454). The medium of instruction cuts across all subject areas and is binding to all subjects on the curriculum in both the Seychelles and Mauritius.

Whilst bilingual and multilingual education have received increased recognition in scholarship, there is limited research regarding underlying cognitive mechanisms of learning experiences in bilingual and multilingual educational settings. Despite being not empirically confirmed, Grabner et al. (2009) believe that it is usually assumed that knowledge is exemplified in a system that is independent of specific language of instruction and can be acquired regardless of the language used by the learner. The relationship between subject matter taught and encoding and processing of information and knowledge has been researched by Saalbach et al. (2013). Their findings speak the benefit of multilingualism in terms of the basic cognitive functions and the ability to communicate in various languages. The quantitative empirical research conducted by Saalbach et al (2004) underlines that multilingual learners are at times required to translate the technical knowledge into a specific language of application which may hamper which may "reflect task-specific information processing instead of mere knowledge retrieval and translation" (p. 42).

Dewey's idea of experience echoes in concepts such as reflection-in-

action (Schon, 1983) and situated learning. The literature shows that most theories on learning consider learning as a fundamental and inseparable aspect of social practice (Pritchard, 2014). Engagement with learning refers to learners' subjective experiences and perceptions concerning their schooling (Moreira et al., 2018). These experiences and perceptions may be predictive of academic trajectories (Wang & Eccles, 2013). Appleton et al. (2006) present experience as an important factor that determines engagement in their review of relevant literatures to measure student engagement with school. Jarvis (2015) believes that learning begins with experience. He, however, contends that there is an implicit dimension to learning that we may ignore and queries whether experience is implicit and unconscious.

Jarvis' (2015) argument is significant in relation to learning and concurs with the view that we learn in all three domains of the mental, the emotional and the behavioural. Zepke and Leach (2002) consider transformation of experience to lead to knowledge. Episodes in an individual's life lead to construction of new knowledge and skills. If learning connects to experience as presented by Berg and Chyung (2008), language learning and the language of instruction experiences are linked to both conscious and unconscious experiences. The classroom as a social space is therefore a means of dynamic interaction amongst the students. Thence, experience of the language of instruction has the potential for transforming students through thought, emotion or action which is comparable to what Illeris (2015) considers to be part of the acquisition process which leads to different learning outcomes for the learners.

2.7 Cognitive load

Learning and the use of the language of instruction rely on the memorisation and reapplication of knowledge that is acquired pedagogically. Cognitive load, the total amount of mental activity performed by the working memory at any point in time (Pass et al., 2003; Pass et al., 2004; Sweller, 2017) occurs when learners are overpowered by interactive informative elements. Cognitive load is important when looking at experience for it may provide insight into the

experience of using and memorising terms in the language of instruction and re-applying these later.

Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) assumes that storage of and processing of subject-related information are based on two interdependent systems: the working memory that deals with information processing and the long-term memory that stores information in the form of schemata. During learning activities, the working memory serves as a temporary storage for information. It enables learners to process complex mental tasks (Baddeley, 1992). Miller (1956) posits that learners can only grasp a limited number of information-related items simultaneously through the working memory.

2.8 Summary and conclusion

Language policy emerges from the literature as a multi-layered concept that has emerged with time. Whilst language policy definition is challenging, it is one that needs to be contextualised to the setting within which it is set. The language of instruction that is inherent to language policy is central to teaching and learning as well as to learning experiences in educational settings. The use of English is seen to have set objectives. There is, however, limited reported research on the experience of English as the medium in small states contexts such as Mauritius and the Seychelles.

Concerning the research questions, the focus of the literature review has been to draw on the theories and the interconnections amongst these. The literature raises two issues: firstly, what motivates educational language choice and how are these defined in small state contexts; secondly, how does educational language policy influence learning experiences of those who attended school.

In this sense, the research questions are essentially exploratory and open-ended with a certain flexibility to understand and encourage the experience of learning in the language of instruction. To that end, I present the research focus as determined by the following questions:

1. How is educational language policy defined in educational policy documents?

2. What are the forces that influenced language policy decisions in Mauritius and the Seychelles?
3. How do those who have experienced educational language policy perceive their learning experiences?

In the chapter that follows, I present the methodological framework. Specifically, I explain the rationale for the methods and the methodology of the study in line with my ontological and epistemological stands. I expound on the sampling and provide an overview of how I proceeded with data analysis before explaining the ethical considerations.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I explain the basis and the rationale behind my methodological choices. Ethical considerations that guided the research are presented in the various subsections of the chapter. As a preamble to the chapter, I contextualise the methodology and indicate briefly the methods that guided research on experience and on educational language policy. In section 3.2, I explain my epistemological and ontological perspectives. The phenomenological approach guiding the research is presented in section 3.3. An overview of the cases study design is given at section 3.4. The rationale for the case study design is presented in that section.

In Chapters 1 and 2, I presented the main purpose of this research. I refer to those who have completed their schooling (primary or secondary or both), who participated in the study throughout as “participants” in the dissertation. The ways in which I planned the research and the fieldwork undertaken are presented in section 3.5. Greater description relating to the choice of participants and information about them is given at section 3.6.

The questions that guided the main one are:

1. How is educational language policy defined in educational policy documents?
2. What are the forces that influenced language policy decisions in Mauritius and the Seychelles?
3. How do those who have experienced educational language policy perceive their learning experiences?

The first two questions were explored primarily through the documents on educational language policy in Mauritius and the Seychelles. In order to collect data on the third question, a Written Reflective Exercise was initially devised. Semi-structured interviews were then used to obtain first-hand information from the participants in line with Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) that guided data collection and analysis of the lived experience part of the

research. The research tools complemented each other in providing valuable data to the research questions. In section 3.7, the research tools and data collection methods are described.

In section 3.8, ethical considerations related to access to the sites of research, and the ways in which issues of power relations and bracketing were addressed are explained. The phases of analysis of data obtained from the Written reflective Exercise and the semi-structured interviews are described in detail in section 3.9. The overall categories and themes that were identified in the data are then depicted in section 3.10. Limitations that were identified concerning the case study are put forward in section 3.11 and before concluding the chapter at section 3.12.

3.1 Researching educational language policy

Studies on language of instruction encompass a broad range of research methodologies and methods (Goundar, 2017). Hornberger (2015) draws a parallel between the evolution of methodology in language policy research and the waves of research that dominated the field. Section 2.4.1 of this dissertation presented the various waves that related to concerns of language policy researchers. Methodologically, language policy shifted from wide-ranging national census and demographic surveys and questionnaires that captured language attitude to more ethnographic ones seeking to elucidate the intricacies in enacting language policy in local contexts. Educational language policy, on the other hand, has been studied through various lenses for the field cuts across various disciplines. Methods employed to generate data include ethnography, case studies, comparative studies as well as historical ones that investigated economic and social issues in relation to the language of instruction (Hult & Johnson, 2015). One example is the study of Manyike & Lemmer (2014) who looked at the problems and prospects of educational policy in post-apartheid South Africa.

In Hornberger's (2015) review of "who researches whom [and what]" (pp.12-3) in language policy, the concern of such research is presented as the

creation, interpretation and appropriation of policy on language status, corpus, or acquisition in particular contexts (*Ibid*).

Research design and approach, in this sense, refer mainly to the researcher's authority over analysis of the data, the question being part of a "complex dialectic between the researcher, the research process and the research outcome(s)" (May, 1997). My research design draws upon key principles of phenomenology to obtain participants' "story" of their perceptions on their experience of learning. My study is not a narrative enquiry. Rather, it seeks to look at the experiences of those who have been by educational language policy initiatives through one-to-one interviews that capture the voices of the participants. Language policy and language education can be examined casually by a synchronic or positivist approach (Bourdieu, 1991). Mindful of this, I encouraged rich accounts that were central to understanding experience. In the next section, I describe the philosophical foundation of the research design.

3.2 Ontological and epistemological positioning

Answering research questions demands the mastery and justification of choice of methodologies and methods (Crotty, 2012). Crotty (2012), Hitchcock & Hughes (1989), Creswell et al. (2007) and Somekh & Lewin (2011) observe that it is important for a researcher to be conscious of his/her assumptions about the impact of the undertaken research on knowledge. A significant step when I began this research was to recognise and grasp the meaning of research on, with and of subjects (Cameron et al., 1992). This was central to the development of my researcher-identity and understanding my position as a researcher. It was important to locate my positionality as an insider and peripheral researcher as I set forth to investigate creation, interpretation and appropriation of experience of learning and educational language policy in two different contexts.

Consequently, my ontological and epistemological viewpoints may be seen as deeply personal. My contemplation and comprehension of the world and what can be absorbed and understood from it are fundamental to my identity and to the development of myself as a researcher. This research seeks to uncover the perspectives of individuals and how they experienced an event or a condition which implied focusing on the particularities of the contexts (Agee,

2009) and on the thick description of human experience in that context (Geertz, 1973).

Ontologically, I position myself as a relativist who subscribes to the view that “reality is subjective and differs from person to person” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.110). I concur with the view that “there is no meaning without a mind” (Crotty, 1998, p.9) and that

Realities are apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature...and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the construction (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p.110-111)

It follows that my epistemological positioning, “what is there that can be known?” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.111) aligns itself along subjectivist epistemology where I reckon that “the knower and the known are positioned as inseparable” (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p.37). Subjectivism posits the world including the psychological world of the research participants as unknowable and the role of the research is to construct an impression of the world as they see it (Ratner, 2006). I hold that meaning is not discovered but that it is constructed through the interaction between our consciousness and the world and that reality is individually constructed. There are as many realities as individuals and each reality is subjective. I agree with Frowe (2001) that language does not passively label objects but it actively shapes and moulds reality. Hence, reality is constructed through the interaction between language and the independent world.

These philosophical orientations guided my research approach. My assumptions about the social world informed my methodological decisions. My intention was to construct knowledge from the participants’ perception of their experiences. Fundamental to this is the notion that “there is no objective truth waiting for us to discover it. Truth or meaning comes into existence in and out of our engagement with the realities in our world” (Crotty, 1998, p.8).

My research methodology reflects an interpretative, phenomenological interest in the world, “attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2001, p.3). The methodology and methods reflect this position as well as the demands of the research questions.

3.3 A phenomenological approach

My aim was to reach the core of experience in line with a personally constructed, complex understanding of experience. This implied engaging with meanings from the collected data, while providing real and thought-provoking meaning to phenomenon through different perspectives (Taber, 2010) which is achievable through researching in a qualitative manner (Hult, 2010).

As part of this interpretative case study, I opted for a phenomenological approach which captures life-world details that emanate from concrete experience (Küpers, 2005). Interpretive understanding or “*Verstehen*” (Van Manen, 1990) provides access to participants’ experiences. From a phenomenological outlook, research is a constant questioning of how social actors experience the world (Van Manen, 1990) and a systematic challenge of what is usually taken for granted (Creswell et al., 2007). In general terms, phenomenology refers to the study of the appearance of things in experience (Hammersley, 2012). It suggests that there are possibilities of discovering and understanding new meanings if we set aside the prevailing understandings of phenomena and revisit experience (Crotty, 1998). Several researchers express their preference for phenomenology as it allows the researcher to study and understand human phenomena (Aagaard, 2016; Aspers, 2004; Barua, 2007; Caelli, 2000; Finlay, 2009; Greiffenhagen & Sharrock, 2008).

Guimond-Plourde (2009) and Groenewald (2004) argue that a phenomenological stance relates to production and interpretation of lived experiences. Phenomenology values the voice of participants (Csordas, 2012; Sloan & Bowe, 2014; Van Manen, 1990). I considered the phenomenological approach as an opportunity to reach rich data on the voices and perspectives about experience related to educational language policy. Data generated would be interpreted and meaning inferred.

Since there are various forms of phenomenology, I consider it important to acknowledge the delimitations of this study in relation to the type of methodology chosen. Variations of phenomenological research include Transcendental Phenomenology, Existential Phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty, 1945) and Hermeneutic Phenomenology (Heidegger, 1962, cited in Crotty,

2012). This research deals with Hermeneutic Phenomenology as a method of inquiry. Ajawi & Higgs (2007) present the case for hermeneutic phenomenology in their investigation of ways in which experienced practitioners learn to communicate clinical reasoning. Their claim is that human phenomena is best understood through hermeneutic phenomenology in that there is close correlation between its goals and that of an interpretive research method. Phenomenology is looked upon as being hermeneutic when its method is considered to be interpretive (Gullick & West, 2012). Hermeneutics refers to interpretation so that meaning and understanding may be theorised (Annells, 1995). One pertinent argument of Heidegger (1962, cited in Crotty, 2012) is that human existence is not isolated from consciousness but, rather, engaged in activity.

I hold hermeneutic phenomenology to be linked with my relativist ontological position and to the subjectivist epistemological paradigm. Hermeneutic phenomenology enabled the exploration of the participants' experiences and the opportunity to make abstractions and interpretations based on theoretical and personal knowledge (Csordas, 2012). Hermeneutic phenomenology is attentive to philosophies supporting both interpretation (hermeneutics) and phenomenology (Van Manen, 1990). When placed in the context of my research, I saw the experience of language of instruction during learning journeys as an engagement into the activity of learning. This concurred with what Van Manen (1997) and McLachlan et al. (2012) state about action that is always interpreted in hermeneutic phenomenology. Meanings, therefore, are not set to us in a direct way, but they have to be deduced. Similarly, I deduced and interpreted experiences of participants and drew meaning from them, in line with the phenomenological and interpretative position I had adopted. Hermeneutics added the interpretive ingredient to make explicit meanings and assumptions in the participants' texts that they themselves might have found difficult to articulate, as is the case with tacit knowledge and skills (Crotty, 2012).

Transcendental Phenomenology as proposed by Husserl (1971, cited in Crotty, 2012), calls for demarcation from science and focuses on the very "thing" or phenomena under investigation. I did not opt for a Transcendental Phenomenological approach since I do not believe that complete suspension of

all judgements is feasible. Rather, as Gullick & West (2012) state, transcendental subjectivity has been criticised in favour of hermeneutic and existential phenomenology because of its impracticality. Similarly, I refrained from using an existential phenomenological approach which has its origins in nineteenth century philosophy (McLachlan et al., 2012) and builds on Husserl's concept of life-world of daily experience and targets description of phenomena in the lived experience of human existence (van Manen 1997, p. 184). My research being an exploration of experience rather than a description of it, where the focus was the interpretation of lived experience, I did not find existential phenomenology fit the purpose of my study.

I was wary of the limitations of phenomenology. Greiffenhagen & Sharrock (2008) comment on the drawback of phenomenological research and criticise phenomenology as being restricted since it focuses only on individuals at "the expense of social structures" (p.85). Phenomenology is more broadly used in clinical studies as a search for the literature on the topic indicates (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007; Groenewald, 2004), and there is limited reported research on phenomenological educational language policy researches.

3.4 Case study design

This qualitative and phenomenological study follows a case study design. Qualitative case study is an approach to research that confines the investigation of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources. Thus, the case study descriptions are holistic in nature. This ensures that the issue is explored through a variety of lenses to reveal multiple facets of the phenomenon and understand the contexts (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Case studies thus emphasise the importance of context in defining social realities (Yin, 2009). Merriam (2009) defines case study as an "in depth analysis of a bounded system" (p. 38). A bounded system is a single entity, a unit that has limits. Like other forms of qualitative research, a case study seeks meaning and understanding of social phenomena. A case could be a single program, an organisation, a classroom, a group of people, or even an individual person.

To qualify as a case, there must be a limit to the number of people or contexts involved within that system (Flyvbjerg, 2011). The purpose of the case

study is to expose the meaningful issues characteristic of the phenomenon under investigation. Typically, a case study seeks to determine “how” or “why” some social phenomenon exists (Yin, 2009, p. 4). A case study is preferred when studying contemporary events within a naturalistic setting. Data collection can include an array of methods—both qualitative and quantitative; however, interviews and participant observations are the most commonly employed techniques (Merriam, 2009).

Case study design can be used for three purposes of research: exploration, description, or explanation of a phenomenon (Yin, 2009). Moreover, the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, with emphasis given to the importance of description (Merriam, 2009, p. 39).

3.4.1 Case study rationale

“The [research] question can provide an important clue regarding the appropriate research method to be used” (Yin, 2009, p. 10-11). I therefore went back to the purpose of the study and to the research questions presented at the end of the second chapter. Yin (2014) advances that for a case study, “a ‘how’ or ‘why’ question is asked about a contemporary set of events, over which the investigator has little or no control” (p.13). The main purpose of my study was to analyse educational language policy and to carry out a phenomenological exploration of learning experiences in relation to educational language policy. Consequently, addressing the research questions required an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon - the experiences of those who had completed their schooling and lived in Mauritius or the Seychelles - the essence of case study design (Yin, 2009, p.18).

In this research I investigated a contemporary phenomenon in accordance with Yin’s (ibid.) suggestion. Furthermore, context was an important aspect in this research. Patton (2002) suggests that a case study should take the reader into a situation, a person’s life, a group’s life or a program’s life. As part of this qualitative and phenomenological case study, I investigated the experience of learning in relation to educational language policy

as a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life situation to make a contextual analysis of a limited number of events (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Case study designs or approaches are based on their function, or disciplinary perspectives (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). The qualitative case study design chosen helped in exploring the phenomenon within its context through using a variety of data sources. This ensured that educational language policy and experience could be investigated through a variety of lenses, with due importance attached to the contexts within which the data was generated (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Data collection methods for this study, which included a Written Reflective Exercise and two semi-structured interviews, are presented at Section 3.7.

The case investigated in two sites, Mauritius and the Seychelles, was a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between a phenomenon and context are not clear and the researcher has little control over the phenomenon and context” (Yin, 2003, p.13).

Yin (2003), Stake (1995), Merriam (1998) as well as Flyvbjerg (2011) lay stress on context or the relationship of the individual unit to the environment. Flyvbjerg (2011) argues,

The drawing of boundaries for the individual unit of study decides what gets to count as case and what becomes context to the case. (p.301)

Despite being aware of the case study being bounded (Stake, 1994; Yin, 2003), I found it challenging to fully work with one case study that included two cases. I explored two different geographical contexts but looked at the experience of learning in relation to educational language policy as a phenomenon. I was conscious of the problematic issue of restricting the phenomenon to units of study as advised by Flyvbjerg (2011). I perceived the phenomenon as transgressing barriers of geography in a highly globalised world. This case study, therefore, departed by idea of a case study as wholly bounded system but rather as one in which the phenomena investigated were bounded but affected by global forces (Flyvbjerg, 2011; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003).

In this multisite research, I did not consider the experience of educational language policy of Mauritius and the Seychelles to be unrelated. Rather, the study looked at linkages across the two contexts (Mauritius and the Seychelles)

in terms of educational language policy. It explored the interconnectedness of experience in these two contexts. The study implied comparing and contrasting the phenomenon in the analysis of the data for patterns and differences in both the formulation of educational language policy and experiences of participants from both contexts.

The cases of Mauritius and the Seychelles were looked at separately at first, and then later, collectively, so as to enable the exploration of individual, organisational and connections in the learning experiences of the participants through an analysis and reconstruction of phenomena (Yin, 2003). Experience, seen through the phenomenological approach and the use of the comparative case study design, is motivated by the openings offered to describing phenomenon and context through a variety of data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Whilst each case has its own particularities, working on them concurrently gave depth and richness to the analysis, and enabled the theorisation of educational language policy experience through various perspectives. At the same time, even while studying the two sites, I used comparison. I tried to give depth to the phenomenon by looking at valuable contextual information, such as historical circumstances, or using and comparing concepts or categories between Mauritius and the Seychelles.

The comparative case study orientation proposed by Bartlett & Vavrus (2017) attends simultaneously to macro, meso, and micro dimensions of case-based research. This approach enabled me to attend to two logics of comparison in the research. First, it allowed for comparing and contrasting experiences of educational language policies in Mauritius and the Seychelles. Second, it provided opportunities of looking at investigating educational language policies across the two sites, Mauritius and the Seychelles.

A comparative case study approach seeks to disrupt dichotomies, static categories, and taken-for-granted notions of what is going on (Esser & Vliegthart, 2017). The very notion of an island state presupposes that there are structures that define individual experiences outside the realm of national boundaries. Mauritius and the Seychelles are deliberate choices for this two-site case study sharing similarities in the structuring of languages in education that in turn affect individual experiences of those who have lived the educational language policies in both small states. It is important to mention that the

uniqueness of the phenomenon studied lies in: firstly, it being situated within small states postcolonial settings, which share complex and similar history of colonisation, and, secondly, the language of instruction is dominantly English. Hence, this case study provides an in depth analysis (Stake, 2010) of the experiences participants from both small states, while capturing data according to a qualitative research paradigm (Cohen et al., 2011).

3.5 Fieldwork

I started my fieldwork by collecting data in Mauritius in October 2015. I had obtained five weeks of leave from work for research purposes on twice which helped me collect data. In May 2016, I had applied for and obtained leave to the Seychelles proceed overseas for collection of data.

I collected data in Mauritius first. The data collection plan was worked in collaboration with the participants and when I contacted them and explained the purpose of the study and invited them to participate in the study if they were willing to. I sent to those who had agreed to participate in the study the Consent Forms to be filled. Clear mention was made regarding their agreement to partake in the study and to be audiotaped when interviewed. Subsequently, meeting the participants enabled me to obtain their formal and written consent for joining the research.

I either sent the Written Reflective Exercise to participants by email or handed them printed copies of the documents. One challenge that was faced concerned participants who had difficulties to read/write in English or French. In such cases, I had two other versions of Written Reflective Exercise: in Mauritian Creole and Seychellois Creole. For the interviews, I sought appointments with the participants and we mutually agreed on the time and venue for the meeting. The participants were interviewed in their homes, their offices or outdoor benches. I tried to interview them when they were not busy and most of the times that participants preferred were either the week-end or in the afternoon or during their lunch time or late evenings when they were free and had more free time and were relaxed. Table 1 sums up the data collection time plan.

Table 1: Time Plan

Month	Plan of work
June 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ethical approval obtained from the University of Brighton - Contact was established with Seychelles and request to conduct research and collect data was sent to the Ministry of Education of both Seychelles and Mauritius
June - July 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Written Reflective Exercise and interview questions were piloted in Mauritius with critical friends
July - Aug 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contact was established with initial potential participants and rolled out to other potential ones through snowball sampling
Sept - Oct 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Data was collected in Mauritius. -The Written Reflective Exercise sheet was given to participants one to two week prior to the interview exercise - Data from Written Reflective Exercise was analysed - 12 Mauritian participants were interviewed after they submitted their Written Reflective Exercises -Two semi-structured interviews were conducted at an interval of 5 days for each participant - Each interview lasted about 30 - 45 minutes
Nov 2015 - Feb 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Transcription of the interview exercise -Familiarisation with data collected
March - Apr 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Initial Coding of data collected -Draft themes searched for -The Written Reflective Exercise and interview questions were piloted with Seychellois friends
April 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Approval to collect data from the Seychelles obtained -Communicated with two of contacts from Seychelles, one from UniSeY and another who was suggested by one Mauritian participant -Established contact by phone with the first participants who were proposed by my two contacts from the Seychelles -Confirmed with initial participants for participation in the research -Planning of data collection in the Seychelles for May 2016 - Written Reflective Exercise sent by e-mail to the initial participants
May 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Field trip to the Seychelles for collection of data - A first series of interviews was conducted with those who had received the Written Reflective Exercise already and other potential participants were contacted and the Written Reflective Exercise given to them - Interviews were conducted in the and data were coded as I went through and listened to the interviews -12 Seychellois participants were interviewed after they submitted their Written Reflective Exercises -Two semi-structured interviews were conducted at an interval of 5 days for each participant - Each interview lasted about 30 - 45 minutes - Draft coding and search for themes in the data collected in the Seychelles
June - Oct 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All interviews were transcribed
Nov 2016 - Feb 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manual colour Coding of Data collected - Themes finalised - Themes reviewed - Themes defined and named

3.6 Selection of participants

As stated in the introductory part of this chapter, the term participant is used to refer to those who had completed their schooling (primary or secondary or both) as participants. In section 3.6.1 below, their profiles as well as the code name assigned to them to preserve anonymity are presented.

I followed Robinson's (2014) four point approach when selecting participants. This included: defining the sample universe, deciding the sample size, selecting a sample strategy and finally, sourcing sample. In line with the first point, I set the boundaries around the sample according to two main criteria:

- (i) The participant should have lived and completed their schooling in either Mauritius (for Mauritian participants) or the Seychelles (for the Seychellois participants);
- (ii) Though not a requisite for participating in the research, I looked at potential participants who might have had problems to complete their schooling or faced problems with the medium of instruction or had been successful in their studies.

3.6.1 Number of participants

The second point involved deciding upon the number of participants. My decision was influenced by the practical considerations that go with qualitative studies. The study, as stated earlier in this chapter, has an idiographic aim. I sought a small sample size that would allow for individual voices to be listened to and understood. I originally considered a sample of around ten participants from each country to be most appropriate to enable me to capture data and provide me with scope for developing relative generalities. It allowed me to concentrate on participants as individuals and their experiences rather than subsuming them into an anonymous crowd of participants.

Table 2 sums up the code names assigned as well as the education status of the participants and the languages that they knew. KM refers to Mauritian Creole and KS, to Seychellois Creole. MP and SP are used to refer to the

Mauritian participant and the Seychellois participant respectively. A number code was assigned to each participant in order to preserve anonymity and to protect his/her identity.

Table 2: Participants

Mauritius			The Seychelles		
<i>Code Name</i>	<i>Completed Secondary Education</i>	<i>Languages Known</i>	<i>Code Name</i>	<i>Completed Secondary Education</i>	<i>Languages</i>
MP1	Y	English, French, KM, Hindi	SP1	Y	English, French, KS
MP2	N	English, French, Gujrathi	SP2	Y	English, French, KS
MP3	N	Business English & French, KM	SP3	N	English, French, KS
MP4	Y	English, French, KM	SP4	Y	English, French, KS
MP5	Y	French, English	SP5	Y	English, French, KS
MP6	N	English, French, KM, Hindi	SP6	Y	English, French, KS
MP7	Y	English, French, KM, Hindi, Bhojpuri	SP7	Y	English, French, KS
MP8	Y	English, French, KM, Hindi	SP8	Y	English, French, KS
MP9	Y	English, French, KM	SP9	N	English, French, KS
MP10	Y	English, French, KM	SP10	N	English, French, KS
MP11	Y	English, French, KM	SP11	Y	English, French, KS
MP12	Y	English, French, KM	SP12	N	English, French, KS

3.6.2 Sampling strategy

Robinson's (2014) third point led me to look at the sampling strategy. My focus was not to test data but to explore the experiences of participants from both small states. I opted for two sampling strategies: purposive sampling and snowball sampling in order to reach participants in both Mauritius and the Seychelles. In the sections that follow, I present and give the rationale for the sampling strategy.

Purposive sampling

I first proceeded with purposive sampling (Blaikie, 2010). This method is usually employed to reach participants who are either difficult to identify or in cases when there is no “available list of population elements” (ibid., p. 178). The rationale behind opting for purposive sampling was twofold. Firstly, it would enable me to reach participants in Mauritius. I relied heavily on my critical friends from the Seychelles to reach initial participants there. The other positive aspect of purposive sampling related to my choice of context and the time constraint I faced when collecting data in the Seychelles. Purposive sampling uses prior knowledge and experience to reach participants (Fraenkel et al., 2012). This could be applied in Mauritius. I drew from my own experiences to enable me to reach participants whom I considered appropriate for providing data for the research. I must acknowledge that for the Seychelles, this was challenging. I had to rely on the persons who were suggested as potential participants by my critical friends.

In Mauritius, I contacted potential participants either by email or by phone. It was a challenging task for many did not reply to emails sent and some of the participants who had busy schedules. Tardy responses as well as the reluctance of some participants who were initially contacted to participate in the study led me to look for other potential participants and this disturbed the data collection schedule in Mauritius.

For the Seychelles, I established contact with several individuals, from UniSey and from various walks of life. I had made acquaintance with them through Mauritian friends who travelled to the Seychelles for work or business. My Mauritian friends contacted their Seychellois friends and asked permission to share their contact details with me. I was introduced to a Seychellois family visiting Mauritius by one of my critical friends. I sent emails and communicated the purpose of the study with the Seychellois connections. They facilitated my reaching other participants when I visited the Seychelles through suggestions of who could be contacted as potential participant when I visited the island. I could not proceed with a purposive sampling for the Seychelles and relied heavily on

the two contacts for reaching potential participants as presented in the next section.

Snowball Sampling

I was less familiar with the Seychellois context. I considered snowball sampling (Blaikie, 2010) to be the most appropriate way to reach participants. I was proposed the names of potential participants by Seychellois acquaintances. I started my sampling while I was still in Mauritius and prior to going to the Seychelles for the field study. I sent emails to some of the suggested individuals. I established connections with the potential participants through telephone conversations. I introduced the purpose of the study and myself as a researcher. I sent the soft copy invitation to partake in the study letters and consent forms by email when possible. Else, I gave the consent letters to the participants during the field trip to the Seychelles.

By opting for snowball sampling, I worked on networking amongst the Seychellois and proceeded with a chain referral (Blaikie, 2010), with one participant suggesting another potential participant who could be contacted. I found this method suitable as the initially contacted participant knew about the context of the study and would be in a position to propose other individuals who could offer help and who possessed the characteristics which I was looking for in participants.

The participants who had already agreed to partake in the study gave me the contact details of other prospective participants. I contacted them when I was in the Seychelles during the field trip in May 2016. I proceeded in the same way as I had done in Mauritius, first by contacting them by phone through the numbers given to me by the other participant. I then either emailed them the letter of invitation to participate in the study or gave it to them when I first met with them after I had taken appointments with them.

Both sampling methods were most helpful when research was conducted in the Seychelles and Mauritius. Snowball sampling was particularly helpful in the Seychelles. It enabled me to reach a multitude of people and collect data from the island within the span of time I had dedicated to field research in the

small state. Since the research was not sociolinguistic in outlook, the geographical location of the participant did not matter. My focus remained the experience of educational language policy. The only amend that I made as I sampled participants, was to balance between those who had lived their schooling during the colonial or the postcolonial periods. This choice was not informed by the pilot exercise but by the initial collection of data in Mauritius that led me to realise the colonial/postcolonial divide that had previously escaped my attention.

My experience of using snowball sampling to reach participants led me to think over what Noy (2008) presents as the social knowledge and power relations that are linked to it. Noy's (ibid.) research was based on traveller tourists and marginalised men and the study employed snowball sampling. Snowball sampling speaks of the dynamic nature of the selection of participants design. This implied moving from one participant to another, but I found such a sampling method to be challenging for me. I had to heavily rely on the initial participants and their social knowledge. Cohen et al. (2011) consider snowball sampling to be social interpersonal. I relied on interpersonal relationships to reach subsequent participants. I felt powerless and dependent. However, it made me develop awareness about my positionality as a researcher looking at an international context. I became cautious about not influencing participants. I hence accepted any decision to engage in the study or refuse to do so.

3.6.3 Sourcing sample

The last point mentioned by Robinson (2014) relates to the recruitment of the participants from the real world. As part of ethical consideration, I established contact with the Ministry of Education in Seychelles and that of Mauritius to seek their approval to conduct the research. Following an initial contact with the government of each country, I submitted the research proposal, information and consent forms for participants and the set of questions for the interviews that participants would be asked as part of the permission seeking process. I started the research only when ethical approval and permission to conduct the research from the University of Seychelles, the Ministry of Education of Seychelles and the

Ministry of Education of Mauritius were obtained. It was only after the permission was obtained from the Seychelles that I proceeded with looking for the initial participants.

3.7 Data collection

Data collection refers to the process of gathering information that helps the researcher to understand the phenomena being studied and answer the questions with which the research began (Dawson, 2002). There are various tools that can be employed to reach data in qualitative research (Stake, 2010). I describe the tools that I used to collect data while providing a justification for doing so.

3.7.1 Data collection methods

The methods for collecting data followed the needs of the research questions. Two sets of data were required: the first for looking at how educational language policy is defined in educational policies in Mauritius; and the Seychelles and what the forces that influenced language policies are. The second set of data, which addressed the second research question, focused on how those who have completed their schooling perceive the impact of educational language policy in relation to their experiences of learning.

The first and second research questions were addressed by looking at existing policy documents in relation to educational language policy in both Mauritius and the Seychelles. The third question was addressed by following IPA and data were collected through two tools: the Written Reflective Exercise and two semi-structured interviews of the 24 participants.

3.7.2 Data from documents

The first research question was answered by perusing and analysing policy documents. Documents refer to materials that can be read (Bryman, 2016) and include, for this study, policy papers, educational legislation and curriculum frameworks from both Mauritius and the Seychelles. I considered documents as

a start to understanding the educational context and the educational language policies of Mauritius and the Seychelles. This gave insight into the various policies. Perusal of documents allowed me to have a better understanding of the history, ideology behind policy decisions and gave me insight into the philosophy of each country regarding educational language policies.

I obtained documents at the resource centres of the Ministry of Education of Mauritius and of the Seychelles. Permission was sought to access the resource centres. I obtained some documents from a few participants who had been involved in language-in-education policy decisions. This, again, as described earlier, made me rely on the interpersonal relationship that I had with participants. They would readily help me access potential information sources. This was particularly true of the Seychelles where participants helped through the networks that they so that I obtained access to educational language policy documents.

3.7.3 Collecting data on experience

This research focused on the perception of learning experience in relation to educational language policy. The phenomenological approach guiding the study called for a careful selection of tools that would provide information on the phenomenon. According to Beven (2014), phenomenological research traditionally relies on multiple interviews, involving open-ended questions, with each interview having a different focus. Beven (2014) advises three semi structured interviews per participant where the first one focuses on questions about the participants, history and context; the second on his/her reconstruction of experience; and the third, on his/her reflection on the meaning of his/her experience.

Mindful of Beven's (2014) advice, and informed by the preliminary review of the literature conducted, I worked on the methods for collection of data. I faced two constraints in collecting data. The first was access to participants in the Seychelles and the second was the time that I could spend on the island. I had to respect the financial budget and the time during which I could be away from my professional life for the field trip in the Seychelles. The

same data collection tools would have to be used in both contexts. I therefore looked for other potential tools for collecting data.

The Written Reflective Exercise

In a phenomenological research, it is important to obtain information in participants' history and context. The reconstruction of experience is important (Bevan, 2014). Instead of conducting a first interview to get information on the participants, their history and their context, I opted for a Written Reflective Exercise. My decision to use a Written Reflective Exercise was informed by the research of Ajjawi & Higgs (2007) who explored the experience of practitioners' communication of clinical reasoning. Even through the context and the purpose of the research is different to that of the research conducted by Ajjawi & Higgs (2007), I looked upon the written exercise as valuable for it gained time during the data collection process, both in Mauritius and the Seychelles. The Written Reflective Exercise contained questions that would trigger participants' reflection about critical incidents related to their experience of the educational language policy. It prepared the participants for speaking about their experiences while prompting the identification of areas that demanded reflexivity. What I observed on the exercise concurred with the claim made by Van Manen (1990) that writing encourages reflection.

The written exercise held several strengths. It enabled the capture of data in a rapid way and to obtain an outline of the situation (Flick, 2009). It was a means for participants to provide information in their own words. The Written Reflective Exercise was found to be helpful later when I interviewed the participants. Firstly, the data obtained therein helped me to probe the participants further during the interviews. Secondly, I noted that the participants were more comfortable during the interviews and some of them referred to the written exercise in their answers.

However, the Written Reflective Exercise contains limitations. It is restricted and does not provide rich data on all dimensions of experience. Language too was seen as a problem for I had not, even while piloting the

method, fully grasped the barrier that English language could pose. I prepared two other versions of the document in Seychellois Creole and Mauritian Creole.

Piloting the interview questions

I piloted the interview (Gillham, 2000) with six critical friends from Mauritius and the Seychelles. For the Seychelles, the interviews were piloted via WhatsApp video calls before I went to the small state to collect data. It was noticed that each session did not exceed the recommended time frame. The aim of the pilot study was to evaluate the appropriateness of the questions and to provide me with some early suggestions on the weaknesses of the questions set I obtained experience in conducting in-depth, semi-structured interviews and understand the ways in which I could build a rapport with the participants later. Importantly, the pilot study assisted me in developing the skills in interviewing and maintaining the flow of conversation.

Semi-structured interviews

I proceeded with reading the responses of the participants from the Written Reflective Exercise. This helped in developing semi-structured interview that followed for each participant. Van Manen (1990) describes interviewing in hermeneutic phenomenology as serving two purposes. First, it is a means of exploring and developing a rich understanding of the phenomenon and, second, it helps to develop a conversation around the meaning of experience. Thus, van Van Manen (1990) encourages more conversational interviewing. He, however, cautions against using unstructured or open-ended interviewing. Hence, van Manen's conversational interviewing is semi-structured where semi-structured interviews rely on the participants' memories and reflections to help participants revisit their experiences (Crotty, 1998).

I opted for a semi-structured interview that possesses the characteristics of both the structured and unstructured ones (Flick, 2009). I did not want to restrict the range of questions to rigid and pre-planned ones as the structured interview proposes, nor did I want the interview to be totally flexible and driven by the discussions during the interview as is the case for the unstructured interview (Gilbert, 1993). I was guided by Ajjawi & Higgs (2007) and built

meaning from discourses of lived experience. This was best achieved through the semi-structured interview that enabled me to start the whole process with pre-set questions but to modify and explore what participants mentioned so as to obtain more information.

One important factor that was taken into consideration while planning the interview questions was how to best help participants revisit their experiences. I had to be careful not to make participants uncomfortable. Rather, as Van Manen (1990) recommends, I used the interview to explore and develop a rich understanding of the phenomenon and to develop a conversation around the meaning of experience. This concurs with Bevan's (2014) second phase of interviews within phenomenology, "apprehending the phenomenon" where I focused on the experience learning in relation to the educational language policy. Questions asked sought descriptions of the experience of learning. I asked participants to describe a typical day in their lives when they were at school or to describe what how they communicated with their friends. The aim of such types of questions was to make the participants feel comfortable while encouraging them to interpret their experiences through revisiting events and activities during their school days. The participants described their experiences did not necessarily follow a chronology. What stood out from their stories, however, were significant events and moments that had impacted on them. In an attempt to obtain clarity, I asked them supplementary structural questions (Bevan, 2014). The structural questions were adapted to each individual participant so as to capture the very essence of their individual experience in relation to educational language policy.

During the second interview, I clarified the phenomenon (Bevan, 2014). I used the participants' responses from the Written Reflective Exercise and the first interview to encourage further reflection on the meaning of their experiences. Informed by Bevan's (2014) use of the "imaginative variation" (p. 141) in his study of phenomenological interviewing, I asked the participants questions on their beliefs and feelings regarding potential variations in educational language policies that they could think of. Hence, participants were asked if they believed that their experience would have changed considerably had the educational language policy been different. They were prompted to compare that imagined situation to the ones they lived and if they perceived any

difference had the scenario been different. I obtained precision on the meaning of experience through such interview questions. One drawback of the “imaginative variation”, however is that some participants could not readily respond and it took me further probing and questioning through different words to be able to help them explicate their thoughts and experiences. The positive aspect of the “imaginative variation” was that it enabled participants to interpret their experiences and thus provided multi-layered perspectives of their learning experience in relation to educational language policy.

Each interview lasted between some 30 - 45 minutes. All the interviews were transcribed. A few participants, however, did not wish to be audiotaped as they felt uncomfortable and I therefore jotted down notes during the interview conversation. I conducted the interviews in both English and Seychellois Creole. The latter is almost similar to Mauritian Creole and I could easily communicate in the language. The challenge lay in fully understanding the typical Seychellois terms and expressions. I managed this by working with my critical friend from the Seychelles who explained to me the meanings of expressions used by the participants. I understood what the Seychellois respondents said but it was interesting to look at the gestures and the facial expressions that helped in better grasping the participant’s meaning as s/he spoke about the key incidents that shaped his/her language-in-education experiences. Listening to the transcripts later gave me an indication of the tone of voice and the words that were used and how these indicated the feelings of the speakers in their discourses.

3.8 Ethical concerns

I abided by the guidelines set by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2011; 2018) as well as those set out by the University of Brighton (2018; 2019). Following ethical clearance from the University of Brighton, I particularly considered the permission to collect data in Mauritius and the Seychelles, reaching potential participants and obtaining informed consent and issues of power. Central to ethical considerations is the focus on respect for the person, knowledge, democratic values and academic freedom (BERA, 2011). This research has aimed at upholding the guidelines presented by BERA (ibid.).

In the subsections below, I indicate and illustrate some of the sensitivities involved in this research: access, sampling, relationships, anonymity, power, and bracketing.

Permission to collect data from Mauritius and the Seychelles

Prior to beginning research in the two islands, I sought permission to conduct research in their respective countries from the Ministry of Education of Mauritius and the Ministry of Education of Seychelles. I submitted soft copies of my research proposal, information letters and consent forms for the intention of the participants, and the time plan for collecting data. The letter is put up at Appendix A for reference.

The permission to collect data in Mauritius was obtained some three months after making the request. That of the Seychelles, however, took more time and which hampered the initial time plan for visiting the island to collect data. I waited until permission was granted to collect data from the Seychelles prior to travelling to the island for data collection.

Information and consent

In section 3.6.2 above, I explained the ways in which the participants were selected for partaking in the study. The letters for the intention of the participants and the consent forms *vide* Appendices B and C were designed to give information to the participants in a clear way. The letters were designed to give participants maximum information on the research. However, as already explained earlier, one of the issues I had not thought of was how to communicate in writing with participants who had difficulties to read and write in English. In such cases, the contents of the letter were translated to Creole and explained to them. I answered all their queries.

Dealing with power relations

Informed by Fraenkel et al. (2012), I considered how to minimise relations of power between myself as a researcher and the interviewee when collecting data. Since I knew that I was an outsider, I was careful to remain discreet and not to intervene or give my opinion when I spoke to participants during the interviews.

The interview questions were revised on several occasions, and at different times to ensure that I could look at the questions set from various perspectives to look for weaknesses. Respect for democratic values led me to respect participants' decision not to be audiotaped or not to submit their Written Reflective Exercise. As an alternative I made notes during the interviews that could not be audiotaped and participants were asked questions contained in the Written Reflective Exercise when they did not wish to submit the paper so as to respect the decisions of participants.

Bracketing

My research centres on issues of discourse and culture, thereby implying that I needed to consider positionality, that is the knowledge of one's disposition as a social, historical, cultural as well as philosophical being (Carter et al., 2014). This is linked to my assumption that any individual is a product of his/her experience of society and its culture. One aspect of research and collection of data that I took care of was that of bracketing (LeVasseur, 2003; Tufford & Newman, 2010) which is presented as a philosophical attitude conceived by Husserl (1931). Bracketing implies that prior knowledge could be suspended and set aside so that one's assumptions about the world do not interfere with the phenomena under study. The technique of bracketing is regarded as a way of showing scientific objectivity within a phenomenological approach (Finlay, 2009; LeVasseur, 2003). According to Tan et al. (2009), bracketing leads to phenomenological reduction and to set aside one's initial habits and thoughts, beliefs, biases and prior knowledge of the phenomenon and thus to break down mental barriers so that we may see what stands before us (Hein & Austin, 2001; Kafle, 2011).

My journey led me to critically reflect on and to understand my own position when as a researcher. I became conscious that as a researcher, my interest in the subject of study was a deliberate choice. When I looked for data and spoke to participants, I was moved by curiosity and by concern about knowing more about the phenomena. My philosophy is concurrent with that of Van Manen (1990) as I found it impossible to totally negate my own background experience in relation to the phenomenon under study and to proceed with a

complete bracketing of my biases, as advised by the phenomenological approach (Barua, 2007; LeVasseur, 2003; Moustakas, 1994; Reiners, 2012). While I consider bracketing to be challenging to achieve, I tried to remain objective and stood guided by the pre-planned interview questions for each participant.

Any act of communication ties the speaker and the listener in a partnership (Harrington, 2000). This highlights the connection and sharing of ideas between the researcher and the participant. While conducting interviews, I was sceptical about the notion of bracketing and any temporary suspension of previous knowledge, which I considered difficult to achieve. I understood the importance of not digressing from the gist of study and the piloting of the exercise for data collection helped in achieving this.

Starks & Trinidad (2007) advise honesty and vigilance while collecting data. I was careful to set aside any prior knowledge and assumptions while I collected data. I listened to the participant with an open mind but acknowledge that this was not without its challenges. There would be mental connections and patterns that I would identify with other participants while a specific participant was being interviewed. I tried, as far as I could, to set aside the data collected and revisited them at a later stage so that I looked at what was said with more objectivity.

3.9 Analysis of data

Pertinent to qualitative research are the several options to analyse data. Hitchcock & Hughes (1989) suggest that data analysis is the process of using explanations from the data for the development of theories whereas Stephens (2009) regards data analysis as a quest for meaning within the “triangular relationship between theory, the data generated and the context or setting” (p.98). Hatch (2002), for his part, presents data analysis as a

... a systematic search for meaning. It is a way to process qualitative data so that what has been learned can be communicated to others. Analysis means organising and interrogating data in ways that allow researchers to see patterns, identify themes, discover relationships, develop explanations, make interpretations, mount critiques, or generate theories (p. 148).

Of the three approaches to data analysis mentioned above, I agreed with that of Hatch (2002) as it makes provision for the search for meaning in the data while interrogating it so as to develop interpretations and generate theories. Stephens' (2009) view about the triangulated connection among theory, data and the context was interesting and applicable when I analysed data from the documents. I, however, considered that this principle could not be applied to the analysis of the data collected through the semi-structured interviews where theories could not be applied systematically to the phenomenological data. This process would have been time consuming and disturbed the time plan. Instead, I opted for two different ways of analysing data. The first was a thematic analysis of the documents. The second was an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) of the responses collected from the semi-structured interviews and which will later be presented in greater details in this chapter.

3.9.1 Analysis of documents

Thematic analysis was identified as the most appropriate method to analyse the documents for it allowed me to handle the data qualitatively and identify patterns of meaning across a dataset from Mauritius and the Seychelles. The use of thematic codes or categories was a preliminary step. It allowed a broad, contextualised, and cohesive understanding of what has been found (Bazeley, 2013). Data reduction is a "sequential and continuous procedure" (Walliman, 2001) of selecting, simplifying, abstracting and transforming data into a framework. Reading the data on several occasions led to the construction of meaningful segments of data that were given colour codes and attached codes and memos in the margins. The process of working with the data and grouping them into themes was a conscious exercise. It involved "contextualising and making connections between those themes to build a coherent argument supported by data" (Bazeley, 2013, p.15).

My approach to data analysis was underpinned by Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis which helped me organise the prominent features in the data as presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Phases of Thematic Analysis (adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006)

Phase	How I proceeded
1. <i>Familiarisation with the data</i>	I read policy papers.
2. <i>Coding</i>	Documents were read and analysed so as to capture the meanings and the concepts that emerged from the data. These were coded and collated with relevant data extracts.
3. <i>Searching for themes</i>	The codes were coded further and constructed into themes. All the coded data relevant to each was collated.
4. <i>Reviewing themes</i>	I evaluated if the themes fitted and worked in relation to the coded extracts and the dataset was reflected upon. The appropriateness of the themes was analysed and the development of each theme so as to avoid redundancy and repetition was carefully carried out.
5. <i>Defining and naming themes</i>	A detailed analysis of each theme was made and the essence of each theme identified. The themes were analysed in relation to the coded extracts.
6. <i>Writing up</i>	Key extracts relating to the identified themes were used to weave a narrative and presented in the chapter on findings.

3.9.2 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) of semi-structured interviews

The rationale behind choosing IPA

I adopted an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach to analysing the data collected from the semi-structured interviews. My decision for using IPA was made after a long search for a methodology that suits the subjectivist orientation as well as the aim of the study. IPA is grounded in three theoretical principles. Firstly, IPA values the participants' own perspectives on their experiences (Jeong & Othman, 2016). It is concerned with how the person binds and integrates elements of perceptions, memories, judgments, assumptions, and beliefs about something into one unified, meaningful experience (Husserl, 1970 cited in Reiners, 2012). Secondly, IPA is essentially committed to closely examining the unique, specific experience of each individual participant, from which emerge the themes that answer the research question(s) (Eatough & Smith, 2008). Thirdly, IPA is in agreement with the interpretative (i.e., hermeneutic) tradition (Smith et al., 2009) which guides my approach in this research. As such, I consider IPA to take on a relativist ontological approach that acknowledges that each person's reality and experience would be different from each other. I consider IPA as corresponding

to my subjectivist epistemological position that as presented in section 3.2 above and which sees knowledge about the phenomenon as constructed progressively. This is consonant with the ways in which the data was collected through the Written Reflective Exercise and the two semi-structured interviews that followed. Moreover, the aim of IPA is in harmony with the research objectives where the responses of the participants and the interpretation of the researcher remain subjective. While I did not completely reject the universality in individual experience and its independence from the researcher, the research conducted lays emphasis on the subjective, particular nature of the participants' and the researcher's meaning- and sense makings (Alase, 2017).

Whilst I was aware that IPA is mostly associated with medical psychology, I was cautious and selective in the ways in which I applied IPA in analysing the semi-structured interviews. I was careful to listen to the voices of individual participants so as to reach the insider perspective of lived experiences in this phenomenological study and interpret responses. The section that follows describes the ways in which I proceeded with an IPA approach in my analysis of the interviews.

Analysis of the semi-structured interviews

IPA promotes the use of theoretical knowledge to inductively analyse data. I exercised this in this study through a hermeneutic turn between the review of the literature and the data. I was guided by Finlay (2011) who synthesised the common strategies and steps in analysing data in IPA as in Table 4.

As I proceeded with collecting data from participants in Mauritius at first and then in the Seychelles, I used an incremental approach to make preliminary and subsequent analysis of the interviews. The preliminary analysis consisted of listening to and transcribing the interview transcripts and re-reading the interview transcripts. The aim of proceeding in this way was to engage in the original data by listening to the first interviews to be able to develop the questions for the second one as I went along with data collection. In the second phase of the interviews, I proceeded with the full transcript of the interviews for each participant. While exploring the meaning of the participants in the

transcripts, I made marginal notes that were free and based on what emerged from the data.

Table 4: IPA procedure for analysing the semi-structured interviews

<i>Steps</i>	<i>Actions proposed by Finlay (2011, p.142)</i>	<i>What I did</i>
Step 1	-Listen to and transcribe the interview transcripts -Reread the interview	I immersed myself in the original data by listening to the first interviews so as to develop the questions for the second one as I went along with data collection. I called that the pre-analysis phase. In the second phase of the interviews, I proceeded with the full transcript of the interviews for each participant. I made initial notes with free association and explored the semantic content. I wrote notes in the margins.
Step 2	-Develop emergent themes	Once all the data was collected and I had listened to and re-read the transcripts several times, I focused on chunks of transcript and made an analysis of notes and looked for codes instead of themes outright
Step 3	-Search for connections across emergent themes	I abstracted and integrated the codes I developed broad categories from the integrated codes and define the themes
Step 4	-Move to the next case	I tried to bracket the themes that I had identified at step 3 and remained open-minded to justice to the individuality of each case
Step 5	-Look for patterns across cases	I looked for patterns of shared qualities across cases, noting idiosyncratic instances
Step 6	-Take interpretations to deeper levels	I deepened the analysis by using metaphors and temporal referents, and by importing other theories as a lens through which to interpret the analysis

The steps that I followed and are presented in table 4 above were checked every time I proceeded with a new interview and its analysis. I thus moved smoothly through the final interview transcripts and engaged with the data continually and concomitantly throughout the data analysis process. The analysis process involved feedback from critical friends. This helped me in seeing things from various perspectives. The iterative process developed awareness about information that had not been noted during the initial reading. Whilst the first two steps proposed by Finlay (2011) conflated almost naturally during the data analysis process, I made three types of comments in the margins: (i) descriptive comments, where I rearticulated the participants' accounts into English when either French or Creole languages were used; (ii) linguistic

comments where I paid attention to words and expressions and highlighted these in different colours; and (iii), conceptual comments that related to the literature that I had read for the study.

For each interview, I designed a three-column table with the original data/transcript in the middle column and my comments written in the last column. I colour coded words and expressions. I read the data on several occasions. This led to reading of the data to be more focused and interpretative. While examining the verbal and illustrative comments and the original source, I developed codes centrally from conceptual comments, mostly in the form of a phrase and sometimes in a sentence that had been colour coded. I then tried to make the codes concise and compressed while expressing the original sources from which they had emerged. I preserved the original data sources and was informed by the research questions and the literature in the definition of the themes.

I looked for connections across emergent codes. First, I organised them under the research question that guided the interviews following which, I grouped them in categories that were guided by both the data and the literature. Codes from the interviews were organised under each of the categories so that I constructed a node tree manually that visually represented the relationship amongst the codes and categories in a clear manner.

I organised the cases from Mauritius and the Seychelles under the same categories to allow each case to be connected with each other, contributing to shaping a united categorical structure. This enabled me to compare the cases and to draw similarities and differences amongst them. An interaction between the two cases emerged and within this process, the codes and categories were either kept or discarded or others added as I proceeded with the analysis of the next participant's responses.

Step five involved looking for patterns across cases. At this step, fairly fixed categories shared across all the cases were developed. These were further grouped in themes that acted as the boundaries within which the patterns of convergences and commonalities, and those of divergences and nuances, across the participants were observed. I created a table for organising the categories

and the codes, and another table in which I included the grouping themes and the locations of the relevant interview and supplementary data.

This step was in preparation for writing the findings. From this point, more focused further analysis of the participants' data was carried out. I then took the interpretation to deeper levels as suggested by Finlay (2011) during the write up phase of the findings in the fourth and fifth chapters of this dissertation. The themes were not finalised until the final write up phase.

Eventually, I engaged in a supplementary exploration of the analysis through which themes were re-identified and the report of the findings was rewritten. This additional analysis combined both deductive and inductive processes. On the one hand, the report was structured from main sections to sub-sections, and on the other hand, the themes were re-read, given new or modified meanings, and (re)classified under the subsections of the report. In so doing, some data extracts were moved from one theme to another.

Challenges encountered while analysing data

Challenging aspects of the data analysis process included “articulation” (Silverman, 2010, p.222), that is the selection of codes and themes and fitting these together. This issue arises from the interlocking of units within codes and themes (Silverman, 2010, Stephens, 2009). It took me several readings before finalising the codes. Categorisation of data obtained from the interviews of Seychellois participants proved to be challenging in that I dealt with different accents. I tried to counter this through reading the data on several different occasions and each time I did so, I gained further insight into what was meant by the participants. This led to a better and clearer understanding of the codes that emerged from the data.

Another obstacle that I encountered during the data analysis phase arose when I finalised the themes. These would often overlap and I worked on this through reading and colour coding and by defining words and concepts that participants referred to in order to avoid bias. I was wary of partiality (Flick, 2009; Wellington, 2000) and countered this through quoting and working on the very words used by participants to retain their experiences and perspectives.

Larkin et al. (2006) point out that it is vital to understand the participants' worlds through detailed descriptions. This leads to focussing on participants' lived experiences, critical incidents and relationships. One of the limitations, as Smith (2007) highlights, is that access to experience is limited since only a part of experience is visible. I was, therefore, aware that the analytic process was constructed through both participants' and my own perspectives and that lived-experience is fractional and convoluted (Smith, 2007).

3.9 Overall categories and codes

The finalised categories are tabulated in Table 5 on page 87. The categories were further classified into the following themes

- i. Layers of hegemony
- ii. Anxieties
- iii. Double cognitive over-load
- iv. Development of coping strategies
- v. English as an acquired taste
- vi. Language-identity relationship

Table 5: Codes and Categories

Categories	Codes
Presence and absence of language policy and educational language policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colonial languages • The mother tongue • Implicit and explicit policies on languages
Politics and educational language policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neutral language • Social stability
Factors supporting the learning of English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to English through the media and books • Self-motivation to learn English
Factors contributing to poor knowledge and understanding in English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited exposure to English Language during childhood • Cultural differences between the texts being used and the reader
Experiencing English at school and outside school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects on the self • Communicating with others in English • Losing one's voice as a result of not being fluent in English
Strategies used by participants to support the learning of English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorising words and terms • Reading and building on vocabulary as a coping strategy
Mother tongue at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mother tongue as a scaffold to teaching and learning • Alienated because of one's mother tongue • Assertion: "My mother tongue is my identity"
Participants' perspective on the importance of English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of English for examinations purposes • Career path and security is dependent upon English • The smallness of the islands calls for a global English language
Changes in educational language policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of national languages • Changes in perception • Ancestral languages and colonial languages
Mother tongue at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mother tongue as a scaffold to teaching and learning • Alienated because of one's mother tongue • Assertion: "My mother tongue is my identity"

The process of working with the data and group them into themes was a conscious exercise. It involved “contextualising and making connections between those themes to build a coherent argument supported by data” (Bazeley, 2013). This is presented in the chapter that follows.

3.10 Limitations

Case Study qualitative research faces the challenge of focusing on the salient features of data collected during the study. This is a liability specially when large chunks of data have been collected and these can be lost during the data reduction, coding and analysis processes. The risk of bias, paradoxically, cannot be avoided for researching and analysing data is conducted by the researcher and I am aware that I have interpreted data from my perspective and from the lenses of empirical research and theories that have been studied during the period of researching and writing up. Still, I have quoted the voice of the participants to counter potential bias. Flick (2009) considers that, in case studies, it is important to move from a general focus to a progressive one where data is verified by the participants. However, despite my inviting participants to review the data collected for this study, no response was obtained. By seeking the response of the participants, I had wished to obtain their validation of the research through their perspectives. This was unfortunately not made possible.

Cohen et al. (2011) consider that one of the weaknesses of the case study relates to the non-ability to make generalisations from what has been experienced by the participants. In line with my epistemological stand, I would consider that my focus has been to capture a slice of experience, and that my aim has not been to reach data that would represent a larger sample. I have undertaken a case study that has explored experiences of participants’ through their voices. I acknowledge that experience is subjective and departs from generalisation and I concur with Flick (2009) that objective reality can never be captured.

3.11 Conclusion and link to the next chapter

In this chapter I have supported the decisions that informed my methodological choices. I have described the scope of the literature to explain the scope of the data collection tools. I have looked at the ways in which data was processed for analysis and presented the challenges that I have faced during the research and analysis of data phases. In the next chapter, I present the findings in the form of categories that emerged from the data.

Chapter Four

Findings

4.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter I established the methodological rationale for the study and described the approaches to data generation and analysis. I now present the broad categories from the study of the policies and explore the perceptions of the participants in relation to their experience of educational language policy. The findings are organised along the research questions that guided the study, namely:

1. How is educational language policy defined in educational policy documents?
2. What are the forces that influenced language policy decisions in Mauritius and the Seychelles?
3. How do those who have experienced educational language policy perceive their learning experiences?

The findings from the data in relation to the first two research questions are presented at sections 4.1 and 4.2. The findings for the third research question are presented in the rest of the chapter with the data obtained from the Written Reflective Exercises and the two semi-structured interviews. These findings, in the form of excerpts, relate to the themes that emerged from participants' commentaries about their experiences. The participants are referred to as MP (Mauritian participant) and SP (Seychellois participant) and their words are quoted.

Findings in relation to the first two research questions

In the sections that follow, the findings on the definition of educational language policy and on the forces that shaped language policy decisions in Mauritius and the Seychelles are presented.

4.1 Presence and absence of educational language policies

Data presented in this section has been gathered essentially through education policy documents and legislations regulating the use of languages in Mauritius and the Seychelles. The sub-section present the codes and categories that emerged from the data to answer the first research question.

4.1.1 National language: implicit and explicit status

There is a marked difference in the ways in which Mauritius and the Seychelles present languages in their respective Constitutions. While the Seychelles has a clearly defined trilingual language policy regarding official languages in its constitution, Mauritius does not possess any formal document that makes mention of the official language in Mauritius. Article 4 of the Seychellois Constitution (The Republic of Seychelles, 1993) clearly positions the National Languages of the country as the following:

- (1) The National languages of Seychelles shall be Creole, National English and French languages
- (2) Notwithstanding clause, a person may use any of the national languages for any purpose but a law may provide for the use of any one or more of the national languages for any specific purpose. (p.13).

In Mauritius, the only mention of language is that of Article 49 of its Constitution (The Republic of Mauritius, 1968) states that

The official language of the Assembly shall be English but any member may address the chair in French. (p. 34).

English is the language of the National Assembly, but paradoxically, the Constitution does not make mention of any official language. This is reflected in Mauritius as English is recognised in legal documents, administrative correspondences and policy documents that are written in English. This gives the status of English being the privileged language of administration in the island.

Article 33 of the Constitution of Mauritius stipulates the following regarding qualification to be a member of the National Assembly:

Subject to section 34, a person shall be qualified to be elected as a member of the Assembly if, and shall not be qualified unless -

- (a) is a Commonwealth citizen of not less than the age of 18 years;
- (b) has resided in Mauritius for a period of, or periods amounting in the aggregate to, not less than 2 years before the date of his nomination for election;
- (c) has resided in Mauritius for a period of not than less 6 months immediately before that date; and
- (d) is able to speak and, unless incapacitated by blindness or other physical cause, to read the English language with a degree of proficiency sufficient to enable him to take an active part in the proceedings of the Assembly.

The Education Act of 1954 (Republic of Mauritius, 1957) confers the responsibility of promoting the English language and the teaching of it:

(2) In particular, he [the Minister] shall ensure

- (d) the more effective teaching of English and the spread of the English Language in Mauritius

This is indicative of the importance of English as a language in Mauritius. It however does not mention the French and Asian languages that are present in the island, as statistically shown in the 2011 survey (Central Statistics Office, 2011).

4.1.2 Educational languages in policy documents

The Early Learning Framework of the Seychelles (Ministry of Education Seychelles, 2015) and the National Curriculum Framework of Mauritius (MIE & ECCEA, 2010) for early childhood education mention of the importance of communication and explain the importance of the child's home language. For Seychelles,

Proficiency in Creole, English and French should enable children and young people to make connections with different people, appreciate their diverse cultures and learn to become global citizens. Therefore, this Early Learning Development Area (ELDA) of which language is the most vital component should be used to develop concepts in all the other ELDAs. (Ministry of Education Seychelles, 2015, p.51)

In Mauritius, the National Curriculum Framework for Pre-Primary Education mentions that children who join pre-primary school are fluent in their mother tongue, thus these children should be given the opportunity to express themselves in their “environmental language” (MIE & ECCEA, 2010, p.42)

There is a clear difference in the approach to educational language policy in the two countries. Explicit mention is made of the languages that learners are aware of and that are targeted by early childhood education in the Seychelles. In Mauritius, the use of language is left open and no explicit language is mentioned. The “environmental language” is broad and open and hints at the variety of languages that learners are exposed to at home.

The Policy Statement of the Ministry of Education Seychelles (Ministry of Education Seychelles, 2000) states the following about primary education

It is the goal of Primary Education that the child should:
- acquire literacy in the three national languages at a level corresponding to his/her mental development and to the usage patterns of the three languages in his/her every-day life

Similar to the early childhood educational language policy, the trilingual approach is encouraged with the aim of the child developing proficiency in the three languages mentioned in the Seychellois Constitution.

For Mauritius, the issue of language of instruction is taken up in the 2008 Strategic Plan (Ministry of Education, 2008) which points out the educational language issues and the difference between the home language and the language of instruction. The Strategic Plan recognises that the difference between the home language and the language of instruction can be detrimental to the child’s learning experience.

The educational language policy issues are approached differently in both Mauritius and the Seychelles. While the Seychelles adopted a trilingual language policy in their education systems in pre-primary, Mauritius, despite being aware of the constraints of using English as the medium of instruction, as the following words show, finds it challenging to decide upon educational language policies for the learners:

Facilitation of learning through the use of a language other than the 'official' language of instruction, which is the 'official' language of assessment, will have to be the subject of a broad based national consultation before policy decisions are taken. (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 42).

The above was elicited in 2008 on for educational strategy. The Nine Years of Continuous Basic Education (NYCBE) reform that was implemented in Mauritius in 2015, and conceptualised in the "Inspiring Every Child" policy document (Ministry of Education and Human Resources, 2016) proposes Mauritian Creole as an examinable optional subject from Primary to Lower secondary levels. No mention, however, is made as in the 2008 Educational Strategy document, of the medium of instruction or the use of support languages.

4.1.3 The place of the mother tongue

The status of the mother tongues differs in each nation. Seychellois Creole was given a formal status in the 1981 Budget Speech of the Seychelles. It was then recommended that with effect from January 1982, Creole would be the language of instruction in all Primary One classes and during the first school years in the Republic. The decision was a historical one motivated by the concern of enabling young children start their schooling in the language that they know. It, however, made no mention of the definition of the initial years. The next step proposed by the 1982 Budget Speech was the use of English as the medium of instruction when the learners had mastered English and could be taught in the language. French as a subject, on the other hand, would be introduced once the learner had developed proficiency in Creole. The objective was a progressive introduction of the three languages in the education system to empower learners. The decision to give Seychellois Creole its true value and reinforce the country's identity was coupled with proposal for the creation of a Creole Academy.

Unlike the Seychelles, Mauritius has only recently introduced Creole in its curriculum as an optional language to be studied at primary level in 2012

after the publication of a standard established Creole orthography and grammar by Carpouran (2011) and Police-Michel (2011). Mauritian Creole is thus studied as an optional and examinable subject for the end of primary education assessment and in secondary school to Grade 9 (Ministry of Education, 2015). The Education Act of Mauritius (Republic of Mauritius, 1957b) recognises that in elementary classes of primary schools, until Grade three, languages are considered apt by the Minister may be used for teaching. Yet, all textbooks for the core subjects except for French, Creole and Asian languages are in English. Pupils are evaluated in English which makes little room for the mother tongue in the formal teaching and learning processes (Owodally, 2012)

Attempts to introduce the mother tongue in the National Assembly in Mauritius have been challenging. This is reflected in the recent debates in Mauritius (National Assembly of Mauritius, 27 March 2018) regarding the use of Creole for parliamentary debates. In Mauritius, English as the language of instruction, was established during the British colonial period (Tirvassen, 1998). The Seychelles fared a similar scenario with English being made the medium of instruction during British colonial rule (Franda, 1982). There have been many attempts to promote the mother tongue, that is Mauritian Creole, by various governments but English has constantly been perceived as a tool to achieve academic success (Sambajee, 2016). It has remained the very language of formal and official dealings, that of the civil service and that of education (Sonck, 2005b).

The Seychelles rely on English as a medium of instruction mainly because of the reliance on curriculum material as the findings of the research conducted by Laversuch (2008) into trilingualism in the island shows. The curricular weight related to the economic currency of the language on the one hand, and the fact that most of the textbooks used on the curriculum for all subjects are written abroad in English made it difficult for the state to depart totally from English medium instruction. Such is not the case for Mauritius where textbooks are written and printed locally and offered freely to primary school learners. Lower secondary textbooks are produced locally.

In this section, it is seen that there are gaps in the definition of educational language policy in Mauritius as opposed to the Seychelles that adopted a trilingual language policy for the early years of education. Whilst the documents related to educational language policies in both small states have been analysed the discussion highlights the status of English as an important language. The section that follows presents the participants' perspectives in on language policy and the forces that shaped these policies.

The participants' codes initially provided at Section 3.6.1 is again produced below for ease of reference.

Table 6: Participants

Mauritius			The Seychelles		
<i>Code Name</i>	<i>Completed Secondary Education</i>	<i>Languages Known</i>	<i>Code Name</i>	<i>Completed Secondary Education</i>	<i>Languages</i>
MP1	Y	English, French, KM, Hindi	SP1	Y	English, French, KS
MP2	N	English, French, Gujrathi	SP2	Y	English, French, KS
MP3	N	Business English & French, KM	SP3	N	English, French, KS
MP4	Y	English, French, KM	SP4	Y	English, French, KS
MP5	Y	French, English	SP5	Y	English, French, KS
MP6	N	English, French, KM, Hindi	SP6	Y	English, French, KS
MP7	Y	English, French, KM, Hindi, Bhojpuri	SP7	Y	English, French, KS
MP8	Y	English, French, KM, Hindi	SP8	Y	English, French, KS
MP9	Y	English, French, KM	SP9	N	English, French, KS
MP10	Y	English, French, KM	SP10	N	English, French, KS
MP11	Y	English, French, KM	SP11	Y	English, French, KS
MP12	Y	English, French, KM	SP12	N	English, French, KS

4.2 “There is a lot of politics in language policy decisions”

The participants had varied reactions to the educational language policy they had experienced. Those who were schooled during the colonial times associated English with colonial power. MP5 and MP8 referred to language policy as uncertain and dependent upon politics. MP5 views language policy to be dominated by politics. This for him permeated the field of education. In his words:

It is a tug of war. We need to be aware of the linguistic diversity of our country with the presence of creole and Bhojpuri. We need to

be progressive in politics and in language policy. We cannot always be scared of how people will react, how sensitivity is hurt (MP5)

MP8 considered that there was a need to reflect on language policy, education and the medium of instruction in Mauritius. He believed that Creole is ready to be used as a language of instruction:

“Creole is ready and we need only some technical adjustments but it hasn’t got to be a political decision” (MP8)

The issue of language is different in the Seychelles where the trilingual educational language policy was welcome by SP4:

Before 1981, Creole was not recognised in society and in school and it was forbidden to speak creole in class or the teacher would punish for that and I did not learn creole as such in school settings (SP4)

She added that in 1981, she was asked to be part of a team to develop a curriculum for the use of Creole as the language of instruction. This was challenging initially. For the Seychelles, the decision to include Seychellois Creole in the educational language policy and adopt a trilingual language policy was a decisive one.

Mauritius seems to have a long way to go before it can achieve what the Seychelles has. It is only quite recently that Mauritius published the first dictionary of Mauritian Creole in 2011 (Carpooran, 2011; Police-Michel, 2011), Mauritian Creole, as mentioned in chapter 1 is an optional language taught since 2002. The language is widely used in the public sphere today. Yet, there is little indication that the language might be used as the medium of instruction. This may be explained by language being a highly sensitive issue in the island. Aumeerally (2005b) articulates the diasporic connections of Mauritius with the rest of the world as articulated in the languages of the decedents of migrants. She argues that Mauritians are not attached to their colonial past. Rather, the oriental languages are a powerful vestige of their past, and symbolise their identification with the lands of their forefathers. The use of Mauritian Creole in class is not denied in research (Sonck, 2005a). However, the formalisation of this practice has so far not been envisaged.

4.2.1 The coloniser's language is neutral

The neutrality of the former colonisers' languages in multilingual Mauritius is seen as an important factor that might have influenced educational language policy. Language was perceived as a potential source of divergence. MP5 said:

In Mauritius we do not have any language policy that is clearly spelt out or presented to the population; but there are things that there are actions that are done, like putting creole in schools and there are initiatives that are taken about a hidden unwritten policy. If we choose one language, the others are offended (MP5)

The 'offence', that MP5 made reference to, connotes of the sensitivity of language issues in Mauritius. This sensitivity was linked to the multicultural and diasporic nature of Mauritius was explained by MP4:

We have had the attempt to translate the national anthem in creole which was not very welcome. We think of the language as the community, as the religion (MP4)

MP5 spoke of her awareness of the importance of the languages one critical incident. During one visit in one of the popular tourist villages of the island, she witnessed a child who refused to answer her when she used French. She later code switched to Creole and the child was immediately comfortable. During the interview she pondered on the value of the mother tongue:

That child could not speak French but what will happen to her at school? We need other languages such as English and many others because we need the world out there. But we cannot change things here because then there is rebellion, with one person saying why not my language (MP5)

MP4 expressed the need to revisit and decide for a language policy that takes into consideration the sociolinguistic changes in the island since it obtained independence:

We owe a language to our people. Just like the parents, they owe a language to their child. We need to change the attitude to the languages, make it a healthy attitude towards languages so that we respect these languages and it is a national decision that we need so that we accept the Creole language and that we use other languages such as German and Italian in our curriculum, else we will have a fight for language and a fight because of language (MP4)

MP7 had a different view of language which he linked to the examinations that are conducted in English. He, however, insisted that there had been a change in the status of Creole. The language has become a dominant language:

Le creole est devenu une langue dominante
[creole language has become a dominant language] (MP7)

These findings throw light on what Aumeerally (2005a) calls the “curious role of imposing an equality of handicap on learners from all ethnic groups” (p.311). The neutrality that is associated with the English language would not, therefore, privilege any ethnic group over another in the small state.

summarize the significance of the language policies before moving on to the participant experiences.

Findings in relation to the third research question

So far, this chapter has focused on the first and the second research questions. The following section will address the third research question where data was collected essentially through the Written Reflective Exercise and two semi-structured interviews.

4.3 Experience: English as a challenge and a facilitator

Two sets of structures emerged from the data: one that presented English as the language of instruction as a challenge and the other that saw it as an enabler. In the subsections that follow, the challenges that participants described in relation to their experience of the language of instruction are presented.

4.3.1 English as a challenge

Reasons for finding English demanding in all subjects seem to relate to four main domains: the ways in which teachers used English; the technicality of specific subject curriculum content; the teachers having different accents; the teaching methods.

Explanations in English were difficult to understand

Many of the participants found it difficult to follow classes when the teacher used only English in class. MP3 and MP9 spoke of the difficulties they experienced to follow and understand the teachers when the latter used only English. What hindered understanding further for MP9 was the articulation of the teacher. He would then ask the teacher to re-express herself and articulate better when he did not understand her.

A similar experience was shared by SP8:

I remember there was a difficult topic and I was finding it difficult to understand and the teacher did not use creole but used English still (SP8)

The reactions of MP3, MP9 and SP8 in the above excerpts reflect the problematic of understanding English on the one hand and the other challenge they faced when the teacher used only English.

This, in the case of MP3 especially, led to his losing interest in academic studies and feeling demotivated. His commitment and interest in the other subjects show that English became a hurdle in his academic performance. As he could not understand English, he felt demotivated and his overall performance dwindled. He ultimately shared feeling of disaffection, which led him to abandon secondary school:

si pa ti ena problem avek konpreansion ek lekritir an angle , kapav mo ti pou res dan lekol ek mo ti pou konpoz mo lexamen form 5

[If there was no problem with listening to and understanding and writing English, maybe I would have remained at school and sat for the Form 5 examinations] (MP3)

There is anxiety perceived in their accounts of incidents that reflect uneasiness when they had to listen to and understand English. Another stumbling block was the power relationship in the teacher-led classroom (Kimura, 2016). The teacher's pedagogical approach in class did not help MP3 develop familiarity with English. The experience of MP3 is a poignant example of how the use of English only impacted on the relationship between students and teachers. This

finding concurs with the views of Zee & Roorda (2018) who researched student-teacher relationship in elementary schools. Teachers' attitudes, in the case of MP3, impacted on his motivation to learn. Similarly, teacher-centred approaches and classes conducted only in English hampered understanding of concepts and explanations for SP8:

I remember there was a difficult topic and I was finding it difficult to understand and the teacher did not use creole but used English still. (SP8)

The use of English exclusively in class intimidated the participants. There was a break down in the emotional support that the teacher provided to the student in class (Gasser et al., 2018). This, in turn, impacted on the instructional support (ibid.) where the teacher is expected to manage the attention of students. The importance of teacher-student communication is highlighted in the study conducted by Torres et al. (2018). Student self-regulation is dependent on the communication processes in class between the teacher and the students (ibid.).

MP2 left school for vocational training without completing his secondary education. He explained that he was hesitant about asking the teacher questions when he did not understand him/her:

but when I was in secondary, the languages were pure with no mix up of other languages. But when we tried to understand, and could not but not all teachers used Creole or French when we did not understand. Some would still use English and we did not question the teacher (MP2)

A similar view was given by MP3 who spoke about his experience of studying science since the examinations would be conducted in English. He explained:

I did not understand all the time but was scared to ask the teacher (MP3)

For MP1, his use of English or Creole depended upon the relationship between the learner and the teacher:

There was a teacher who was always communicating in English. So with her it was always English and some others would be using

only French in class so again, it was difficult not impossible to communicate in creole with them. It was like not respecting them. (MP1)

In the above case, power distance between the learner and the teacher was influenced the language used in class.

The Teachers' English impeded upon learning

Another teacher-related factor that impeded upon learning was their communication skills. This was predominantly the case for the Seychellois participants where many of the teachers were not Seychellois but foreigners who had been hired by the schools since there was a lack of teachers in the country. The teachers not being locals created barriers in communicating and this impeded on the teaching-learning process. SP1 and SP6 shared their experiences of not understanding the teachers' English. For SP1, one hurdle was that the teacher himself was not a native speaker of the language. There were various levels of understanding that she had to go through, namely the teacher's English, the language of Mathematics, as she explained during the interview

We had to try to understand first the accent, then the meaning and then the Mathematics and it was not easy as we had a different Seychellois English (SP1)

At first glance, the presence of foreign teachers does not seem helpful for the Seychellois participants. SP6 also commented on the teacher's accent. She had a Korean teacher whom she could not understand at all:

I had a Korean teacher and we could not understand her: no understanding at all. She was heavy and she had to be taught English herself. It was funny but we could not understand. She did not know English but came to teach here and we could not communicate (SP6)

Differences in the English accent led to a break in communication this impacted upon listening to what the teacher explained.

Foreign teachers were recruited to work in schools as the island did not have enough trained teachers. Foreign teachers working in the Seychelles did not know Creole and this led to gaps in communication between the students and the teacher. For SP4, the fact that the foreign teacher did not speak Creole meant that there were gaps in communication with the teacher when something could not be expressed in English:

Now let us suppose that we have a foreign teacher and the student speaks Creole, then there will be no understanding ...we do not have enough teachers like if we have a Seychellois teacher, the teacher can use different languages when talking and explaining to the students what they need to learn in the mathematics and in the science biology, chemistry, sociology but it is not the case and the language-in-education has to remain mainly English (SP4)

The gap between the mother tongue and English as used in class had a negative effect on learners' listening and understanding. Goh (2008) researched the decoding of sounds and Chang et al. (2013), the intelligibility of pronunciation and accent concur on the importance of the speaking skills of the teacher for learning to take place. They argue that listeners' comprehension is to a large extent influenced by the ways teachers speak, and most importantly, when listeners are not familiar with the speakers' accents or pronunciation, this may negatively impact on listening and learning (Kimura, 2016).

“Technical terms were difficult to understand and remember”

Apart from the teacher's accent and English, the participants voiced out the difficulties that they experienced in class to understand to the terms and expressions used as well as the jargon that was specific to the subjects being studied. Consequently, learning was a trying experience with a struggle to understand and cope with technical terms for MP1:

There are times when learning like some terms happen to be that are too technical and difficult to understand. (MP1)

As opposed to MP1, MP2 compared his experience with that of his friends. His understanding of explanations given by the teacher depended on the word that was used:

My understanding, it depended on the word and on my understanding and like some friends would understand it in English and I might not (MP2)

MP3, for his part, preferred explanations given in French by his teacher:

mo tip e gagn bann tipti tipti problem kan explikasion ti an angle
me avek franse li ti pasab (MP3)
[there were some small small problems when the explanation was
English but with French it was better] (MP3)

English contributed to making this participant anxious as he could not cope with the cognitive load: one of wrestling with the language and second of ensuring that they had enough resources to achieve clarity of understanding of the concepts in the discipline being studied. The meaning making process carried a double cognitive load that appeared to have generated substantial stress. In case of MP3, the added load may have brought him over the tipping point. The data shows that even though many factors would have coalesced to produce the outcome, the effect of English cannot be underscored.

The frustration of not understanding English was burdened by the challenge of memorising words and terms. MP3 referred to problems he had in remembering and understanding technical words:

Bann mo, bann mo teknik ki mo ti pe gagan boukou problem pou rapel. Mo pa tip e konpran.
[The words, the words we had, the technical words, I had a lot of problems to remember. I did not understand (MP3)]

This impacted negatively on his studies and on his performance when he had to answer questions in English. The outcome as he explained was that he gave up and could not study further. MP3 found learning in English challenging and felt that he did not progress in his studies as a result.

For SP1, the shift from primary to secondary education where Creole was no more used as a support language was a challenge. The use of English as the language of instruction led her to make more effort and was a strain on her memorising terms:

In secondary school, when I was taught, there was not Creole anymore, and I tended to forget certain words that were in English and I had to make more effort to remember the words in English (SP1)

Despite the experience of learning new words and languages, the challenge linked to the technical terms for the various subject areas became an overload for SP11:

When I learnt languages, it was a nice experience but explaining in science, at times the language. Technical words are different and I try and try to understand but it is not working all times (SP11)

The experiences presented above relate to memorisation and the pressure of memorising terms that do not exist in the mother tongue. The repertoire of both Mauritian and Seychellois Creoles of the mother tongue were not broad enough to accommodate the technical complexity of subjects' technical terms. This was an overload that the participants found uncomfortable and which, in their perspective, was created and reinforced in two ways: firstly, the lack of equivalent term in their mother tongues and secondly, the strain of remembering these terms which they could not understand.

"I did not know that world"

Cultural implications of the language of instruction were a key concern or participants. The cultural barriers that language carries with it is reflected upon by SP1 who brought up the challenge faced with the study of poems in class:

One incident is that it was difficult to read new words but we did not have the writings like poems and stories and we are small country and not many people can do it...we do not know the world

outside and we do not know the world where you have elephants and so on (SP1)

She went on to speak of the lack of confidence she had when she read English in the literature class where the problematic lay in the disparity between her Seychellois world and the writings from the rest of the world:

It was not a question of understanding. I do understand the words then (pause) but the different types of writing was a problem for me and my friends and I was not sure of what I was reading and this was problem for me. I did not know that world (SP1)

There was a gap between SP1's experience of her local context and the reference made to international contexts contained in the textbook. SP12 too spoke of the breach that existed in her reading the textbooks for the literature course that she was studying:

I cannot imagine winter and snow and think of Shakespeare. When it comes to the expressions that are very British, like the idioms or even the writing and the description of the paysage [landscape]. You just do not close your eyes and see it (SP12)

What SP1 and SP12 brought up as they spoke the hassle to relate to what the foreign text in English offered may be interpreted as the use and prescription of textbooks to be studied on the programme. Though much older than SP1 and SP12, MP8 alluded to the literature that was linked to the English language and that was compulsory at the time he was in secondary school:

English was one thing. It was already foreign and complicated. Now, I started studying literature. How much I could visualise the scenery when the poets were describing the scenes during the times of winter (pause) picturing all that in my mind was difficult and I found that ridiculous (MP8)

His tone of voice expressed exasperation, and for him it was not the language only that was complex, it was his imagination that failed at that point. This is reinforced by his speaking of the imposition of culture through literature, as he says that it was "ridiculous" to study what he could not visualise and his spoke of books written to be studied by the colonised people who live in another context as trialling. His invitation to the poets and writers coming to the colony

to see and experience what was there and write about it highlights the gap that he felt between what he studied and who his identity as a colonial subject.

Though a postcolonial, SP1 too spoke of the exacting task of overcoming cultural barriers when she studied English literature. Going back to her A-Level literature in English class, she said:

English is not my whole first language and there are things that I do not know or do not understand (pause) there is the culture that is different. I can understand what is in the words but I cannot know what is in the history and the background of the books (SP1)

The textbooks were not prepared by the Seychelles. SP1 here expressed the difficulties encountered when the textbooks were produced externally. The participant perceived a gap between her knowledge of her culture and the world that was presented in the books. She acknowledged that English language could be understood. The main challenge was connecting to the world that the book offered, thus leading to a breach between the learner and the curriculum material that was offered to her.

The problem of learning resources was present in the anecdotes of MP1 who referred to the textbooks prescribed on the curriculum for science subjects that he studied at secondary level as being inappropriate for they contained a different English jargon:

Some of the books like Nelson and Parker for Physics and they are of British authors and when now when I look back at the books and how things were explained in the type of English that was explained; the English was not for students around the world but for students there. (MP1)

Even though his experience departed from the reference to literature textbooks that SP1, SP12 and MP8 referred to, MP1's reaction enunciates the same reflection on textbooks prescribed for the secondary programme of study. When probed about their preference, all of these participants are unanimous in their preference for the inclusion of local, African or non-European textbooks where they could encounter contexts that would be similar to their own. The fact that the examples contained in the textbooks did not relate to the Mauritian or Seychellois contexts was seen as a disadvantage and this was true for the

subjects that the participants studied. This finding compares to the concept of scaffolding proposed by Bruner (1972). Scaffolding is important for it enables teachers to monitor and adjust the amount of information that the student obtains and begins to master. It involves a continuous and complex interaction between the student's knowledge of the world and his/her cognitive development (Shanker & Taylor, 2001).

MP1 argued that there were now more and more Mauritian authors and textbook writers and that this helped students to better grasp the curriculum content. SP12 compared what she was learning in the undergraduate course in literature to her experience of secondary schooling:

The reading the literature course I am studying and there is something about the ways in which things are difficult; it cannot be understood and I have not learnt these things in my secondary schooling days (SP12)

She dwelt upon the ways in which this hampered her understanding of the texts, very much like SP1. MP8 related the difficulties he experienced when he had to understand or translate English expressions or idioms:

and it did sound English - e.g sot semin [cross the road]. In English it was: I jump the road and - when we come to the lights, I would say that I went across the red lights and British would say jumped the lights (MP8)

The difference in culture and expression was confusing for MP8 and he drew attention on the challenge he faced when it came to understanding idioms.

The findings here remind us of what the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (O'Halloran, 1997) mentioned in the second chapter of this study. Culture is seen as inherent to learning. The failure to of cultural connections between one's world and what is offered in instructional material may lead to the challenges in learning. This finding, however, challenges the argument of Bloch et al. (2009). Even though human mind is assumed as able to biologically acquire, process and use more than one language (ibid.), gaps in cultural knowledge are seen to impede upon learning.

“I can’t talk in English, I remained quiet”

Situations where participants had to express themselves in English only resulted in their keeping quiet in class. This compares to what is presented earlier about the participants having difficulties to understand the teacher, thus remaining quiet. They would find it difficult to share their ideas and to voice out their opinions. MP2 spoke of the difficulties he experienced when he had to speak English:

Get kan enn profeser donn nou explikasyon ek apre li poz nou kesion, li fer nou reponn an angle swa franse, mo pa kapav koze, mo ress trankil
[See when a teacher gives us explanations the asks us questions and asks us to answer in English or French, I can’t talk in English, I remained quiet] (MP2)

For SP1, the lack of confidence because she would not know how to say something in English led her to avoid speaking

Sometimes, you don’t say anything as you do not know how to say it. I would keep quiet as I would not use to say things. (SP1)

MP4 refused to express herself in English but it was because she was told to speak English as she explained:

There was my English teacher who once told me that if I do not answer in English, he will not listen to me. It was simple. I stopped talking in class (MP4)

Another participant whose inability to communicate robbed him of his voice in class and in the schoolyard was MP8. In his case, it was the difference between the home language and the language used by his friends which caused discomfort:

With the teachers in classes, I remained quiet. What could I say? I thought in Bhojpuri and I had to say that in English or French and I did not want to be laughed at (MP8)

He preferred keeping quiet at his secondary school for he was made fun of by other students who ascribed to him, as well as those who came from the village in the derogatory term “bane butation”:

There was no-one who could understand Bhojpuri and whenever they saw students from the village, they said: *bane butation*. When I spoke creole they said I was weird. My reaction was that why should I be there in that milieu. [MP8]

The meaning of “butation” is derogatory in Mauritius and but it speaks of his being alienated from a peer because of his language and his roots.

As opposed to other Seychellois participants, MP4 felt that French had a better status and she would refuse to speak other languages and this as she said,

This led me to experience internal fights to find my identity. For my children, I spoke Creole as this was the language of the island (MP4)

The reconciliation with languages was one that took SP5 time and she therefore settled for the language that was mostly used for communication for her children.

When I had problems was when I moved from primary to secondary and there was the creole language - but when I went to secondary I would stop talking at times - there was only English and I would at times I did not understand and the teachers helped us. We had to adapt to them (SP5)

The importance of interacting in the language of instruction as part of the curriculum is emphasised by SP1 and SP10 who refer to their experiences of having had to explain directions to tourists in French or English and the challenges they faced. According to SP10, the problems could have been avoided had she used more English in the class, and had the curriculum catered for communication and oral aspects of English and French. This dimension was different for SP1 who spoke of the advantages of having learnt Business English and French at the Polytechnic and how this helped her overcome the barrier of communicating and holding a conversation in English:

We need a balance between all languages like in secondary we learn but then we do not use all languages outside the school ... and when we have to, we cannot talk. I think we have to talk and have oral classes (SP1)

A similar wish was expressed by MP10 who considered that the lack of practice in English and French hampered his oral delivery during presentations at university and he wishes that an oral component be introduced in the curriculum in all subjects to address this issue.

The challenge that the participants faced when communicating in English is comparable to the issues that they faced with technical terms and with the teachers' explanations. The language of instruction was seen problematic on various levels.

"I think in Creole and make it into English"

Writing demanded more effort and thinking in English, the target language, and was far from being an easy task. This was problematic for the thinking was done in the mother tongue and then translated in English:

I was basically a science student, understanding concepts were rather in creole and the writing would be in English and I would translate the concepts from Creole to English. At times the English would not come immediately in a proper English way (MP1)

MP7 too spoke of his struggles when he wrote in English:

But there was this problem when I was having problems to say things when I spoke, to do tasks. We had to had to start from scratch. When we had to write in a language - even a sentence is difficult then and we had to think and then think again (MP7)

SP11 and MP8 explained that they suffered from the interference of their mother tongues while they had to write in English. For SP11, the interference of Creole when she wrote English was a strain:

...when I write, I think in English and most of the time, I think in Creole or when it is difficult, when I was writing a composition, then I think in Creole and make it into English (SP11)

MP8 had a similar experience, except that in his case, his mother tongue being Bhojpuri, he thought in Bhojpuri and then translated his ideas in English.

When I was at school, there is this language interference. I thought in Bhojpuri and I translated it at times in Creole and then in English or at times from Bhojpuri to English.(MP8)

MP9 whose mother tongue was French had to translate from Creole to French and to English as he explained:

There were at times a feeling of it being odd but it was difficult for me as the concepts and explanations were in Creole and I had to re-write in English as in my mind, I had to move from creole like translate to French and now to English and I had a lot of problems to write in good English and my English was French-English (MP9)

For MP9, there was a different problem of interference of his mother tongue and he had to doubly translate what the teacher explained into his mother tongue and then to English.

When questioned about whether thinking in the mother tongue was a barrier to their writing, participants had mixed feelings. They shared their difficulty with translating and writing in a “proper English way” (SP4), meaning that they were aware of the interference of Creole or French in their writings.

For SP11, there was a lack of confidence when she said that she had to “think twice” before she managed to jot anything down. As for MP8, we can see a double process of translation whereby he thought in Bhojpuri and translated it into Creole and then into English. His confusion, as he said, arose from literal translations that would not have any meaning in English. Similar to MP1, his concern was mastery of Standard English, which he considered impossible for natives:

In the long run, I can say I have language I can speak but I can never master it and this is impossible for people who are studying outside the UK. We cannot master it. It is a question of exposure (MP8)

While his ambition was to develop a British native like proficiency in English, the case of Seychellois participants was different. Participants recognised that they had a different accent and a different jargon that is a mixture of both Creole and English. SP1, for example, used both languages at the same time as opposed to SP6 who spoke of the difficulties experienced when communicating in English since teaching did not focus on speaking English:

When we did our academic Secondary 5, it was not the type of learning that we helped us with the communication spelling problems in English; I can speak it ok but at times the words are difficult (SP6)

A similar view was given by SP11 who considered herself to be more proficient in writing in English than speaking the language:

When it comes to speaking, it has to be done very quickly and because I lack that practice and have long pauses in between how do you say this, and how do you pronounce (SP 11)

The above responses on the application of English point towards the difficulties and adaptation of written and spoken aspects of the language. Again, as seen earlier, the findings show the difficulties in speaking English that the participants experienced. The ability to speak is seen in two different ways: Standard Pronunciation on the one hand as the reaction of Mauritian participants MP1 and MP8 suggest, and the acceptance of a new hybridised English as the responses of Seychellois participants above show.

4.3.2 English as an enabler

Career paths

Almost all participants considered foreign languages as important for their empowerment in various ways. The importance of English and French, for example, are central to qualify for a job. MP1 spoke of his parents' deep concern over his learning of English and French:

We all know about the importance of English when we join school. If we fail English, we fail the whole School Certificate. When we got our results, they would look at the English marks first (MP1)

MP6, who was preparing to sit for the School Certificate examinations, once again affirms that in Mauritius, one needs to have passed English, French and Mathematics at one and same sitting. Moreover, in order to achieve better career prospects, he has opted to try the examinations and sit for the A-levels too subsequently:

normalman pou gagn enn bon travay, mo bizain gagan enn kredi dan angle pou SC... sim o gagn sa kredi-la lera samem pou ed mwa pou mont dan HSC.

[usually, to get a job, a better one, I need to get a credit in English for School Certificate. I will have to get that credit then I will have to sit for the Higher School Certificate (MP6)]

Being qualified in English were a means of empowering him to move on in life and he views this as a means of obtaining a job and, as he says above, bettering his career prospects:

Angle, li ipou nou kapav gagn enn travay angle li bien inportan pou fer nou gagn enn promosion parey pou franse isi dan Moris, nou bizain tou le de.

[English is important for us to get a job, to obtain a promotion; same for French here in Mauritius, we need them] (MP6)

The importance of the foreign languages can be traced back, as MP8 says, to the colonial period:

When I think of it, we had to learn the languages of the colonisers if you need to get anywhere we all needed English to get a certificate, to get a job. We all needed English. (MP8)

English was portrayed as being powerful. He linked it to the colonial power in the same way that he speaks of it as the language of the colonisers and alludes to the language as a tool that was used to colonise people:

We were colonised in schools in the language of the coloniser we had to learn and we had to learn it if we wanted to get a job and get out of poverty (MP8)

The power that MP8 suggests is one that is based on the financial and economic progress that was promised if one mastered English. There was, in his time, a need to learn the language, to be empowered and overcome poverty. His views bear similarities with those of MP6, MP9 and MP10 who equally shared their views about the importance of focusing on English. In the words of MP9,

Si j'échoue en anglais, j'échoue partout. Toutes les portes se ferment...
[If I fail English, I fail everywhere. All the doors close on me].
(MP9)

MP9 was motivated to learn English by a fear of failure. In Mauritius, a student sitting for the O-levels/School Certificate needs to pass in English for his certificate to be valid. If the student fails in English, and passes in other subjects, the certificate he obtains is not considered valid. MP10 stressed upon this aspect:

My parents, they put a lot of emphasis on English. I was made to take additional tuition from an early age, asked to listen to English. I even had cousins whose parents spoke English to them. It was to tell us how important English was for examinations (MP10)

This consciousness about the importance of English goes beyond its functions for assessing learning. As SP1 spoke about it:

We need a salary and if we need to study in English for it, then we have to do it. (SP1)

This may be interpreted as an obligation that she feels i.e. there is no alternative to learning in English for this guarantees a job, and a salary, whereby the economic empowerment that the language promises after schooling. Such was the case of SP5, SP7, SP8 and MP8 who obtained the opportunity to travel to the UK to pursue tertiary studies because they knew English or the case of SP8 whose knowledge of both English and French allowed her to travel to the Maldives to complete a course in Hospitality Management and come back to the Seychelles to join the tourist industry. For SP10, the use of English as a medium of instruction helped her to develop the necessary competencies to work in an international context:

This project, we would not have been able to write in creole. There is a lot about the sea and when we look for the information. The project is explained to the person in English and all Indian Ocean islands understand it. We can do it as we know English (SP10)

In the case of SP10, English enabled her to work with people from other Indian Ocean islands and to work on information and formal documents in a language that is common to them.

The knowledge and proficiency in English and French equipped and qualified MP5, MP7, MP8 and SP4, SP5, SP7 for university education outside the islands. SP7 referred to language policy as being central for the openings that it offers to islanders to access education in the European continent:

If we want to get university education abroad, we need the English and the French language but mainly the English language (SP7)

The communicative dimension of the language of instruction has been a consistent concern amongst all participants. Participants spoke of the dichotomy that they felt exist between the written and spoken features of both English and French. MP5, while commenting on the various aspects of language, said:

Language is related to exclusion... if there is a link between the issues of language and success at school and the issue of language to be used later on, it is this problem of learning the academic language, not the practical side of it (MP5)

Participants were in favour of a change in the curriculum so that proficiency in spoken English be integrated in the syllabus. MP6 considered himself to be a victim of the need for a credit in English to obtain a post in the public sector and in his words,

Aster sa dimounn ki pena kredi an angle-la me li kapav koz bien dan sa lang-la, li perdi so sans...
[Now the person who does not have a credit in English but is proficient in communicating in the language, loses his chances] (MP6)

A credit in English would refer to a satisfactory level of proficiency in written English for the O-level examinations. It was important for a student who sits for these examinations to pass in English and to obtain a “credit” in English. If a student does not pass the O-level English paper, he is considered to have failed the whole O-level examinations.

English breaks the shackles of insularity

The importance and authority of the language of instruction is associated with the connection that it establishes between the small islands and the rest of the world. MP1 saw the importance of having English as a national language to be able to connect with other countries:

If we go beyond the teaching-learning. We have liked to preserve English as a national language - French is there as another language and we need to think of the smallness of our country and the need to reach out to other countries - Africa - I think that Creole - is to be kept as it is - we need to emphasize English and we could have more French in the parliament (MP1)

For SP 3, there was the need to work and the use of Creole only would not have helped then island establish connections with the rest of the world. The

We are touristic and we need to know English. There are tourists coming to Seychelles. We need to give them good service. Then we Italian and German and Russian and so on we need to learn how to take care of them in English. They are not going to understand Creole! (SP3)

The importance of language as a bridge to the outside world was conveyed by SP4 who believed that studying the three languages, that is English French and Creole, was important, as for her,

English can travel the world. It is the global language (SP4)

She questioned the importance of Creole as a medium of instruction:

Where will Creole bring us? But, for us Creole is our mother tongue and it tells the world who we are. It does not have to bring us to the University of Cambridge or something like that. We need to

recognize us, us Seychellois through our mother tongue and we need to learn it, to learn through it (SP4)

While she acknowledged that languages act as a link between the island and the rest of the world, she insisted on the need to be recognised by the world. Creole is one means through which this validity and distinctness between the rest of the world and the islanders is established and is reinforced. While this, once more speaks of identity and belonging, it revealed the need for preservation that can be achieved through the use and establishment of the mother tongue, as a medium of instruction.

This idea of the importance of English was echoed in the response of SP5:

I should say that it was when I studied in England that I got to see and understand the importance of the school system being in English. I did my BEd in England and it was a boost for me to be able to develop my language, but understand and develop academically (SP5)

Her background helped her, as she said it later, assimilate the university and communicate with others, more so when she realised during a conversation with a Spanish colleague that this was an opportunity to develop her skills in English further:

I remember I met a Spanish-speaking colleague and I said I will learn and speak Spanish with her but she said no. I am not going to use Spanish and I will use English because I came here to develop my English and this is true you know, we develop our English better and we come back to the Seychelles to share this with our people (SP5)

The power and status conferred upon the languages of instruction, in MP5's opinion, is as much political as academic as he speaks of the difference between the corpus planning and the status planning whereby should be

A balance in the relationship of languages, like which languages de we promote for social integration and which languages we promote for academic purposes and where do we stand (MP5)

He further reflected upon the power that colonial languages stand for and comments on the Eurocentric approach that spells of the power that the former coloniser still has on the island and the ways in which language empowered or enslaved people over time as he presented it:

Our examinations are not in Creole. So, we need to practise the languages and we know the languages are important. We are not able to crush other languages like are we to allow creole to crush other languages; then what happens to us?

For MP5, the debate is deeper than the dominance of languages with the language policy issue being complex in an island where there are different peoples and different cultures. The dependency on the rest of the world, especially Europe has led to changes in linguistic patterns, with Bhojpuri being threatened and he asked himself the following questions:

So we are promoting and thinking of revolution of language of Creole but do we think of the consequences? What is it at the end? Are we Commonwealth? Or Francophonie? Or are we Africa? Indian? Or else are we still attached to Europe because it is so powerful? (MP5)

A similar idea is reflected in the words of MP7:

We are a very small nation and when we introduced Creole as a language some time back, we were hesitant and gave it same status as Asian Language. It is not an Asian Language, it is not Mandarin or Bhojpuri. It is the mother tongue and we have to have it in education. But English is neutral (MP7)

The questions that he asked relate to the relationship between Mauritius and the former coloniser. Seen from a postcolonial perspective, the issue of the various international bodies that the country belongs to, the Commonwealth and the Francophonie, amongst others, leads to pondering on the ties that the country has preserved with the former colonisers. He questioned whether this did not have to do with power relations whereby the former colonies needed to keep a bearing through the authority of the former coloniser:

Maybe we need them. We need France and England as we are not strong enough linguistically and politically (MP5)

He thought of the media as a testimony of the ties that are preserved, very much along the same lines as the language of instruction:

We have Creole in the schools and as a subject and as a support to teaching, so it tells us about the evolution of the language. The language was crushed. It was the language of the weak and there is this reversal. And the language of the oppressed becomes the main language and it is this reversal that I found interesting. (MP5)

MP7 too spoke of the tussle for power that language represents when he asserts that the language of instruction has been purposely kept to the foreign ones for the relationships that the island shares with the external world. His claim was that the very old “tug of war” between France and England still lives on:

Today, we have a different war. It is the war not of lands or territories as geographical lands, it is the war of languages, France wants French to dominate and wants Creole to be seen as a French derivative and English is the language of the powerful world (MP7)

SP4 had a different standpoint. She viewed the blurring of the power relationships amongst the languages in the modern world because of globalisation. With the advent of media, migration or mixed marriages, as she argues,

There is no such thing as home language or mother tongue or language of instruction. The lines are vague (SP4)

adding,

I take my situation I have been married to a Canadian Creole Portuguese and he speaks French and Portuguese and all you get the picture...then comes the Seychelles with all the baggage linguistic that we have at home, at my mother’s home My husband with his own languages, my daughter with many languages (SP4)

For SP4, the issue of language would be more complex for her daughter who was exposed to different languages:

I cannot say that Creole is her first language . You see when we talk of mother tongue, we have to be careful. We do not know which it is - it can be the father’s tongue. Who spent more time with the child. In my case, it was my husband or they can have two mother tongues: mother speaking one language to the child and the father simultaneously speaking another language (SP4)

The above comments that she made emerged from her experience as a mother and as an individual married to a foreigner. In her case, and that of her daughter, the family background and the languages that her child was exposed to is one that spoke of negotiation.

The importance of foreign languages is seen in terms of the openings that it offers as well as the links that they provide with the rest of the world as MP1 stated

I think that one thing that I would like to see like we are small Mauritius and we need the rest of world, our economy, our education. We have liked to preserve English as a national language. French is there as another language and we need to think of the smallness of our country and the need to reach out to other countries such as Africa (MP1)

It was the need for connecting with the international world from the small island that, according to SP4 and MP7, prompted policy makers to preserve the use of English as a medium of instruction and to keep French as another language. This, they argued, was connected to the island being former French and British colonies. It reflected notions of inheritance of educational practices. However, changes have been brought about in the perception of the language of instruction and its relationship with the home and mother tongues.

There have been changes in perception over language policy in relation to education in the Seychelles as opposed to that of Mauritius. MP 8 condemned the lack of a proper language policy in Mauritius and argues for a legitimate position for Creole in the curriculum:

Language policy: since 50 years I have been saying that we need a reflection on the language policy and we have never had one and we need a new medium of instruction and I believe that Creole is ready for that and our language is ready creole is ready and we need only some technical adjustments (MP8)

SP4, on the other hand, explained that in the Seychelles changes operated slowly but the interest in language in education got an impetus in the late 1970s and it was, in an endeavour to address the issue of illiteracy that led the

Seychellois government to introduce Creole as a medium of instruction for adult literacy programmes:

In the 1981, there was this political decision and it was a one-party system at that time, that creole should be given its place and one too the ways of doing it is to teach it. (SP4)

And as SP5 presented it, the use of English and French in secondary school education and like SP4, she lived through the introduction of Creole as a medium of instruction for adult literacy programmes:

There was a programme in the Ministry whereby we had had to teach people who had were “analphabetic” you know, someone, had to phonetics for teaching them creole - and that was how in one session only, I started to learn Creole (SP4)

The education policy for the Seychelles was commented upon by SP7 as “well written”. Yet, she firmly believes that there is need to review language policies:

I think maybe we have lost track - as the years go by, to go back to evaluate the policy to see what is working or not working and the need to change it and I will say that the education policy serves a good purpose. (SP7)

The need to review language policies echoes in the response of MP1 who not only believes that the language policy should be reviewed but also that it should look into teacher training:

The teachers do the job on their own - there is lack of monitoring on that issue and there is lack of support and there was not any induction about language teaching. So we need to train all teachers in languages (MP1)

The political aspect of language of instruction, in his view, has to be revised with a more democratic approach, very much in the same line of thought as MP5, MP7 and SP2 whereby languages are free choices but need to be carefully planned and implemented. This calls for rethinking whether bilingualism or multilingualism should be practised for the benefit of the learners. SP7 expressed it thus:

The thing is that now one question: it is we are trying to do pedagogically where we are trying to use a different approach and contrast and creole is the mother tongue. What we are personally

trying to do is improve the transition - in terms of language-in-education and we need to think of new ways and new pedagogies and new languages even (SP7)

Language policy, visibly, in the eyes of the participants, needed to be dynamic and be constantly revised in line with the current contexts.

Together this section provides important insights into challenges that the participants experienced when English was used as the language of instruction. The findings also showed that the participants appreciated the language with time. This aspect of the finding is presented in the section that follows.

4.4 Developing a liking for English

The difficulties that participants experienced in English, however, did not discourage them altogether. With time, the participants developed a liking for the language:

Some friends would understand it in English and I did not always, but as I went along. We could understand in all three languages simultaneously and this helped me to think and say things (MP2)

In the case of MP8, it was his personal experience and encounters with specific people and situations that made him like English:

You know with time, I developed a love for the English language and this was more so when I went to England for my studies and met other people who helped me. The people from the British Council who helped me get a place and study when I was in Edinburgh and of course there is my wife. All that made me love the language even more (MP8)

Central to MP8's experience was the collaborative nature of language learning as well as the social environment appear to be important ingredients in his development of a strong liking for the language he referred to as the "colonial language" at one point of his discourse. This acquired taste was related to his need for a language where he could find himself and which would empower him:

A neutral language that could help me and which was not my mother tongue (MP8)

For the MP9 too English was important. He considered English as an important language and he worked hard to develop proficiency in the language:

l'anglais c'est une obligation, je ne pourrai pas penser vivre dans une société comme Maurice sans l'anglais, et si je passe pas en anglais, je ne passe pas et mes parents mettaient plus d'emphasis sur le l'anglais avec des des leçons

[English is a must, I cannot imagine living in a society like Mauritius without English, and if I do not pass English, I do not pass at all and my parents emphasised the importance of English, with tuitions (MP9)

For MP10, the liking for English was motivated by the promise that the language represented access to reading material, education and higher education:

When I was at school, I think that learning English and French enabled me to have access and understand a lot more of material from various sources. It was important when I was writing essays and it helped me as I have a writing-everywhere language. English is everywhere at university and I find it fascinating at the number of things that I can write and pass examinations (MP10)

The Seychellois participants too expressed their appreciation for English. For SP1,

We need to move on and adapt but I know it well and now I am okay with English (SP1)

SP5 and SP12 spoke of the global presence of English and thus, its value in enabling them to reach higher education in the UK or travel the world:

All was in English the teachers were many of them foreigners and they spoke a lot of English and I went to study in England (SP5)

For SP12, the need for the language led her to see the importance of the language. She considered French as equally important. English and French would be, according to her, present everywhere:

I find English and French very useful like wherever you go there is English and French (SP12)

The acquisition of a love for English is seen in the experiences of MP7 during his studies in the UK:

I was doing studying linguists in 1966. We had started to work on Basic English, to teach English and when the was explaining how Basic English functions, I stopped and told him this is exactly how a Creole language is (MP7)

MP8 had a similar learning journey and he shared his experience of wanting to learn the language and this was enhanced when he worked in the UK after completing his studies there.

It was the encounter with the British education system and its society away from Mauritius that led to an affinity for English in the case of MP7 and MP8. Time and exposure to English, awareness about its importance and using it in social communication when they were studying in the UK prompted these participants to develop a strong liking for the language.

Taken together, these results suggest that there is an association between the participants' perception about the importance of English and their developing an inclination for the language. The findings also showed that there were strategies that each participant developed to learn in English as well as learn English. These are presented in the section that follows.

4.5 Developing coping strategies

The data showed that the participants developed personal strategies to learn English. These included memorisation looking and exposure to the English language through the media.

4.5.1 Memorising words and terms

SP5 recounts that she learnt by heart even if she did not understand what she was learning. Rather, she focused on memorisation as the teacher could ask questions that she would have to answer:

When we were in the secondary, we did a lot of rote learning. We would learn by heart without any understanding, like learn poems by heart, expressions and idioms by heart, learn words that were new by heart. We needed to remember what was said as the teacher would ask questions (SP5)

She added that at that time, her main concern was not to think but to know, showing that knowledge was more important than the development of thinking skills.

SP1 and MP10 too expressed themselves on the rationale of memorising English words and definitions. The experience of SP5 stands in contrast to what they said. SP5 reflected on her experience of the language of instruction being English and mentioned, as quoted above, that with hindsight, she realised that she did not think in English but rather, she believed it important to reiterate what she was being taught.

SP1 too spoke of the advantage of using English only as the language of instruction for it enabled her to remember those words that she could use again when she answered questions for the examinations. This speaks of the examinations-oriented approach to learning and how they viewed the use of English as important to enabling them to answer questions in the examinations room. MP8 too expressed his concern with the examinations being in English, this the need to develop skills in writing in English:

But the fact that we had to write in English and we had an exam coming where we would have to write in English, all other subjects are taught in English and it is a necessity to write English. We did not know how to speak English but it was important to write it and pass the exams (MP8)

As opposed to MP8, some of the participants spoke of the ways in which they overcame the challenges of the language of instruction. Various strategies were employed. SP1 spoke of the importance of interacting with her peers as a facilitator to learning English further:

When I was at school, there was language learning difficulties and others that helped me later on; mainly the communication part (SP1)

While time and the assistance from his peers and parents helped MP2, the case of MP3 is one that reflected the challenges that he faced as a learner because of the language of instruction being English.

MP10 alluded to reading extensively as a means of improving his English, whilst paying attention to technical vocabulary and applied these words in the subjects that he studied. His aim was:

My being good in English I knew would help me to be good in all the other subjects (MP10)

It was a corresponding awareness of the importance to develop personal strategies to overcome the barriers of English as the medium of instruction that prompted MP8 to look for strategies to learn English. In the days he attended secondary schools, books and learning materials were scarce and he did not have either access or enough money to buy these. One way in which he tried to improve his English was by listening to the BBC and he asserted, in both the Written Reflective Exercise and the interview that “my real English teacher was BBC”. This, he furthered, was due to the remoteness of his village where no one spoke the language in his family or his neighbourhood. He felt a need to learn the proper way so that he successfully completed his studies.

MP1, on the other hand, was determined to master English in order to learn other subjects. It was a constant use of the dictionary and reference books that enabled him to succeed in his endeavour:

I would prepare my notes and checked the dictionary all the time to be able to do better (MP1)

As the cases of MP1, MP2, MP8 and MP10 denote, there was a self-motivation to learn in the medium of instruction that drove them to seek their own strategies, with the resources that they had, to boost their proficiency in the language and consequently, their performance in the subjects that they were studying.

4.5.2 Exposure to English Language

Being exposed to the English language also led to the participants becoming comfortable with it. MP8 shared an anecdote regarding the experience of speaking English during his university days in the UK:

At the later stage, when I happened to be in London, to go a particular place, the underground station, and I asked the fellow “could you please give me a single to Putney” and I mis-pronounced it - and *Put - Ney* (MP8)

This, he considered to have been a humiliating experience, for he was not understood by the ticket officer who told him about the right pronunciation and for him,

There are so many incidents like that when we were humiliated or denigrated or made to feel bad as we did not know the language. It was a problem with the language. I could not speak proper French or English or proper Hindi - I grew up with this feeling that I did not have a language (MP8)

It was by listening to BBC English as he says, that he managed to improve his English and learn the right pronunciation and understand the idioms and the cultural aspect of the English language during his stay in the UK.

However, MP2 spoke of the slow progress he made from the initial classes such that he later on managed to better grasp classroom explanations in English, and that, with the help of his friends and his parents:

But as I went along, it was all ok. I could understand in all three languages simultaneously and this helped me to think and say things and write things in English and my friends and my parents helped me. (MP2)

The participants spoke of the positive aspect of using English as the medium of instruction. MP10 who was a science student for his O-level and A-level, found memorisation of English terms useful. He memorised words, definitions and technical scientific terms and used these when he had to answer questions.

When the technical terms was explained in English itself and I think. I think it helped me as I helped me to answer questions and

at times it helped to memorize it easily. I learnt the words by heart and I recited them (MP10)

The importance of the language of instruction, in the case of MP10, was related to the examination papers that had to be answered in English. The language of instruction was therefore viewed more as an opportunity to learn and improve his performance.

MP7 and MP8 shared a similar past in attending secondary school during the colonial period. A similar pattern of experience is discerned in their schooling and in their exposure to language during their childhood as both grew up in rural areas but attended schools in urban regions. For MP7, the language of instruction in secondary school was dominantly English but as he says, he could understand what was being explained if he listened carefully:

When I was in secondary, if I listened carefully, I could understand (MP7)

In summary, these findings show that despite the initial challenges that the participants felt about the use of English as the language of instruction, they developed both a liking for the language and devised personal strategies to learn both the language and in the language.

Having presented the participants' anxieties when English was used as the language of instruction and how they later developed a liking for English, the section which follows looks findings in the participants' perception of how the use of their mother tongue was not always appreciated at school.

4.6 Stigmatised mother tongue

4.6.1 The mother tongue was not allowed in class

One important dimension of school and classroom culture is reflected in the perception of Creole as being inappropriate for classroom usage in both islands. MP9 related his experience in the teachers' use of Creole during explanations, as clashing with his own upbringing where Creole was not allowed nor spoken

at home. It was upon entering secondary school that he had to learn Creole from his father to adapt to the classroom pedagogy:

I learnt Creole from my father and my friends. I was in secondary school...everyone speaks creole and it was difficult for me initially...like it was not always easy to communicate with the friends and the teachers and at times they would make fun of me jokingly with me being a “François” and it did not hurt me but it made me feel different...(MP9)

In Mauritius, people who speak French are often tagged as being “François”, a term that teases them about their use of a language of higher status to Creole. Though not offensive, it has social class and cultural connotations.

A similar reference was made by MP6

Quand on parle le Français, on entend cette expression: trop François toi
[When we speak French, we hear the expression: you are too ‘François’] (MP6)

A parallel response was obtained from MP10 who felt that the Creole language could be raw and the tone could be inappropriate at times and MP1 who now prefers English to Creole:

When I have to make a pertinent message, it would be English. It depends on the person, but the creole may hurt as it may be harsh, vulgar as opposed to the English is more formal and we have more of a softness to it (MP1)

English was associated with respect and considered polite language as opposed to Creole. When queried further about his views, MP1 spoke of the sociolinguistic situation of Mauritius where Creole was the most commonly used language and yet, English and French were more prized for they represented education and being educated. However, despite his feeling about Creole, he did code switch when he has to explain complex cultural issues to his students. Referring to his experience of teaching secondary students, he highlighted that he needed the support of Creole for there are cultural differences that the learner would not grasp. An explanation of the electoral system on Mauritius with the runner up being on the candidates’ communal

identity is one that is specific to the country and even through the students would be required to write their papers in English, understanding that cultural subtlety is best understood, according to MP1, in Creole, the mother tongue of the students.

SP2 shared her experience of having her voice stifled at school because of the use of mother tongue:

Kan mo ti koumans al lekol, mo finn koumanse swiv enn system angle kot pa ti ena drwa koz kreol ditou dan lekol... ek si nou ti koz kreol, nou ti pe gagn tit ek kritik - koz kreol
[When I started school, I started school in the British system of education where we did not have the right to speak Creole at all at school and if we spoke Creole, we got book behind the back with the critique 'Creole Speaker' (SP2)]

The board with the label "Creole Speaker" stigmatised her. This was far from being a pleasant experience for her. This was equally the case for SP5 who compared the current education system to the times she was in secondary school:

The system was different then. At school, we were not allowed to speak in Creole. But we could not speak English. So we shut up because we had a system, a card. And they had written something on it in Latin and called *signum*. I never found out what it meant. Long ago they used more Latin which was even more of a language we did not know (SP5)

She explained that "signum" was a kind of punishment, derogatory and humiliating. She, like MP8 and SP2 felt that they were stigmatised because of their use of the mother tongue in a school where the language of instruction was English. The mother tongue was, at that time, viewed as a shame with the participants having to either remain silent so as not to speak it in the formal school setting or adopt the language of instruction. This was described by MP8:

I felt hopelessly un-educable and brainless and not meant for school. I suffered from inferiority complex and was being mocked at by the supposedly clever ones who could speak a smattering of English and French (MP8)

He poignantly spoke of the way in which language represented power and how he could be rejected because of his language. For MP8, the English was the

representative of the coloniser, and he understood that language was a form of power:

It is later that I realised that we were being colonised by the language of instruction, that we were the descendants of labourers and slaves and the colonial languages were imposed upon us to make of us what they wanted us to be. It was a different form of subjugation.

The word “subjugation” is very telling about the power and power relations between the languages of instruction and the learner. This power relationship encompassed as SP4 said in her description of her secondary school days:

The teacher had power. It was all to do with the teacher, when to talk, when to sit: what to say. Before 1981, Creole was not recognised in society and in school and it was forbidden to speak creole in class or the teacher would punish for that and I did not learn creole as such in school settings (SP4)

The teacher was vested with the authority of reprimanding or “punishing” the student for departing from the use of English or French in the formal school setting.

SP11, on the other hand, narrated an incident when the teacher ignored her since she spoke Creole instead of English to her:

I had a English teacher who was strict and we were punished - and if we spoke creole she would ignore us, like that time when I spoke Creole to her and she would say she is an English teacher and would speak only English even if the teacher speaks creole with other teachers (SP11)

She contrasted that to the attitude of another teacher who would later, spoke to her in Creole and helped her to understand Mathematics and she appreciated the support that this brought to her in understanding the complexity of the subject.

MP5 mentioned her experience of communicating with a young boy she met in the coastal region. The young boy she spoke to refused to answer her initially when she spoke French. He, however, responded when Creole was used. This experience led MP5 to reflect on classroom situations and concluded that language was a barrier:

What about his engagement? What about I can listen to you but I cannot hear you? Our ears can listen but without understanding and this is what happens in school. We do not hear because the language is a barrier (MP5)

Her reflection about how that boy would respond or fail to respond to the teacher is very telling of the barrier that language can stand for. Yet, she recalled having rejected both the Asian Language and the Creole language during earlier times in her career and her childhood, believing that Creole was inferior:

In a French class one day, my students asked me if I did not know Creole. The school was in the capital city Port Louis. I told them that may be when we go to the bazaar we can speak Creole but in class it is French (MP5)

MP5 related that she had felt “diminished” when she had to attend Asian language classes, for she did not value the ancestral language in the way that she valued European languages. It was only later when she visited a museum in Paris that she appreciated the value of the Asian language. There was a change in the perception of the language of instruction over time. This in turn, as seen in the responses of the participants, impacted on their learning experiences. Ultimately, there came the realisation of the importance of the language of instruction and this may have created an awareness about the language.

4.6.2 The mother tongue as a scaffold to learning

Despite the presence of English as the medium of instruction, and to some teachers’ preference for using it as opposed to Creole during lesson, the participants spoke of the advantages and disadvantages that they perceived about the use of Creole in class during explanations.

MP1 and SP10 spoke of the importance of examples drawn from the context so that she understood the topic of study. One example that she gave was that of the teacher code switching to Creole to explain and provided illustrations from the Seychellois setting during her O-level sociology class. For SP10, studying Sociology was challenging. The teacher using Creole helped her understand. Yet, she added:

There are some times when you understand things better, for example when you use your own language and your own country examples and link it but it was not the case always as the books gave other examples and we were confused at times (SP10)

The need for the link between the theoretical explanations and the context is felt important by the participant who spoke of the examples contained in the textbooks in the same way as MP1 above. The pedagogical aspect of language and culture stands out in their responses where culture is seen as a barrier to understanding and where a student, context-centred approach is preferred. This was expressed by MP7 in a very interesting way as he describes the translation and understanding of English and French idioms and expressions in Creole:

One day I had to say something like a swallow does not make the summer. How do I say that? How to understand that? Then I said: it would mean to enn morisien: 2/3 petal rouz pa fer banana [a Mauritian would say two or three red petals do not make a new year] (MP7)

From his perspective, there was the need to contextualise language so as to avoid any culture clash and to make understanding meaningful.

Participants' spoke of their experience of being exposed to use of languages other than English in the classroom. Apart from MP8 and MP 9 whose mother tongues are Bhojpuri and French respectively, all other participants from Mauritius speak Mauritian Creole as their native language. The Seychellois participants, on the other hand, speak Seychellois Creole as their native language but this is mixed with English in their homes when they grew up. Speaking of the various languages that helped them in their learning, most participants referred to the use of creole during teachers' explanations in class.

In the case of MP1, understanding the science concepts that he studied was easier when Creole was used by the teacher:

Well, it is the use of creole by a teacher who was teaching us Physics. Many concepts appeared simple when creole was used. What was more interesting was when he asked us to pen down

whatever he had explained to us in English. It was indeed a pleasant experience (MP1)

MP10 too referred to Creole as a facilitator when learning Physics, but remained wary about the replication of his ideas in English:

When I was doing Physics or Chemistry, then it would be impossible to use creole. These terms call for the use of English only but there are times when the support explanations would be in examples that would be given to support the explanation and facilitate the learning (MP10)

MP10 pointed out one critical incident that made him value creole when he reflected on the difference between the use of Creole and English. This occurred when he had to explain a specific in the Physics class during a group work:

It was difficult to *visualise* and *we used examples in Creole* and used the idea of a ruler and when it was in English, it was a lot of graphs and then we shifted to creole with simulations and it was finally understood. Even the teacher had to use Creole to explain to us as we did not understand it in English (MP10)

Moreover, as he stated,

When I listened to the explanations in English and the support of creole for adding examples and it helped me understand better and *visualise* better what it was that I had to see and understand (MP10)

For MP10, creole assisted him not only in understanding but also enabled him to picture the explanations.

The importance of using Creole was expressed by MP3. He found English difficult but preferred Creole for it facilitated learning Mathematics and science subjects when he was in lower secondary.

dan ti klas, bann size kouma sians ek maths ti korek- pa sa difisil-la akoz bann profeser-la tip e servi kreol pou explike. Mo ti pou prefer explikasyon an kreol apre si
[In lower secondary, subjects like science and maths were ok – not that difficult since the teachers put it in Creole. I would have preferred explanations in Creole later too](MP3)

It was later on, when he joined a vocational training centre, that he enjoyed studying since the teachers used more of Creole than English. The mode of assessment being project-based, he did not have to write English:

si mo konpar lekòl ek MITD, zot bien diferan. Pou aprann mekanik, lang angle ti pli fasil ki dan leko lek profeser-la ti pe explik an kreol pou ki nou konpran. Get kouma nou ti ena proze pou fer me dan sekonder nou pa ti pe fer li.

[if I compare school and MITD, they were different. For studying mechanics, the English was easier than at school and the teacher used to explain in Creole so that we understood. See like we had projects to do but at secondary school, we did not do it](MP3)

Moreover, MP3 stated that it was the hands on experience that he obtained through activity-based learning that was most useful:

Met lamin dan moter; pa lir dan liv
[Put my hands in the engine; not read in books] (MP3)

What permeated from the experience of MP3 is his preference to learn by doing rather than study in books. The practical aspect of the vocational course therefore motivated him to move on with his studies and he has recently completed a diploma and was planning, at the time of interview, to enrol on a degree course.

It was, however, noted that for those whose mother tongue was not Creole, the use of the language in the teaching-learning process became a hurdle to their learning. This is the case for MP9 who considered the use of Creole by teachers as initially uncomfortable. He explained that he was more acquainted with French and was not comfortable when the teacher used Creole for explaining concepts:

I had to re-write in English as in my mind, I had to move from creole - like translate to French and now to English - and this had a lot of problems to write in good English and my English was French-English and the expression was not very English. (MP9)

MP9 spoke of three aspects linked to the use of Creole by the teacher. Firstly, his mother tongue being French, he had to “adapt” to the use of Creole. Moreover, he had to translate these to French, his mother tongue and

subsequently, to English, the language of the curriculum. Thirdly, his English was biased with the interference of French and this led him to see his expression in English as being in a continuum that was influenced by French.

A similar experience was shared by MP8 whose mother tongue was not Creole. He traces his frustration back to the time he joined primary school where his encounter with Creole and French led him to feel alienated and this impacted upon his socialising with others at school. At the very beginning of the interview, he articulated that:

The government policy was to use only English or French (pause) and I did not know what creole sounded like (pause) ever since language I was born and I until the age of 5, I did not know anything apart from Bhojpuri. And when I joined school there was such a problem. In a mixed school where I knew nothing apart from Bhojpuri. We had Creoles and Hindus and Muslims and what not; but we had to speak creole that was the language everyone was there (MP8)

He, however, because of his linguistic background, struggled to learn English as it was the main language that was used at that time in class. He felt, as he said, the need to integrate the school through a neutral language, one that did not oppose of his identity:

I could not speak proper French or English or proper Hindi - I grew up with this feeling that I did not have a language. But told myself that I have to learn a language in which would be instrumental and which I would use for the purpose I am studying. So, I got a tremendous move towards the English language (MP8)

No one spoke Bhojpuri in class, the language that he had been exposed to at home, leading to his feeling of not having a language, as he poignantly mentions.

For the Seychellois participants, the use of Creole is different in class. Seychellois Creole is taught in primary school from Primary 1 to Primary 4. Creole is taught as a language and is used as a medium of instruction during that period. Other subjects are however taught in English as from Primary 5, with Creole as a separate language until Primary 6. Creole is not used in secondary schools, either as a subject or as a medium of instruction. The withdrawal of Creole as a language from the secondary school curriculum is

referred to as a weakness of the Seychellois education system by SP7 who talked of the compartmentalisation of languages during secondary schooling:

It is compartmentalised. English is English and in terms of language we need to start thinking about how we promote proper use of language. We have then we do not have Creole and this is a handicap to the learners (SP7)

She argued later during the interview, and mentioned in the Written Reflective Exercise, that language was porous and social and that restricting the uses of creole is one major drawback of the system.

Her views are analogous to the response of SP1, SP4, SP5, SP6 and SP 10 who contend that the use of Creole in the secondary sector would be of help. Ironically, even though Creole exists as a language in the primary sector, its use is not encouraged at secondary level. This, SP3 said, was a means through which teachers ensure that students are exposed to English and French:

...napa ti Kreol dans seconder. Ti English only ek French. Napa ti let us koz Kreol
[there was no creole in secondary. There was English only with French. The teacher did not let us speak creole] (SP3)

On the other hand, MP7 shared a different view on the pedagogical use of Creole as a medium of instruction. He shared his experience about knowing an individual who was about to drop out of school. As a result, he taught the girl basic literacy in Creole explained,

I helped the girl. I started with Creole. Every Sunday morning, she would come to my place and I taught her to read and write in Creole. In three months, she had become literate in Creole and I now moved to English and by the end of the year, she knew both English and Creole (MP7)

MP7 referred to other times when he worked students who had failed the end of primary cycle examinations. He had worked on a literacy programme with the local church authorities. With the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction as he saw,

Three years later, the level of literacy reached that of Form III, and in three years they could read and write and understand things in their mother tongue (MP7)

Even though his experience of teaching prisoners lies outside the boundaries of the formal school setting, it is very telling of the ways in which bilingual literacy programme helped them towards literacy. The mother tongue was seen in the situation as having the potential to develop basic literacy:

Most of those people who are in prisons, who are in stealing and crimes are those who do not know how to read and write and they are there as they are not able to read and write and they cannot get a job. I taught bilingual literacy to prisoners (MP7)

He spoke of such programmes as being successful as the prisoners learnt and were motivated for it provided them with the means writing back to their partners and homes. As he humorously commented, he motivated the prisoners about the importance of literacy by telling them that the person they would rely upon to write to their spouses would get all details on the latter.

The example MP7 used with the prisoners and the ways he made them learn Creole and used it as a medium of instruction led him to win their confidence and teach them a language that would be of help to them when they had to integrate society after being released from prison. Moreover, as he stated, the important thing was that they managed to learn and the pedagogical value of using Creole as the medium of instruction in such cases was considered productive and invaluable for their literacy.

It was a drive for literacy that led the Seychelles to work on a language policy that included Creole. As SP5 remarked,

When I was at school, I did not have to study Creole, I studied in English and gradually, I started in French but there was a programme in the Ministry whereby we had had to teach people who had were “analphabetic” and that was how I started to learn Creole (SP5)

The case of the Seychelles tells us about the use of the mother tongue as a tool to initiate literacy. It was with such a view, as SP4 indicated, that Creole helped in the primary school when introduced in Primary 1 and 2. However, it seemed paradoxical that the language is not sustained as the medium of instruction in

the subsequent years of primary schooling. SP7 reflected upon the language of instruction in the primary and secondary schooling. The use of Seychellois Creole as the medium of instruction up to Primary 2 would not be sufficient. It would be important for the language to be used and taught at upper primary and secondary school levels.

The absence of Creole represented a severe handicap for learners who were not given the support of their mother tongue in the teaching-learning process as they reached Upper primary and in the secondary. Her views concurred with the feelings of other participants, who regretted that Creole was not used as a medium of instruction to facilitate learning at secondary school level.

The importance of Creole as the language of instruction is highlighted by the experience of MP3 very tellingly said that:

si zordi, mo ena pou fer kiksoz, mo finn realize mo pa feb, mo pa ti bet/ gopia, mo ti ena zis enn problem konpreansion kan mo ti pe aprann

[if today, I have to do something, I realised I am not weak, I was not stupid, I had a problem with understanding when I was studying (MP3)]

He added, in a reflective way,

Si nou ti ena kreol kouma enn opsyon ek explikasyon ti an kreol, mo ti pou kotign lekòl, langaz-la pa ti konpreansib ek mo pa finn kapav kontign mo letid

[if we had creole as optional and explanations were in Creole, I would have continued school, the language did not go through and I could not progress](MP3)]

It is with hindsight that he realised that he had potential. His inability to adapt to the education system with the language of instruction had led him to be afflicted with low self-esteem.

In this section, it is seen that the majority of the participants agreed on the use of the mother tongue to facilitate learning. One experience that participants shared was concern with identity. This category is explored in the section that follows.

4.7 Language and identity

One category that emerged in the finding that did totally relate to the pedagogical experience of the language of instruction is the issue of identity. The Seychellois participants displayed a vibrant and unanimous identification to the creole language that resonated in responses:

Seychellois Creole is my identity (SP1)
I think that Creole is my nationality (SP1)

There is a strong sense of pride and belonging that the language generates in the Seychellois participants. SP2, for example, spoke of:

Kreol, li nou la lang
Creole is our tongue (SP2)

As she went on to explain that the language binds the whole population into a nation. SP10 spoke of her pride in being able to read, write and speak the Creole language:

I am proud of my mother tongue. I am proud that I can speak it, I can write in Creole and read in Creole (SP10)

Another participant who spoke of the strong sense of belonging to the Creole language is SP3. In her view, the need for other languages is there but what is more important is that it binds the whole Seychellois population and does not draw any distinction in the population.

According to SP4, it is this force of the Creole language and the strong sense of identity that it fosters in the population that led people to readily and easily accept it as a national language and as a language of instruction in the primary sector:

In Seychelles, Creole is constitutional right and no-one will question the status of Creole and no-one will question the language-in-education. We accept it and no-one usually questions its use and when it was used in the education sector, it was accepted (SP4)

She associates knowledge and acceptance of Creole as going beyond identity for:

Seychellois are happy and proud of their mother tongue. This is something of an identity. We are safe as our kids are able to understand that this is Creole (SP4)

Her use of the word “safe” is very telling of the way she perceives the future generations as well as the subsequent use of the language. What she says connotes of the cultural aspect of language and identity, in that language is the carrier of the island’s culture and identity. From her point of view, the use of the language by the younger generation in a global world where there are different languages that children are exposed to:

Because we find that in society nowadays with the development in technology and so on, children, they learn English through TV. If you wish to learn, there is English everywhere. Creole is our island (SP4)

Her views correlated with those of SP2, for whom being a Seychellois implied the ability to speak Creole.

MP4 speaks of Creole as her tongue, as:

the language through which I know, I think and I take consciousness of the world. Creole is me. It is my status, it is my language, the language in which I was born, and the language in which I adapt to the world and that I take hold of the world (MP4)

For her, her identity is social and is based on the language that she was exposed to when she was born. MP2 and MP8 had different mother tongues and their experiences speak of the feeling of being different from others who spoke Creole. This feeling extends to their living the language of instruction initially in the formal classroom setting. MP2 shared his views concerning his identity:

I am Gujarati and this felt a bit weird initially. I felt like where is my language? (MP2)

His repetition that he is a Gujarati reveals his strong sense of belonging and identification to the language and being exposed to a foreign language at school led to a feeling of alienation.

For MP5, Creole was not allowed in class even if it was used to communicate with friends. The teacher would say:

No Creole, we do not accept Creole and this led me to develop an unhealthy attitude of language especially Creole language and I used to believe that it was not a good language.

It was later at university that she understood that Creole was her language. This realisation about Creole led MP5 to change her perception about languages that she had initially believed in at school.

Another perspective on the language and instruction and identity relates to the conflict that MP8 went through when he attended both primary and secondary schools. It is with a voice filled with emotion that he recounted his experience of joining primary school without any knowledge of Creole, English or French. His response when asked about the languages he used formally and informally indicated the strong sense of belonging that he hinted as he spoke of the use of “Bhojpuri” with his relatives and with his brothers for it is the language in which he is most comfortable. He emphasises during both data collection exercises that at one point he asked himself questions about his identity:

I could not speak proper French or English. I grew up with this feeling that I did not have a language. Who was I? You know, this feeling of feeling the odd one in a place where your language is different to the language that is spoken by others. My mother spoke Bhojpuri only. Bhojpuri was the language of Bihar, I know it is a dialect. But then who am I? I did not know English or French or Creole? How could I communicate? (MP8)

MP8 associated identity to language spoken for this relates to his culture, his social as well as family background. He eventually said, speaking of the policy makers and those who decided upon the language-in-education policies, he

understood that they were colonisers and that they were using their language to colonise the people and us and that we did not matter(MP8)

and added,

We do not have an identity only in terms of language. The issue is we have an identity in terms of the language and of the land of our forefathers (MP8)

Language, seen from his perspective, tells us about how he ways in which he felt pressurised by the languages of instruction for the disparity between his home

language, the ones spoken by his parents and forefathers who were of Indian origin and the languages that he felt was imposed upon him by the school which he considered to be elitist:

In colonial days, education was not meant for everyone, the descendent of slaves of indentured labourers. It was a privilege. Language was another privilege. If you are born in a family with other languages than Bhojpuri, you are at an advantage (MP8)

The perspective of MP8 differs considerably from that of MP7 who speaks of Creole as the Mauritian language and speaks of Creole as essential for it is the language that everyone speaks in Mauritius and he argues that the language should not be called Creole but rather, “Mauritian or Morisien”. He insists on the close correlation between identity, language and language in education as key factors that determine the performance of learners in schools. Hence, his argument,

We are an independent country and we need a national language - no-one has ever had the courage to take the decision (MP7)

and, speaking of UNESCO, he added,

Ledikasion bizain koumans dan lang maternel ek sa finn pran mwa preske 50 an pou fer dimounn konpran ki kreol meme se nou lang maternel, li nou lidantite ek si nou aprann li, nou pou vinn enn pep ini.”

Education should start in the mother tongue, but it has taken me almost 50 years to make people understand that Creole is our mother tongue, it is our identity and if we learn it, we will become a united nation (MP7)

What emanated from the discourse of MP7 is this strong commitment to the building of the nation that he connects to the language in education. More telling is his reflection about language and identity. For him, there is a gap in Mauritius:

We do not have some thing as strong as a Mauritian identity we refer to ourselves as Tamil or Muslim. We mix language with religious belonging. I think we need to review the language in education policy and think of it as “morisien” (MP7)

There are two important aspects of the language of instruction that MP7 spoke of. Firstly, there is the link between one's ethnic and religious affiliation. Then, the language that is common to everyone, and this, for him, is the base of nation building and the means through which national identity is fostered, thus his conviction of the importance of the language of instruction to achieve this. Moreover, when he mentioned the island's past and the language of instruction as the binding force, he hinted at the fragility of the nation and of the social fabric since the language of instruction is not the mother tongue.

This idea of a national language is challenged by MP8 who asked:

Do we have Mauritianism? Yes, we speak creole and when I come home do I feel Mauritian, when I go to my temple, I do not think I am a Mauritian. I think I am a Hindu because this is my home language, the language of my community. (MP8)

MP8 added that he loved the English language and that he respected it but that the language of instruction finally colonises us. We become the language they want us to be (MP8)

In the eyes of MP8, there was a process of identity change to become a coloniser through the language of instruction. His words are the testimony of a feeling of estrangement that he felt at the time both as a person of Indian origin, from a village and a colonised individual who had to face the education system. He, however, speaks of his love for English that he developed with time and paradoxically stated that ultimately, his identity changes into a hybrid one where he is both the Bhojpuri and the English that he learns at school.

4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented the categories that emerged from the data. These have been organised according to what participants shared about their experiences, with their words quoted and translated in English when it was necessary. In the chapter that follows, I discuss the findings that are organised in themes that are analysed in relation to the literature.

Chapter Five

Discussion

5.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to interpret and discuss significant findings in relation to concepts and previous research identified in the second chapter. Fundamental to this research are questions about the interpretations of educational language policy and the forces that shaped decisions about the languages to be used in the education system in Mauritius and the Seychelles, and the perception of those who had completed their schooling in relation to their experiences of learning. The findings from the research questions overlap. I therefore opted to discuss the themes side by side and under thematic headings.

5.1 Unpeeling the educational language policy “onion”

Consistent with the literature (Section 2.3 of Chapter two), the findings reiterate Taylor’s (2009) argument that the former colonisers’ languages have perpetuated their influence in the field of education. Previous studies have highlighted the challenges that policy makers in postcolonial nations face regarding educational language policy decisions in the aftermath of independence (Hanna 2011). This view is consistent with recent research (Milligan & Tikly, 2016; Mokibelo, 2016; Moore, 2013) which discuss the continued use of the former coloniser’s language(s) in postcolonial contexts. The findings of this study illustrate that in both Mauritius and the Seychelles, English (the former coloniser’s language) dominates the educational field. Yet, the National Curriculum Framework of Mauritius (Ministry of Education Mauritius, 2017) and that of the Seychelles (Ministry of Education Seychelles, 2013) recognise the challenges that learners encounter when English is used as the medium of instruction.

The Seychelles adopted the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in lower primary. This was, however, not perpetuated beyond the three years of primary education and English was used with effect from the fourth year of primary education. This policy is in line with international guidelines of 3 years of use of the mother tongue (UNESCO, 2011), followed by a shift to the second language. The Seychellois participants referred to the use of the mother tongue as a facilitator during the first three years of primary schooling. However, the introduction of English as the sole medium of instruction as from the fourth year of primary education impeded on their learning experience. The participants explained that this was not helpful for they had to re-learn all the subjects in English. This finding challenges the international concept of offering the mother tongue education during the initial years of schooling. There is one drawback of the UNESCO (2011) recommendation in its application in the Seychelles. The transition between the mother tongue and English as from Primary 4 is not addressed. The result is that participants faced difficulties in adapting to the new language of instruction. This intimidated them and led to various forms of language anxieties that are discussed later in this chapter.

5.1.1 Layers of linguistic hegemony

The term “layers of hegemony” suggests hegemony, power and control that are exercised by the European countries. Findings from this study reveal the various levels of hegemony in relation to educational language policy in both research contexts. The findings show that there is a continued presence and dominance of English as the medium of instruction in Mauritius and the Seychelles. This in itself constitutes a first layer of hegemony. A second layer may be interpreted as the high status and importance that participants assigned to English. A third layer pertains to the symbolic currency of English language in the world market. It stood as a social marker for the participants, giving them access to status as being educated.

The present finding seems to be consistent with that of Zelime et al. (2018). He argues that despite the trilingual educational language policy in the

Seychelles, people still have mixed feelings about the use of Seychellois Creole as the medium of instruction. These finding challenges the idea of “linguistic imperialism” (Phillipson, 1992). In fact, we can deduce from the participants’ perception that English is not imposed upon them. Rather, there is a conscious and voluntary willingness to embrace the language.

Maintenance of English language in education

In any country, one key language planning decision relates to the language used for teaching and evaluation of learning (Fasold, 1984). The English language, presented in the Constitution of Mauritius (The Republic of Mauritius, 1968) and that of the Constitution of the Seychelles (The Republic of Seychelles, 1993) the rootedness of this language in these small island states.

The findings highlight that Mauritius and the Seychelles preserved English as medium of instruction in the post-independence period. One possible reason for this is the absence of any other alternate language in the aftermath of independence. The legacy of colonialism did not offer the resources in terms of curriculum production and teaching personnel in the other languages or for an immediate change in educational language policies.

In Mauritius, the pendulum has, despite debates on the cognitive advantages of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction (Rajah-Carrim, 2007), swung towards English as the language of instruction. This may be explained in terms of inheritance where the colonial experience continues to shape and perpetuate postcolonial decisions and practices in education (Bamgbose, 1991). The pattern of language planning in the Seychelles, as opposed to that of Mauritius follows what Romaine (2002) proposed:

‘[i]t is political, geographical and economic factors that support the maintenance of linguistic and cultural diversity’ (p.21)

This is true but has more to do with neo-colonial and neo-liberal forces in which English is the language of economic power. This posits language as the site of empowerment over which there are very high stakes regarding who uses it and how. The findings show that for the participants, English language was seen as

increasingly aligned with market forces. It therefore is a means to an end rather than an imposed situation resulting from post-colonialism.

English language supremacy

The findings of the current study support the theories on the supremacy of the English language. Participants (MP4, MP5, MP7, MP8, SP4, SP5 and SP7) referred to English as the symbol of former British occupation of the countries. This situation is concurrent with many other postcolonial African countries (Tollefson & Tsui, 2004) which grappled with decisions regarding whether the former colonial language should be replaced by local or indigenous ones (Kamwangamalu, 2017) in education. The responses of the participants from Mauritius and the Seychelles showed that they relied on international languages for maintaining ties with the rest of the world (Fleischmann, 2008). There is a paradox here in the acknowledgement of the value of a colonial language for purposes of social mobility. This may be explained by the feeling of vulnerability of the two small states. Their fragile economies rely heavily upon tourism as a pillar for economic development and sustainability. This places a lot of emphasis and value on international languages.

The data on the choice of English as the medium of instruction confirm the importance assigned to English language worldwide. Phillipson (1992) considers this a perpetuation of linguistic imperialism and neo-colonialism. The Seychelles' choice of the mother tongue to teach years 1 to 3 of primary education, however, does not fully support Phillipson's (ibid.) claim. The findings challenge Rassool's (2007) arguments about language as a means of subtle coercion where literary practices, as well as ways of knowing and speaking, imply "colonial habitus" (p.16). There is a paradox discerned in the data, more specifically, in the experiences and perceptions of MP8 and SP5. The two participants highlighted feelings of repression and frustration through the mention of words such as: "subjugation", "power" and "signum". The ambiguity of their responses shows how independent small states continue to use languages, considered as oppressive and citizens actively support their use. On

the other hand, they felt humiliated and this affected their learning experience at school.

The former coloniser stood as the yardstick for academic success and social status, while influencing ambitions, dreams and wishes of the former colonised states. English language stands as a medium of academic excellence. Piller & Cho (2013) argue in their study of the spread of English as a medium of instruction that neoliberalism serves as a furtive language policy apparatus advocating the international spread of English. Laversuch (2008) argues that economic and financial concerns lie at the heart of language policy in his analysis of trilingualism in the Seychelles. He considers that indigenous people, despite acknowledging the mother tongue, still believe that English and French are superior. The findings of this research concur with those of Moumou (2004) who states that in the Seychelles, English is highly regarded and looked upon as a gateway to education, progress and by extension, social mobility. The same situation applies to Mauritius where the participants referred the use of English despite their finding it problematic.

The findings reflect the importance placed on foreign languages by the participants. Laversuch (2008) and Wolff (2017) who researched different contexts agree that multilingualism is important in small states for it enables these states to connect with the outside world. It may be concluded that the educational language policy is not simply a pedagogic tool. It symbolises a financial asset in relation to economic development (St. Hilaire, 2007) as well as access to the rest of the world. Put simply, the participants believed that the language of instruction would empower them to acquire better opportunities for foreign education, better job prospects and be recognised in their respective countries.

The learning experiences of the participants are testimony of the power and importance of English, not only as a medium of instruction for formal examination purposes but also as a social marker. Another layer of hegemony was seen in the ecosystem of the school and of the classroom where linguisticism (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000) dominates. The teachers' refusal to use any other language apart from English or when some of the participants were humiliated

or punished for using Creole languages, are examples of the power that was, and is, conferred upon English. The school was the site of social and linguistic reproduction besides that of the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes. This was central to the process of linguistic hierarchies (Phillipson, 1997) as the experiences of most of the participants reflected their perception of English as empowering them.

5.1.2 The Paradox of neutrality

The findings from the policy documents presented at section 4.2.1 of Chapter 4 speak of the perceived “neutrality” of the English language. In Mauritius, English language, in particular, is deployed as the language to promote tolerance, balance and harmony in the light of the various languages and cultures that co-exist in the island (Ministry of Education, 1977). Aumeerally (2005a) contends that the continued use of English as the medium of instruction and formal communication relates to the supposed neutrality of the language. The retention of English as the language of instruction after independence was a way of keeping the education system stable and sustaining a sense of continuity in education and the language policies (Sonck, 2005b). Findings reveal that English is neutral and a means of avoiding language-based conflicts (Bissoonauth, 2011; Sambajee, 2016; Sauzier-Uchida, 2009) whilst adopting a medium of instruction that is foreign to most of the learners. In so doing, the language policy has sought to avoid divisions based upon ancestral languages or ethnic belongings.

Mauritian participants (MP4, MP5, MP7 and MP8) commented on the need for a ‘neutral’ language and on the appropriateness of the English language in achieving this neutrality. Their reaction provides support to an the a report on the languages in Mauritius (Moody, 1943). The Moody report recommended an English medium education system with Oriental languages such as Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Telugu and Marathi being offered to students as optional subjects, ignoring the mother tongue of the island. Wee (2010) who analysed language policies in various parts of the world, presents neutrality as a

rationale where language policy might become discriminatory. In the Mauritian context, language issues are still considered highly sensitive. This is highlighted in the responses of the participants who perceive educational language policy as carrying the weight of conflicts and believe that English is a 'neutral' language despite being culturally laden and very different from the mother tongue.

Yet in the light of discussions above, the notion of neutrality seems paradoxical. English is the language of the outsider and still, it preserves social peace and harmony. When looked at in terms of the potential for empowering learners in various ways, it would be misleading to believe it to be totally neutral. English carries with its notions of economic and social power.

5.1.3 Changing status of the mother tongue

Findings from this study suggest that there have been changes in the use of both the mother tongue and in English as well as changes in the status of these languages between the older and younger generations of participants. Whilst the use of Creole was not encouraged in both Mauritian and Seychellois schools during the colonial period, this situation changed when the islands obtained their independence. Creole is today the medium of instruction at lower primary level in the Seychelles (Ministry of Education Seychelles, 2013; Ministry of Education Seychelles, 2015) and has recently been introduced as a subject in the curriculum in Mauritius (Ministry of Education Mauritius, 2017). This highlights the relationship between language use and the socio-historical context while positing the school as a microcosm of society where the status of languages is replicated.

This data must be interpreted with caution because of the complexity that governs educational language policy. The situation reflects the importance of English language literacy for the colonial subject and presents language as a social marker (Cook-Gumperz, 2006). The findings, therefore, highlight the perception of literacy as a socially and culturally constructed phenomenon, fashioned through the process of schooling. The learners were not encouraged

to use their mother tongue when at school. This stifled the participants' voices. It spoke of subversion of school rule where the participants used their mother tongues to communicate with their peers whether be it in class or in the school compound. The perception of English as important may be interpreted as being the outcome of the participants' learning experiences. Their exposure to English at school may have contributed to their seeing the language as being very important.

5.2 Anxiety

So far, this chapter has focused on the status of the language of instruction and the how it is viewed as both powerful and yet, neutral. This section discusses the theme of anxiety, an unanticipated finding, in relation to relevant literature.

There are patterns and similarities in the discourses of the participants on their experience of using of English. All the participants experienced anxieties related to speaking, listening and writing English. All participants referred to various types of apprehension about the language used in class experienced at different times of their secondary school learning journeys. Anxiety is defined by Spielberg, (1983) in Horwitz (2001), as a feeling of apprehension where a learner undergoes an unconscious feeling of fear, worry or tension linked to the "autonomic nervous system"(p.113). The experiences of all the participants, except for MP8 relates to what Hashemi (2011) considers to be a source of concern, fear and tension for learners while learning a language. Anxiety stemmed from the difficulties learners faced in understanding the language used as the medium of instruction.

The literature on anxiety linked to language learning tends to focus on the learning of a foreign or the second language (Cantoni, 2007). There is, however, consensus in the literature on the potential that foreign languages have to generate fear and hamper learners' self-esteem, their performance and academic achievement (Cheng & Erben, 2011; Horwitz, 2016a; Horwitz, 2016b). It can therefore be assumed that anxiety has had an important influence on the participants' learning experiences. This finding shows that language interferes

experiences. MP2's felt unmotivated because of his experience of the use of English. This impacted on his learning experience. He could not manage his anxiety when he had to use English. Anxiety was experienced differently by MP2, MP8, MP10, SP3 and SP10. These participants did not give up on learning in English but developed their own strategies to deal with their learning. This may be interpreted as a form of motivation that challenges the views of MacIntyre & Gardner (1991) who contend that the encounter with the foreign language generates language anxiety, a negative emotional reaction.

The findings revealed three forms of anxiety that the participants experienced, namely listening, writing and speaking. These are explored in the sections that follow.

5.2.1 Listening anxiety

The findings show that listening was a challenge and this affected participants' learning experiences. Both the Mauritian and the Seychellois participants shared their views on the strain of understanding orally given explanations and information in English. They, however, found it easier to understand information and explanations that were given in written form. Their experience correlates with what Zhang (2013) presents as the tension associated with listening to a second or foreign language where a listener cannot review the information through texts but has to accommodate to the accent and speed of the speaker. While listening is important for learning in the classroom (Joiner, 1986), the inability to follow what is being explained in class was a source of strain. Participants reported that they lacked concentration in class and this impacted on their motivation to learn. These findings indicate that, apart from the need to understand the idea units of spoken language (Dalman, 2016), factors such as variations of pronunciation and the accents of the teachers hampered the listening and understanding processes.

There was evidence from the data of a close link between listening anxiety and the level of understanding. Participants experienced difficulties in following teachers when they used English exclusively without code switching or using the mother tongue. This situation may be compared to findings from

Capan & Karaca (2013) who argue that listening anxiety may lead to high levels of anxiety resulting in the learner/listener failing to understand. When related to this research, it was found such situations were more prominent when components of language were complex and when learners lacked proficiency in English. For the participants of this study, listening anxiety could be linked to poor proficiency in understanding English resulting from poor exposure to the language. As opposed to the Seychellois participants who shared their views about their familiarity with English for being exposed to it in the home. Their responses showed that familiarity with the language was a source of comfort that facilitated listening to English and understanding the language in class. On the other hand, most of the Seychellois participants expressed their feelings of severe anxiety and discomfort when French was used in class for the language was not one they were exposed to outside the classroom. In such cases, exposure to the language of instruction outside classroom situations is seen to have facilitated understanding of explanations in class.

This study produced data on listening anxiety which corroborate with the findings of a great deal of previous studies. Listening calls upon learners to hypothesise, predict, generalise, revise and check for listening inputs (Otair & Abd Aziz, 2017) and anxiety stands as a major problem related to listening comprehension. As is indicated in the findings of this study, listening anxiety is linked to two factors. Firstly, there is poor command of the language that could be a source of stress (Chang, 2008; Hashemi, 2011; Roussel et al., 2017), and secondly, there are emotional challenges linked to speaking a non-native language (Aichhorn & Puck, 2017). In the case of this study, poor proficiency in oral English led to students shunning away from communicating in class. The disparity between mother tongue and the medium of instruction rendered the understanding of concepts and explanations challenging and the participants lost interest in class.

This finding has important implications for pedagogy. The importance of developing listening skills in English is highlighted. The participants who were used to listening in their mother tongues experienced difficulties in following the teacher which resulted in anxiety.

5.2.2 The challenge of understanding teachers' accents

Another experience relating to the language of instruction was the strain and anxiety was the understanding teacher's accent in English. This difficulty was more prominent amongst the Seychellois participants where most of the teachers were foreigners. This finding supports previous research conducted by Chang & Read (2016). They refer to variations of pronunciation, speech rate, speaker's accent and cultural content of talk as affecting listening and comprehension. The participants saw that as a limitation and felt that native speakers would have been able to code-switch between mother tongue and the medium of instruction.

In the case of the Mauritian participants, their account of their experience points towards incomprehension when the terms used were not familiar. They too mention the rapport with the teacher as an important factor as a facilitator or barrier to both communication and understanding in classroom situations. In both countries, the participants refer to the teacher's use of language(s) in class as central to the teaching and learning processes and oral communication in classroom situations. The findings reveal that most of the participants did not query the teacher or ask questions when they failed to understand when the accents were not understood.

In both contexts, the teacher's use of English impacted on the learning experiences of the participants. Learning experiences, it may be deduced, relied heavily on the quality of the teacher's communication. Accent, intonation and the clarity of pronunciation are important factors for students' engagement in class.

5.2.3 Anxiety when writing English

The findings highlight the writing blocks that the participants experienced when they had to write either in class or for examinations. Writing apprehension resulted from emotional blocks experienced by the participants when they had to write English. Such a situation arises when students are not

familiar with the language (Hui Chin Lin & Ming Shuan Ho, 2009). Horwitz et al. (1986) and Hashemi (2011) who researched language and performance in the context of foreign and second languages argue that feelings of tension and nervousness revolve on the two fundamental tasks, namely listening and speaking for both skills are complementary during interaction.

The findings of the study confirm that anxiety linked to writing may negatively impede upon the writing behaviour and willingness of learners (Cheng et al., 1999). This is an important issue linked to English as the medium of instruction. Though my study did not seek to address issues of anxiety linked to language, the findings brought to the fore the strains students might face when they have to listen to, speak and write in English. I consider that there is ample room for further research in the area of writing anxiety.

5.2.4 Culture-related anxieties

Another unexpected finding from the research pertained to participants' experience of the culture. Their experience of learning was impeded upon by what they perceived to be difficulties in understanding English idioms or expressions. They could not imagine landscapes that were described in the literature. The participants' (MP8, MP10, SP6 and SP10) experience reinforce the idea of language as an integral component of culture, shapes thoughts and influences the ways in which these are formulated and expressed (Swiggers et al., 2008). Specific expressions, idioms and proverbs, for example, are part and parcel of the cultural dimension of that language. The divorce became more prominent as the responses of MP7 and MP8 who spoke of translating English idioms or trying to make meaning of these and finding that such translations were absurd in Creole. The specificity of the language of instruction was at loggerheads with the mother tongue and stood as a barrier to their understanding.

Byram & Grundy (2003) argue that language represents or refers to social reality and constructs social reality. In the context of this research, the findings may be interpreted as the challenge of constructing and living in

different realities experienced by the participants while learning. The cultural dimension of the curriculum furthered this encounter through the 'technical' languages they had to learn, and adding to this were textbooks that were published for a different context and which they had to understand and adapt to.

Culture is a tool for us to understand and manage our worlds. Language and culture are intertwined and shape each other (Holliday, 2009). They are two sides of a coin (Nault, 2006). The findings show how participants negotiated with language(s) and culture. The English language and its expressions and idioms and the references to an outer world lay beyond participants' realm of knowledge. These participants developed a liking for English, and seeking ways of improving themselves without always questioning the education they were receiving at the time they attended school. This may be interpreted as their experiencing a process of acculturation. Acculturation denotes the process whereby an individual, or group, adopts or adapts cultural traits of another group that may then result in novel or mixed cultural patterns/behaviours (Mitchell et al., 2017). The learning experience is thus seen as not a simple acquisition of knowledge and skills. It also opens the student to absorbing cultural aspects of the language of instruction.

This awareness of culture that the findings reveal correlates with the findings of Lavrenteva & Orland-Barak (2015) who investigated the element of culture in the curriculum of various countries. Their study concludes that culture knowledge in foreign language instruction is important and that this calls for cultural diversity and promotes respect for difference. It encourages learners to consider and question their assumptions and verify the correctness of their assumptions between their own culture and that of the foreign language and connect what they know about their own and foreign cultures with new situations and contexts.

5.2.5 Speaking anxiety and withdrawal

When we turn to the participants' experience of learning, another finding shows how refrained from participating in classroom discussions. A possible explanation for participants' withdrawing from interaction might be the challenges that they experienced when listening to English. Listening is seen as a complex, active activity in which the listener has to identify and discriminate between sounds and understand vocabulary and grammatical constructs, stress upon words and intonation, and retain what is said (Vandergrift, 1997). Any classroom calls for a two-way communication between the teacher and the students, as well as interactions among the students.

Another possible explanation for speaking anxiety is that the participants lacked confidence in English, and this was the result of their poor fluency in English. Many of the participants shared their experience of keeping quiet in class. This phenomenon has been widely researched in the context of second language learning but not in the field of the medium of instruction as a second/foreign language. Lucas et al. (2011) focus on second language learning and the findings of their study of language anxiety are interesting and can be compared to those of this study. Anxiety can arise from many sources. Participants in this research described the classroom as having the potential of generating anxiety since it represented formal education and is the symbol of testing and evaluation. The participants tended to feel shy, as in the case of some of the Seychellois and Mauritian participants (MP1, MP2, MP8, MP10, SP1, SP2, SP3, SP4 and SP6) who preferred to keep silent rather than try to voice out their opinions because they felt that they could not express themselves correctly in English. This reflects their low confidence in oral communication in the medium of instruction.

This is an important outcome of this research. It indicates that learning experiences could be affected when the teacher insisted on using English only in class. It is equally important to highlight that all participants expressed their preference for the use of the mother tongue along with English to facilitate explanations and interaction in the class.

I consider it important to understand the feeling of embarrassment to interact in English in class. Horwitz (2001) suggests that all learners may undergo instinctive levels of anxiety when they participate in oral activities. She concludes that there are possibilities of reducing anxiety levels through a supportive and constructive learning environment. This findings supports Horwitz' (ibid.) argument. It sheds light on two important aspects of the classroom climate that impacted on the learners' learning experiences. First it is seen that English is the driver of learning experiences in all the subject areas on the syllabus. Second, the relationship between the teacher and the participant is seen influencing learning experiences when English was used for teaching. Both situations either encouraged classroom participation or hampered it.

The findings suggest that interpersonal relationship created a positive or less positive learning experience. One way in which this was presented in the participants' experience was through their perception of their interaction with their teachers. Anxiety could be a major factor impacting on the quality of learning experience in the two small sates.

5.3 Double cognitive overload

The empirical findings on the experience of learning have gone some way towards enhancing our understanding of different anxieties linked to the use of English for teaching. Whilst, as mentioned at section 5.2 above, anxieties related to the use of English was not an expected outcome of the research, another similarly unanticipated finding related to Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) (Sweller, 1998; Sweller, 2017).

Taken together, the data suggest that the language of instruction generated what I label as: '*double cognitive overload*'. The term is explained in this section.

The processes that the participants had to focus on at the same moment are:

- (i) Listening to and understanding English during explanations;
- (ii) Processing new terms and vocabulary spoken by the teacher;
- (iii) Remembering new words;

- (iv) Understanding and remembering the jargon and technical terms of the subject being studied;
- (v) Remembering these technical terms and reapplying them; and
- (vi) Conceptualising all the above while writing.

The participants' experience of anxieties when being taught in English may be interpreted through the perspective of Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1998; Sweller, 2017). The participants experienced cognitive load in terms of processing the amount of information given by the teacher while s/he explained concepts in class. The findings for anxiety and that of cognitive load reflect the various strains that the participants lived when learning both English and in English.

While the findings of the study support the conceptual premise of CLT, they also highlight one limitation of the theory. CLT, conversely, does not take into account is the means through which information is provided to learners. Evidence from the findings suggests that listening to English was one part of the learning experience which participants found challenging. This generated emotional and psychological apprehension since the participants were not familiar with English language. Oral explanations did not allow the participants to revisit the words. Understanding had to be immediate. This finding shows how listening to explanation interfered with the process of spiralling (Bruner, 1996). This may be interpreted as a second loop of cognitive load, which I term as "double cognitive load".

The strain and anxiety experienced by the participants in relation to the language of instruction was also heavily influenced by subject-specific vocabulary and technical jargon. This feeling of disquietude with remembering and memorising these terms further acted as a barrier to the double cognitive load experienced by the participants. When the reactions of participants are analysed from the perspective of CLT (ibid.) and Bruner's spiralling (1996), it may be deduced that the technical vocabulary overwhelmed the participants with excessive information in the form of technical jargon which they had to memorise. The working memory is limited in capacity when dealing with new information (Luchini et al., 2015; van Merriënboer & Sweller, 2005). For the

participants this implied listening, understanding and retaining, and reapplying the technical jargon given by teachers during explanation. This, consequently, overwhelmed the “double cognitive load”. The participants experienced a “double cognitive *overload*”. The consequence of this “double cognitive *overload*” led to two different reactions: they either became unmotivated (the case of MP2) or became aware of their weaknesses and developed strategies to address these.

Overall, the findings in sections 5.2 and 5.3 indicate that participants experienced different strains when English was used as the language of instruction, which in some cases, resulted in *double cognitive overload*. The section that follows turns to the findings related to strategies that participants developed to learn English and to learn in English.

5.4 Development of coping strategies

Despite a ‘double cognitive overload’ that participants experienced because of the use of English, they developed their own strategies to learn English. In the sections that follow, two such strategies, learning of vocabulary and learning by heart are discussed.

5.4.1 Vocabulary learning

Most of the participants mentioned the challenges resulting from vocabulary acquisition and memorisation. One finding speaks of their self-learning coping strategies to address these challenges. Coping strategies included rote learning of technical terms, keeping vocabulary copybooks as well as the use of the media to develop vocabulary knowledge. Chung & Nation (2004) consider that technical vocabulary is a major concern for learners but that little is known about the type of vocabulary mainly because it is difficult to differentiate between which words are technical ones or not. In this research, the participants’ experience showed that they faced challenges resulting from the technical words in English. The participants’ worry, as mentioned in the

previous section, resided in their capacity to memorise such terms and their functional aspect and be able to use these when writing.

5.4.2 Learning by heart

One strategy that was used by most participants to memorise words was learning by heart. As the participants proceeded with learning words and vocabulary through rote learning, they developed their long-term memory to retain words so that they could re-apply these in various situations such as when answering assessment questions, as MP10 highlights. In line with the working memory ideas discussed in the previous section, rote learning enabled the participants to cope with '*double cognitive overload*'. Sweller (2017) describes this process as the "information-store principle" (ibid., p.6) where we store large amounts of information in the long-term memory. Nandagopal & Ericsson (2012) and Sweller (2017) explain that this is the difference between competent and less competent language learners. Capability relies heavily on the amount of knowledge held in the long-term memory (Ericsson & Charness, 1994). Yu (2014) discusses the implications of learning by heart or rote learning for the use of memorisation in foreign language learning. Her qualitative study concludes that focused memorisation does not necessarily enable progress in learning but helps learners to feel more confident and step forward. What Yu's study does not consider, however, is whether understanding takes place when learners resort to rote learning. This study's finding explains how participants' learning experience of resorting to rote learning helped them cope with English. They became more comfortable with the language.

Another finding relates to ways in which participants learnt and retained words. MP10 and MP1 spoke about how reading extensively improved their knowledge of words and technical terms, and how this in turn helped them to re-apply the technical jargon in various contexts. Schmitt (2008) and Webb (2007) argue that reading and repeated encounters with vocabulary contribute to vocabulary enrichment. Repetition, on the other hand, may be said to

reinforce the processing of information from the working memory to the long-term memory, which in turn, developed confidence. The drive to learn and master English vocabulary led MP10 to read the dictionary and to keep separate copybooks where new words and expressions were jotted down. MP10's experience concurs with the findings of Wu (2014), whereby intentional vocabulary learning affects memorisation processes of a learner and the use of repetition helps in developing the long-term memorisation of terms and vocabulary. It may therefore be assumed that vocabulary acquisition is an important factor when education is dispensed in a language that differs from the home language of learners.

5.4.3 Teacher and school factors

Findings regarding the role of the teacher on the participants' experiences of schooling are in line with the views of Zee & Roorda (2018) and Moreira et al. (2018). This suggests that student engagement is dependent upon the relationship that they share with both teachers and the school. Active participation at school and classroom interaction promote student engagement and academic success (Quin, 2016). The teacher and the school impacted upon the participants' experiences of learning. The findings reveal a breakdown of communication between the teacher and some of the participants. Remaining silent can be interpreted as poor engagement in the light of what van Uden et al. (2014) argues is the behaviour of engaged students who participate fully in lessons and focus on tasks at hand. This is an important aspect of the learning experience related to classroom instruction that the study revealed. The finding on the use of language in class addresses a gap that is noted in the literature.

Researches have tended to look at the ways in which the teacher influences student engagement (Mainhard et al., 2017). Kibler et al. (2018) argue that the role of teachers in sustaining linguistically integrated classrooms affects students' sense of belonging in a classroom. Another factor that impeded upon the student's sense of belonging are the peer relationships that create a sense of community among students. When linked to the findings of

the study, it is seen that teacher-student as well as student-student interactions have implication for engagement of learners and their learning experiences. In the case of MP3, communication was a barrier that impacted on his level of engagement. For other participants (SP1 and SP4), the poor interaction and the inability to communicate in English led them to remain silent on class.

Limited reported research was, however, found in the literature on the question of the ways in which language of instruction in class could impact on student engagement (Montalvo et al., 2008). The classroom experiences of the participants and the interactions with the teacher and their peers relate to their feelings of being integrated or excluded in class (Hughes & Cao, 2018). Poor classroom participation or interaction would therefore imply a form of disengagement. The findings demonstrate how the teacher's interaction and attitude contributed to either alleviation of academic anxiety or to increase it (Kibler et al., 2018).

The data showed that liking or disliking the teacher influenced the engagement levels of the learners. This finding compares to that of the quantitative research conducted by Zee & Roorda (2018) on the role of shyness, anxiety and emotional problems in relation to student-teacher relationships in schools. Zee and Roorda (ibid.) suggest that students who are anxious tend to be sensitive to criticism and need to be reassured. This study shows that participants who had poor confidence and trust in their own ability were shy in class. This had implications for the behaviour of the participants. They were conscious of their poor proficiency in spoken English. This inhibited their communication and interaction in class. What stands out in the case of MP9 and MP10 is the ways in which the teacher him/herself stifled communication and increased stress levels of the participants through refusing to code switch or use the mother tongue of the learners in class. The findings confirm the importance of engaging learners and underscore the importance of the language of instruction and how it impacts on the learners' level of engagement in class.

5.4.4 Intrinsic motivation

The participants' coping strategies discussed earlier provides insights their experience of being taught in English. Individual motivational strategies were employed to regulate learning. The findings show that their experience connected to both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation to learn English. This led participants to develop language-learning strategies. The findings support the ideas of Pintrich (1999), Oxford et al. (2014) and Vandergrift (2003) on the ways in which extrinsic motivation (the desire to learn the target language for reasons separable from the learning process) and intrinsic motivation (the desire to learn the language as an end in itself because of enjoyment and challenge and interest) impact on learning experiences.

Oxford et al. (2014) who analysed strategy-related narratives from four countries refer to language learning strategies as learners' consciously chosen tools for active, self-regulated improvement of language learning. Findings from the research reflect that most of the participants apart from MP3 and SP9 consciously worked on their own self-regulated strategies to improve their English. The participants were mainly motivated by extrinsic factors. Their concern for their career and education was one of these. The findings hint at the belief that the ability to use the language in various contexts was a sign of social prestige. This was another source of extrinsic motivation for both the Seychellois and Mauritian participants.

The findings highlight a connection between self-determination (Wehmeyer et al., 2016) and self-regulated learning (Zimmerman, 2008). This is shown when the participants addressed their shortcomings in English and sought ways of dealing with these. In self-determination, the individual is responsible for triggering or making things happen in his/her life as opposed to others doing so. Self-regulation in relation to learning refers to strategies that learners use to regulate their cognition. The focus is on the self, where there are self-instructed procedures and personal beliefs and attitudes that allow learners to convert their mental abilities into academic performance. This finding helps us to understand how the participants managed their learning experiences when English was used. Self-regulated learning (Zimmerman,

2008) is a proactive practice where learners use academic skills and include goal setting and the selection and organisation of strategies to as to monitor their effectiveness. Similarly, the finding in this research shows that the participants experienced a conscious continuous effort and drive towards the execution of these personal strategies towards the realisation of their set goals (Seker, 2016).

5.5 English as an acquired taste

Surprisingly, the findings showed that despite their initial struggles with English, most of the participants developed a liking and a preference for the language. Whilst this stood as a paradox, it was interesting to see the impact of the coping strategies employed by participants and the ways in which exposure to language through society led them to cultivate a strong bond with the language. English was thus an acquired taste.

One explanation for this liking may be interpreted through perspective of Freire (2005). Participants experienced a feeling of inferiority when they were not allowed to speak their mother tongue (MP8, SP5). The feeling that the English language was superior may explain their drive for wishing “to be like” (p.155) and develop proficiency in English. This felt need to become like and to mimic (Ashcroft & Griffith, 2007; Ashcroft et al., 1995) the former coloniser, speaks of the social structures in both islands.

This may be one reason behind participants’ engagement to learn English and their developing a liking for the language. There were different levels of engagement or disengagement depending on the situations that participants faced. Svalberg (2017) interrogates ‘engagement’ in the existing literature on language learning and schooling and presents ‘Engagement with Learning’ as closely linked to the process of Language Awareness, and is either a combination of two or more of the cognitive, affective and social undertakings where the learner, as an agent, is involved in language use or learning (Svalberg, 2009; Svalberg, 2007).

The findings showed the participants' experience of the sensitivity to the role of English. Consciousness about the importance of English coupled with an understanding of personal shortcomings in the language motivated the participants to work towards regulating their learning. Self-regulation learning operated at the level of the cognitive domain with an alerted effort to learn English language and vocabulary as discussed at earlier in this chapter. This is in keeping with the Engagement with Learning model (Svalberg, 2009; 2007) and the findings denote that the participants were alert about the cognitive aspect of the medium of instruction, thus their conscious effort to change their knowledge and proficiency in the language.

Another dimension of Language Awareness (Svalberg, 2007) that the outcome of the study highlights relates to the affective domain that is the willingness of the learner to engage with language (Svalberg, 2009). This was related, as this study shows, to the school for the co-existence of several languages within the same learning environment. It is important to point out that most of the studies on Language Awareness (Tsang, 2017) have been conducted in monolingual or bilingual contexts, as opposed to this research that looks at the phenomenon within a multilingual one. It is seen that in multilingual contexts, awareness about the language in terms of emotions, was not a simple process. The acquired taste for English may be linked to awareness of cultural differences. An example of this awareness was MP8's feeling of belonging to a totally different world when he joined primary school. His feeling of alienation later metamorphosed into a motivation to learn English, which he considered to be neutral language, and a language that would help him socially and professionally. It may be said that the experience of the language of instruction influenced the participants differently. Yet, several questions remain unanswered at present on the development of liking for English. This area calls for further investigation.

Having discussed the findings the development of a taste for the language of instruction, the final section of this chapter addresses issues of identity that emerged from the data.

5.6 Language-identity relationship

Some of the participants perceived their experience of the language of instruction to be related to language and identity. At the outset of the research, the issue of identity had not been considered. It emerged from the data as an important facet of the implications of the language of instruction in relation to the mother tongue in educational settings. It also triggered thoughts about the identification of participants with the language(s) that they speak.

Most of the participants from Mauritius did not all feel a sense of pride or identity when it came to their respective mother tongues. This was not the case for the Seychellois participants. SP1, SP4 and SP1, for example, linked their identity to the language that they used in their homes. This leads to interpreting English as a borrowed language, the “other” language that lies in the realm of the educational domain and which jostled the participants’ identification with language.

Language of instruction and identity is a field that has been debated in the literature (Tollefson & Tsui, 2017). Language, culture and identity are presented as intricately connected (Rassool, 2004; Rassool, 2007a; Ratuva, 2011). This aspect of the finding has been widely discussed in various publications (Norton & Toohey, 2011). While much of the research is located in the field of second language learning the findings of the research is a reminder of the situation in diasporic multilingual small states.

5.6.1 Multiple languages and multiple identities

In the research context, multilingualism was commented upon in terms of the negotiation of languages in relation to identity. As described in the second chapter, Mauritius has a rich cultural past. Migration to the island meant that the people carried their languages with them, thus the existence of various Asian languages in the island (Bissoonauth, 2011; Bissoonauth & Offord, 2001). Language is closely linked to identity and there was, as explained by MP4, MP5, MP7 and MP8, a need to preserve the ancestral language. The mother tongue and home language stood as comfort and reassurance that was jostled through

the use of English and/or French during the initial years that the participants attended school. As regards the Seychellois participants, they had mostly Creole as mother tongue and home language and were exposed to some English.

Khattak et al. (2011) argue that learners' own fear of losing their identity or self-esteem and confidence can be a source of stress. The findings show that identity is not only linked to language but also in terms of the language of the forefathers as we may deduce in the reaction of MP8. This adds to the sensitive issue surrounding language that participants referred to in Mauritius for language symbolises, within their diasporic space, one that speaks of their past and to take the views of Hall (1996a), the language of the past is an anchor for the diasporic subject. Hence, the Seychellois participant identifies him/herself with the language of the home. This was not evident for the Mauritian participant. S/he belonged to different lands: that of the present and to that of his forefathers. Mishra (2005), diasporic researcher, explains that the homeland has a different inflection for those who belong to the community of Indian diaspora who perceive the homeland as the land of their forefathers.

5.6.2 The Seychellois' strong sense of identity

The Seychellois participants had a different perspective on their identity, which was strongly tied to their mother tongue. MP8 speaks of his identity as linked to the forefathers,

we are identity in terms of the language and of the land of our forefathers (MP8)

SP1 says

Seychellois Creole is my identity (SP1)

I think that Creole is my nationality (SP1)

Bucholtz & Hall (2005) contend that identity refers to sameness but this classification may be too rigid. Hall (2011) argues that identities are constructed within discourse and belong to a particular historical and organised

site. Speakers, as agents, produce discourses that translate their identities (Rassokha, 2010) which in turn, determine communicative behaviour.

Mills (2005) perceives native language as unique and distinct from other languages with the speakers demonstrating loyalty and emotional attachment to it through special discursive rhetoric. Based on the findings of the research, identity as spoken about by the participants, can be classified into language attitude and the participants' self-conception as a user of the language. The experience of learning, it may be concluded led to the development of an identity of linguistic positioning vis-à-vis other languages.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the themes that emerged from the findings. These include the various anxieties experienced by the participants when the language of instruction was English, learning difficulties and challenges that ensued as well as notions of motivation and un-motivation. Personal coping strategies to improve learning are analysed in this chapter. The concept of "double cognitive overload", one important finding of this study, has been presented in this chapter.

A summary of the main findings and of the principal issues and suggestions that have arisen in this discussion are provided in the next chapter, which concludes this dissertation. I reflect upon the study and present conclusions in relation to the limitations and strengths before making recommendations for practice, policy and future research.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

6.0 Introduction

In this study, the aim was to explore educational language policy on selected learning experience in Mauritius and the Seychelles, two post-colonial small developing states.

I conclude this dissertation by referring back to the original research questions. I examine the strengths and limitations of the research undertaken and present the implications of its findings. I present the contribution to new knowledge that this research makes in the field of educational language policy. Finally, I share some reflections on my research journey.

6.1 Summary of findings

The research questions which guided the study are as follows:

- How is educational language policy defined in educational policy documents?
- What are the forces that influenced language policy decisions in Mauritius and the Seychelles?
- How do those who have experienced educational language policy perceive their learning experiences?

A summary of the main findings in relation to the research questions are provided in this section.

Findings in relation to the two first research questions:

- i. There are gaps in educational language policies in Mauritius where these are not explicitly defined in policy documents as opposed to the Seychelles who have a firm stand regarding the use of the three national languages in the education system;

- ii. Decisions regarding educational language policies are influenced by the concerns for social stability since languages issues are sensitive. Mauritius opted for English, a neutral language that would not hurt the communal feelings of the various ethnic groups settled in country;
- iii. The history of both former British colonial states has led to the use of English language in administration and in education in the post-independence periods. This was motivated by the need for stability and smooth transition from the colonial to the postcolonial periods. English was maintained as a result of the lack of educational resources in the mother tongue in the post-independence period,
- iv. English enjoys a high status in both islands. This is linked to the international acceptance and use of the language. English symbolises access to commodities in the educational and economic domains. English is perceived as a necessity for it opens the doors to various opportunities. This finding stands in contradiction to those who call for greater use to be made of the first language as learners progress through the education system;
- v. One finding relates to issues of power and hegemony in relation to the English language. Several layers of hegemony were unpeeled in the language ecosystem in both contexts studied. One of these layers pertains to the presence of English, the linguistic legacy of the former coloniser that still dominates the administrative and educational spheres. Another layer of hegemony involves the need for English as it was considered the language of power and access to better economic and educational opportunities. This hegemonic layer was apparent in the educational institution ecosystem where the imposition of English by the teachers and the school, figures of authority, showed that the English was paradoxically, not a neutral language;

Findings in relation to the third research question:

- vi. Learning experiences depended on the relationship with the teachers and the language that they used in class. The use of English exclusively in class led students to be shy and withdraw from participating, as they were not able to speak English.

- vii. Learners may experience feelings of anxiety linked to the use of the English. The analysis of the emotional and psychological strains as analysed in chapter five of the study related to listening, speaking and writing anxieties. The experiences of the participants showed that they went through two different phases: initially, there was bafflement and confusion related to learning in English, and secondly an awareness of the importance of English and their developing methods to cope with both English and learning;
- viii. The stigmatisation of the mother tongue is one finding that is common in both Mauritius and the Seychelles. Some of the participants described incidents where they humiliated because of their use of the mother tongue. Yet, the findings clearly show a paradox in the participants' responses. Most of the participants accepted and developed a strong liking for English as a result of their learning experiences despite their initial dislike for the language and finding it a barrier to learning in class; and
- ix. English was perceived as a challenge to learning. However, paradoxically, the participants developed a liking for the language. They established their own coping strategies to improve on their vocabulary and proficiency in the language.

6.2 Contribution to knowledge

One key contribution of this research is the concept of “double cognitive overload”. The findings of the study build on Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1998; Sweller, 2017) to suggest that there are other levels of strain that learners may experience as a result of the language of instruction. It is seen that the participants experienced cognitive load during classroom explanations. The anxiety that they felt while listening to English impacted further on their cognitive load experience. Listening anxiety added a second loop of cognitive load, thus a double cognitive load. The challenges of processing information and technical jargon added burdened the participants' learning experience

further. This resulted in a *double cognitive overload* which participants had to manage as part of their learning experience.

6.3 Significance of the findings

I explained, in the introductory chapter to this thesis, how research emerged from professional concerns in relation to my experience as a former English teacher, later, a school leader and subsequently, my current position at Ministry level where I deal with policy formulation and the monitoring of its implementation.

The findings of my research have implications for educational language policies today. On a wider and ambitious scale, I would suggest that small islands with similar historical pasts, and with similar multilingual situations work more closely together to share their practices so that they can learn from each other. The impact of the language of instruction is felt in states where the home language and the medium of instruction differ. The case of small states such as the Seychelles may be taken as an example and the success and issues that the island faced when using English can be shared with the small-states community.

The work contributes to existing knowledge on the medium of instruction. Taken together, the findings suggest the importance of the mother tongue for facilitating learning. The experiences of the participants shed light the hurdles to learning when the teacher used only English in class. It would be advisable that the Mother Tongues of the islands be formally introduced as support languages in educational language policies in secondary schools in both islands, and in primary schools in Mauritius. It is important to address the issue of the double cognitive overload in policies that relate to pedagogies.

Teacher professional development is seen as important. At policy level, it would be desirable to include language-teaching components in any teacher preparation programme. The findings show the gap in using English as the language of instruction. Every teacher is a language teacher and pedagogical strategies to cope with technical terms are one aspect of training that needs to be addressed.

One proposal relates to the language of instruction and to the use of English as the medium of instruction in teacher education modules. The findings show that use of the mother tongue can act as a scaffold to teaching all other subjects on the curriculum. This needs attention. This would help address the issue of 'double cognitive overload', an important finding of this study. The pedagogical use of the mother tongue as a scaffold to learning when the medium of instruction is English could be envisaged in teacher education programmes.

The strand that needs significant attention is the emotional dimension and the psycho-pedagogical aspects of the use of the language of instruction. The experience of the participants shed light on the anxieties that they underwent. Early diagnosis of students who suffer language anxiety is likely, so it is important to take necessary remedial pedagogical action and provide emotional support to the student.

The present study confirms the importance of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction to facilitate teaching and learning. It however, reveals the challenges that learners may face when there is a transition between the mother tongue and English as the medium of instruction.

In order to share findings and the contributions of this study to research, I will disseminate the doctoral research outcomes at conferences and through journal articles. A summary report of the findings will be submitted to the University of Seychelles and the Government of Mauritius and Seychelles. Ideas will be shared with my colleagues at the Ministry.

6.4 Recommendations for further research work

The research has thrown up many questions in need of further investigation. One of these would be a study focusing on language anxieties at the level of primary education. The findings could potentially serve as developing early diagnosis tools to address the issue of language anxiety related to the language of instruction. These would help to inform remedial action and support for learners at a very early stage.

If the debate is moved further, better understanding of writing anxiety needs to be developed as well. The results would help teachers understand the writing block and fears that learners might face and which hamper their success in examinations.

The findings provide insights for further research in the field of policy evaluation. Considerably more work will need to be done in the area of educational policy. The experience of learners would need to be investigated as one means to understand the impact and efficiency of policy from the perspective of those who live them.

Further research regarding the role of the mother tongue in education in small states would be worthwhile. It would be important to look at the transition between the use of the mother tongue and the transition to using English or another language and its impact on learning.

6.5 Recommendations for policy

This study has implications for language policies in small states. Numerous educational policy areas need to be looked into in small states such as Mauritius and the Seychelles. A key policy priority should therefore be to make educational language policy plans that are explicit. There is therefore a definite need for Mauritius to set up clear policy regarding the language of instruction and define the stages where use of the mother tongue can be used as a facilitator. For the Seychelles where the mother tongue is used in lower primary education, the effort to sustain the mother tongue until secondary education and use it to scaffold learning should be looked into.

The findings reveal that various forms of anxieties affected the participants' experience of learning. This information could be used to develop targeted interventions aimed at reducing double cognitive overload and enhance pedagogical approaches and curriculum material to lessen this phenomenon.

6.6 Limitations of the study

This doctoral research needed to be manageable and is therefore a small-scale project. A number of limitations need to be considered. First, I have looked at the experiences of educational language policy from an overarching view within only two islands sharing similar historical and sociolinguistic patterns. There is value in studying other small states to gain further insights into the issues of educational language policy. Second, I have looked at the participants irrespective of age or time of schooling. There is scope in addressing learners according to their age groups and understanding their experiences of educational language policies accordingly. Within the framework of my doctoral research, these options did not appear plausible initially but could inform future research areas.

I acknowledge that there are certain limitations within the study itself. The conceptualisation of those who have completed their schooling has been an inclusive one. I have focused on the participants themselves as those who lived educational language policies without placing significance on their current lives and how the language policy has influenced their careers for example. This leads perhaps, to a sense of the participants as a homogenous group. For this research, I have been particularly concerned to allow the participants to talk about their experiences. Future study could allow a reworking of the data to enable alignment and deviation to be shown within, and across, specific educational language policy roles and responsibilities.

The data was collected through a process of twenty-four interviews. During the semi-structured interviews, I undertook my role with care and responsibility. Yet, I am aware that there is a double hermeneutic process at play (Cohen et al., 2011). As a researcher, I engaged in a process of interpretation from a policy actor interpreting their experiences. While I have aimed at analysing the data with integrity, I recognise that I have analysed perceptions from one moment in time for the participants. I have analysed responses that are dependent on the time of the day, determined by the specificities of time and the position of the respective participants.

6.7 Concluding note: My reflections on my research journey

My research experience creates awareness about biography and the self are important to the research being conducted (Denzin, 1989). While conducting this study, I have revisited my own assumptions about research on various occasions. I understood, through my experience, that everything defied the initial research plans since that small states were indeed fragile (my experience of having to give up the idea of going to the Fiji as a result of a typhoon) and that despite the field of study and the context being visible to me, I had to be careful when I collected data. I understood that research is a process, not just a product.

As a result of my research experience, I have become more critically self-aware. As an outsider, not as familiar with a community, I was aware that I could see what the familiar eye might have missed; but I could miss what the familiar eye could see. I realised that as a researcher, I had my own cultural 'luggage' and I needed to bracket that by being as unbiased as possible. The research was a privileged space of sharing and I had to be wary of any bias since it was easy to be absorbed by the participants' voices as they spoke about various critical incidents. I realise that I shared a space with the participants, which transgressed time and geography. While I empathised to some extent, I had to be careful not to be fully absorbed and remain unbiased while I listened to the participants during the interview sessions.

Today I have become more reflexive and question myself about how my positionality could potentially affect the observed phenomenon, the data collection process, and the dynamics of participation in both islands. I slowly became conscious of myself as a researcher and as a cultural, linguistic, ethnic and social being. The research journey has been a challenge, but the personal and professional growth has been the reward.

(Around 59,500 words)

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Appendix A: Letters to Ministries of Education

The Senior Chief Executive
Ministry of Education

Dear Sir/Madam

I would be grateful I could be granted permission to collect data from Mauritius/the Seychelles for the research I am conducting as part of my Professional Doctorate in Education with the University of Brighton.

The study's aim is to:

- Investigate language policy in two postcolonial, independent Small Island Developing State countries, namely Mauritius and the Seychelles.
- Understand how the past of both countries have shaped language policy.
- Analyse language policy documents of both countries
- Look at and explore the viewpoints of various stakeholders who have experienced language policy. Some 30 participants from the Seychelles and Mauritius will be involved in the study.

Data will be collected through one Written Reflective Exercise and two interviews. These will be scheduled and will last approximately one hour. Interviews will be conducted at a place that we would have agreed and that would be convenient to you. Interviews are likely to be audiotaped and the information will be kept on a password-protected computer. Any transcript from interviews will be archived in a secure location. Participants may have access to transcripts of your interviews and to data collected if they wish.

All information will be treated anonymously and confidentially. Data obtained from the interview will be used solely for the research project and only my tutors will have access to the thesis and data that will be analysed. Data will be disposed of after a period of three months after the completion of my doctorate.

The following documents are submitted at attachment:

- i. Testimonial from the University of Brighton
- ii. The research proposal
- iii. Letters for participants
- iv. Consent forms for participants
- v. Interview questions
- vi. Timeline for the research process

Hoping that my request will meet with favourable consideration.

Kind regards,

Chaya Surajbali-Bissoonauth

Email address: c.sb@live.com Mobile:

Appendix B: letters to participants

Date:

Dear Sir/Madam

I write to invite you to participate in a study I am conducting, as part of my Professional Doctorate in Education with the University of Brighton.

The study's aim is to:

- Investigate language policy in two postcolonial, independent Small Island Developing State countries, namely Mauritius and the Seychelles.
- Understand how the past of both countries have shaped language policy.
- Analyse language policy documents of both countries
- Look at and explore the viewpoints of various stakeholders who have experienced language policy. Some 30 participants from both the Seychelles and Mauritius will be involved in the study.

Data will be collected through one Written Reflective Exercise and two interviews. These will be scheduled and will last approximately one hour. Interviews will be conducted at a place that we would have agreed and that would be convenient to you. Interviews are likely to be audiotaped and the information will be kept on a password-protected computer. Any transcript from interviews will be archived in a secure location. You may have access to transcripts of your interviews and to data collected at any moment you wish.

All information will be treated anonymously and confidentially. Data obtained from the interview will be used solely for the research project and only my tutors will have access to the thesis and data that will be analysed. Data will be disposed of after a period of three months after the completion of my doctorate.

If you are willing to participate in the study, I will contact to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet with you for the interview session. You are not obliged to partake in this research and can, at any time, decide to withdraw from the research process.

Should you decide at any time during the interview or discussion that you no longer wish to participate, you may withdraw your consent without prejudice.

If you have any queries regarding this research project, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Attached is a copy of the *Participant Consent Form*. I shall be grateful to you to fill in and send it back to me in the event to decide to participate in the project.

Kind Regards,

Chaya Surajbali-Bissoonauth

Email address: c.sb@live.com Mobile:

Appendix C: Consent form for participants

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Name of researcher: Chaya Surajbali Bissoonauth

Mail address: c.sb@live.com

Phone number: 57531024 (mobile)

Research Tutors: Dr H. Mariaye (MIE), Dr C. Robinson (University of Brighton)

I agree to take part in this research.

The researcher has explained to my satisfaction the purpose, principles and procedures of the study and the possible risks involved.

- I have read the information sheet and I understand purpose, principles and procedures of the study and the possible risks involved.
- I am aware that I will be required to answer questions through interviews
- I understand how the data collected will be used, and that any confidential information will normally be seen by only the researchers and will not be revealed to anyone else.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without incurring consequences from doing so.
- I agree that should I withdraw from the study, the data collected up to that point may be used by the researcher for the purposes described in the information sheet.
- I understand that all data will be anonymised and at no point will participants' identity be disclosed to anyone

	Please tick	
I agree to be audio-taped	Yes	No
I would like my name to be used	Yes	No
I would prefer a pseudonym to be used instead of my name	Yes	No

Any other aspect that I wish the researcher to consider:

Name: (please print):.....

Signed:.....

Date.....

Appendix D: Written reflective exercise

Please provide the following information:

Name	
Occupation	
Country of residence	
Mother tongue	
Language(s) spoken	
Language(s) learnt at school	

1. When did I attend primary school?
2. What are the subjects that I studied at your primary school?
3. What language(s) did I use at school?
4. Any particular souvenir that I have about your primary schooling?
5. When did I attend secondary school?
6. What are the subjects that I studied at your secondary school?
7. What language(s) did I use at secondary school?
8. Any particular souvenir that I have about your secondary schooling?
9. Did I enjoy being taught in Creole/English/French? Why?
10. One particular incident that made me think about the language used is:

Appendix E: Prompts for the first interview

1. Can you tell me about yourself, who you are and what you do in life.
2. Tell me about the languages that you use daily.
3. Tell me about your schooling journey.
4. What did you study at school and after you completing your secondary schooling?
5. Tell me about your mother tongue?
6. Which languages did you use at home?
7. Did you use the mother tongue at home and at school?
8. Which language(s) did you use at school?
9. When communicating with your friends?
10. In the formal setting of classrooms?
11. As you communicated with your teachers?
12. Were these languages used formally or informally?
 - a. Can you tell me more about it?
13. In which language were you more comfortable?
 - a. For communicating with your friends?
 - b. For writing?
 - c. For studying in?
14. Tell me about your experience of formal learning through language(s) that was/were used at school.
15. How did you experience being taught in the language(s) that was/were used in schools?

Appendix F: Prompts for the second interview

1. Was the language used at school/English was helpful/not helpful?
2. If so, in what ways?
3. Can you remember any critical incident where language used in education was either helpful or where it was problematic?
 - i. Can you tell me about it?
 - ii. How did you feel about it at the time it happened?
 - iii. Can you tell me how you lived that incident?
4. Can you recall any useful aspect of language used at school?
5. Is there any less positive aspect of language used at school that you would wish to talk about?
6. Can you tell me about how ELP/ languages used at school helped/hampered your learning?
 - a. Can you tell me more about it?
7. Is there any one particular time/incident/episode that you can recall about when the language helped you or disturbed you at school/in a formal setting?
8. If you were taught in your mother tongue, do you think this would have been helpful? Can you give me your views?
9. If you were given the opportunity to influence language policy used in the field of education, is there anything you would like to preserve or to change?
10. Did learning in English/French/Creole have an impact on the ways in which you learnt learning?