



**USAGE OF THEMATIC CURRICULUM AND LITERACY LEVELS IN LOWER  
PRIMARY IN HOIMA DISTRICT IN UGANDA.  
A CASE STUDY OF PARAJWOKI COORDINATING CENTRE.**

**BY**

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## **DECLARATION**

I Baseka Hamidah, declare that this dissertation on the usage of thematic curriculum and literacy levels in lower primary in Hoima district was properly researched and written by me. Full acknowledgement is given where assistance was sought, most especially from my supervisors and where other views were quoted. It is the requirement for the award of a master's degree in institutional management and leadership of Uganda Management Institute.

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**APPROVAL**

The following research by Baseka Hamidah which was carried out under the Title: “*Usage of Thematic Curriculum and Literacy Levels in Lower Primary in Hoima District*” has been under our supervision and is ready for submission with our approval for the award of a Masters Degree in institutional Management and Leadership of Uganda Management Institute.

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## **DEDICATION**

This piece of work is dedicated to my parents Haji Juma Nsamo Mburamukoro and Mam Salimah Amooti (R.I.P), and everyone who supported me during my studies, research and subsequent writing of this dissertation.

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To the most High ALLAH, who ordained this path for me before I even knew about it and made it possible for me to undertake this journey. Thank you Great Lord for the strength, wisdom, grace and every provision I needed to make this dream a reality.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A	Agree
D	Disagree
LoLT	Language of Literacy Teaching
NAPE	National Assessment Programmes for Education
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NS	Not Sure
SA	Strongly Agree
SD	Strongly Disagree
TP	Teaching Practices
UNEBC	Uganda National Examination Board
UWEZO	Capability

## ABSTRACT

The study investigated the impact of thematic curriculum on literacy levels in lower primary in Hoima district. A case of Parajwoki coordinating centre. This was guided by the following objectives; Language policy on literacy levels, class teacher system on literacy abilities and instructional materials on literacy attainment in lower primary schools in Hoima in Uganda. The research was conducted through quantitative approach using a cross section and correlation as research designs. Data was collected using questionnaires and Interview guide, as well as review of available documents and records targeting basically, pupils, teachers, parents and head teachers as respondents from a population of 108 in primary schools. Data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science where conclusions were drawn from tables and figures.

Based on the study findings, the following were found out; 62.2% of the respondents were in total agreement that language policy used by teachers has a big impact on literacy, 27.8% of the respondents disagreed and 10% were not sure. 66.9% agreeing that class teachers systems used by the teachers enhance literacy levels. 25.1% disagreed and 8% were not sure. 65.2% of the respondents agreed that instructional materials had an influence on literacy attainment, 27.8% of the respondents disagreed and 07% were not sure.

From the study findings, it was concluded that language policy used by teachers had an effect on literacy levels. This was because the teachers were using the local languages to express their views better to pupils in simple and understandable manner. It was also concluded that the class teacher system used by teachers had an impact on literacy abilities. In the schools where various practices are employed, they bring both the teachers and pupils together and learning becomes more enjoyable and simple. The study also concludes that instructional materials impact on literacy attainment through creating group and teamwork ideologies in them. The more materials the pupils use in lessons, the better their literacy levels. The schools and the ministry should plan refresher courses to enable teachers have adequate knowledge and skills that can help to deliver content to pupils. The school should stock adequate instructional material for easy teaching practices. This will help to engage pupils in meaningful learning activities.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This study examines the usage of thematic curriculum and literacy levels of learners in the lower primary in Hoima District. It intends to look at the background of the study in different contexts such as the historical background, theoretical and contextual backgrounds, and the problem statement.

### **1.2 Background of the Study**

#### **1.2.1 Historical Background**

The goal of achieving quality education for all is far from being realized in most countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Although many children in the sub-Saharan region enrolled into primary schools during the 1990s, many left school without attaining the minimum proficiency in literacy and numeracy (World Bank, 2004). As a result, policy makers and researchers are increasingly concerned with low education quality in the era of increased education spending. They have realized that poor education outcomes can have detrimental effects on a country's economic and social development. At the individual level, low learning achievement not only limits one's progression further in school but also negatively affects an individual's future income and productivity (Hanushek and Pace, 2005). Nevertheless, the recognition of the problem of poor learning outcomes has not translated into the development of more effective actions to improve education quality.

In the past few decades, almost all sub-Saharan African countries have been involved in Educational reforms, particularly in the development of new curriculum (Chishdm and Leyendekher

2008). Often these curricula are well designed and have laudable aims to achieve. Nevertheless, in many cases their implementation has resulted in less than desirable outcomes and led to waste of considerable resources, time, and effort since well-intentioned policies were never translated into classroom reality (Rogan and Grayson, 2003).

The literature on Education reforms in developing countries has been increasingly focusing on the extent to which numerous Educational reform initiatives were rarely effectively implemented and have often failed to achieve their objectives (Higgins, 2002). There is now a common acknowledgement that policy makers need to consider and plan for the implementation stage if reforms are to be successful. Indeed policy makers need to view implementation as a crucial stage and understand all stages of reform process as interdependent, rather than as distinct from each other. Differ (1999) argues that there is an urgent need for research that focuses the implementation process in order to improve our knowledge on the actual processes of change, the potential problems and issues that can emerge, and methods of addressing them.

Ugandan primary education system is mainly based on British education system. Uganda was under British colonial rule from 1894 to 1962. Under the British rulers, some Christian missionaries started first missionary schools in Uganda in early 1890s. But education was very limited and only urban elites benefited from it (Owen, 1999). Access to education was very problematic under the colonial rule since most of the African children were denied to enroll in schools just because they were Africans. After getting independence from Britain in 1962, government immediately realized the importance of expanding the education to meet the national interests and needs. Government recognized illiteracy and ignorance as the main problems to tackle through education (Moses and Caine, 2007). Therefore improving primary education was the foremost interest since access to secondary schools required, one must attend primary school first. Ugandan government introduced several policies which helped to improve education access rapidly.

The thematic curriculum for P-1 to P-3 was designed for children who are using their first language, or a language with which they are familiar, as the medium of instruction and therefore as the language in which they first acquire literacy. The policy is followed because evidence has shown that children who first acquire literacy in their home language learn to read more quickly and efficiently than in a language they do not know or know less well. Furthermore once they have acquired literacy in one language, they can transfer easily to a second language such as English provided they first learned to speak it, (NCDC 2007).

### **1.2.2 Theoretical Background**

The theory that offered support to the research carried out was the Operant Conditioning theory which was propounded by Skinner (1982) advanced by Hanushek, (2003). It states that the learning act involves three identifiable stages. First, the stimulus or situation with which the learner is confronted, then the behavior which it elicits from the learner and thirdly, the reinforcement which follows this behavior. Such reinforcement can best be thought of by the teacher as results that follow on from the behavior elicited (Grogan,2009). The results can either be positive reinforcement or increase the likelihood of the learner producing the same kind of behavior or negative reinforcement which occurs when an unwanted response of some kind is removed.

The assumption in the operant conditioning theory is that, for any learning to take place, there must be a stimulus. Each learning experience is a stimulus that produces behavioral responses (Farrant, 2000). In this case a teacher prepares activities as stimulants in the learning process so that he / she can be able to observe and assess the behaviors of the learners. The overall objective of this paper is to understand how family background and school inputs affect children's cognitive outcomes and we use the standard education production function to investigate this relationship (Differ , 1999).



### **1.2.3 Conceptual Background**

The conceptual background rotated around usage of thematic curriculum as independent variable and literacy levels as the dependent variable. Thematic curriculum can be defined as a curriculum with content organized around themes with emphasis on competences, life skills and values across different learning areas (NCDC, 2009). According to Delizoicov, et al., (2013), a thematic approach presents a rupture in the way curricula have been elaborated, since they are strongly based on the scientific and technological contents, and organized in a rigid and systematic manner. In a dynamic domain, with a lot of contents, the thematic approach is a good criterion for helping in the selection of contents.

However, this curriculum is designed to promote and support children's development in a broad range of program types for children from birth to five years in the various early childhood institutions. Basic schools account for the largest proportion of the over 98% coverage rate among the three- to five-year-olds enrolled in pre-primary institutions. It is widely known that these basic schools cater for the country's most disadvantaged children.

Subject based curriculum in lower primary schools had subject over load and overlaps, leading to inefficient use of teaching time and failure to complete the syllabus requirements during the school year. However, the change from subject based curriculum to thematic curriculum has not given any better results but instead worsened where most of the pupils finish lower primary schools when they are not able to read and write because local languages were recommended to be used in teaching all learning areas except English.

### **1.2.4 Contextual Background**

In the previous years, before, the usage of thematic curriculum in the selected lower primary schools, children's performance level had been deteriorating. The practice of organizing thematic curriculum

activities, environments, goals, knowledge, children and teacher interests, social conditions, technologies, values and the like, into a containable pedagogical form involves a series of judgments (Kurose, & Ross, 2000). Judgments are necessarily made on what and whose knowledge is of most worth, the scope and sequence of this knowledge, how children's desire was focused, what technologies to deploy or purchase and so on (Robbins, 2003). Thematic curriculum designs lend form to, and chart provisions for, the processes of learning and teaching and become concrete and operational at various stages of educational practice. The very nature of children experiences are shaped by the way we choose to design, or not design thematic curriculum. In other words, different thematic curriculum designs provide varied qualities and powers of experience and knowledge. Thematic curriculum design might at first glance appear to be about the economics and pragmatics of teaching, about arranging content and assignments, apportioning time on timetables, and allocating resources. Thematic curriculum is, and is much more than, scope and sequence.

The thematic curriculum mainly emphasizes reading and writing in local language through the literacy hour (NCDC, 2002). It is thought that local language literacy leads to improved English. However, the local language is not suitable for the wider world, because it is only spoken in a limited geographical area and because much of the information that an upper primary child needs can only be found in a major language such as English.

It is known professionally that the ability to read is used as a tool for progressively acquiring other types of knowledge; children who fail to read in the early years will fall further behind each school year. Poorly performing children struggle to catch up and some of them simply drop out of school. Large scale data collection and assessments carried out in Uganda, including NAPE, UWEZO, MLA and EGRA painted a worrying picture about the children's reading in both Local languages and English. UWEZO (2011), found that 91% of P-3 learners could not read a P-2 level text. NAPE (2011) showed that 52% grade three pupils could not demonstrate reading proficiency in English.

EGRA (2010) revealed that 51% of P-2 pupils in central region and 82% in Lango region could not read a single word in their mother tongue; 53% of pupils in central region and 88% in Lango region could not read a word in English.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

Before thematic curriculum was brought on board in the year 2007, primary schools in Uganda were using subject based curriculum at both lower and upper primary levels. The purpose of thematic curriculum in lower primary schools is to develop the quality of life of the learners so that they can properly serve the society according to their roles and responsibilities as good citizens. To achieve the aim and improve the usage of thematic curriculum in lower primary schools, Primary Teachers' Colleges are to prepare high quality and sufficient teachers to provide quality thematic education in primary schools (Ballon and Podgursky, 2007).

Subject based curriculum in lower primary schools had subject over load and overlaps, leading to inefficient use of teaching time and failure to complete the syllabus requirements during the school year. However, the change from subject based curriculum to thematic curriculum has not given any better results in lower primary where most of the pupils finish lower primary schools when they are not able to read and write because local languages were recommended to be used in teaching all learning areas except English, (MoES 2005). Usage of local languages limits the learning of English which also brings a challenge at primary four, the transition class, where many children do not easily cope with the usage of English as a medium of instruction.

In spite of the above, little has been done on how to improve on literacy levels in the selected lower primary schools in Uganda to ensure good performance of pupils especially in reading, listening and writing. It is against this background that the researcher decided to investigate the impact of using thematic curriculum on literacy levels with reference to Bulemwa, Kitoba, Bukerenge and Kiseke

primary schools in Hoima district.

#### **1.4 The General Objective of the Study**

The general objective of the study was to investigate the impact of thematic curriculum on literacy levels in lower primary in Hoima district.

#### **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

- 1) To examine the influence of Language policy on learner's literacy levels in lower primary schools.
- 2) To establish the impact of the class teacher system on learners' literacy abilities in lower primary.
- 3) To investigate the effect of instructional materials on learners' literacy attainment in lower primary schools.

#### **1.6 Research Questions**

- 1) What is the influence of Language policy on learners' literacy levels in lower primary schools?
- 2) How does the Class teacher system impact on learners' literacy abilities in lower primary schools?
- 3) What is the influence of Instructional materials on learners' literacy attainment in lower primary schools?

#### **1.7 Hypotheses of the Study**

- 1) There is no significant influence of Language policy on learner's literacy levels in lower primary schools
- 2) There is no significant impact of Class teacher system on learners literacy abilities in lower primary schools

- 3) There is no significant influence of Instructional materials on learners' literacy attainment in lower primary schools.

## **1.8 Scope of the Study**

This section covered the boundary of research, geographical location of the case study in question, content of the study and the period of time the study intended to cover.

### **1.8.1 Geographical scope**

The study was carried out in the selected lower primary schools in Hoima district. The study was centered in different schools in Parajwoki coordinating center such as Bulemwa, Kitoba, Bukerenge and Kiseke primary schools in Hoima district. The selected primary schools were chosen because of convenience and time management during data collection.

### **1.8.2 Content Scope**

The study focused on the effect of thematic curriculum on literacy levels in lower primary in Hoima district. The study aimed at achieving the influence of Language policy on learner's reading abilities, how class teacher system impacts on learners' writing abilities and assess how instructional materials affect learners' literacy attainment in lower primary schools.

### **1.8.3 Time Scope**

The research took a periodic scope between 2014 and 2015 because it was that time so far the usage of thematic curriculum had been adopted for lower primary (NCDC, 2013). The study took the time frame of five months from June 2015 to October 2015 to complete the research dissertation. This helped the researcher to establish how the problem of literacy had evolved over time in Hoima District.

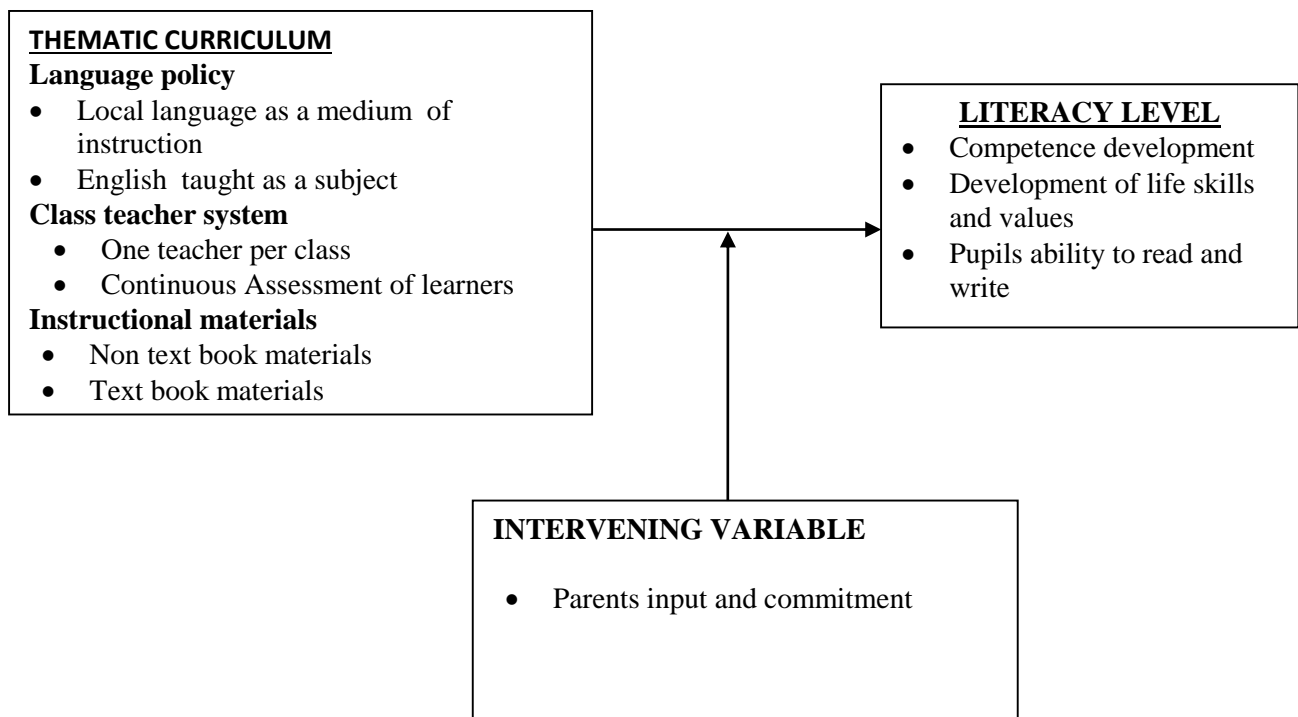
## 1.9 The Conceptual Framework:

The conceptual framework below explained the key concepts and variables used in the study and how they link and interrelate with each other while providing the final outcome of the study. The conceptual framework was based on information from literature review as shown in figure 1:

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

### INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

### DEPENDENT VARIABLE



*Source: Adopted from Musaazi, 1982 and modified by the Researcher)*

**Figure 1** above indicates the effect of thematic curriculum variable is the on the literacy levels in the lower primary section in Hoima district. The independent thematic he dependent variable is the literacy level of learners and it hinges on competence development curriculum which brings out the language policy, class teacher system and instructional materials, methods of instruction, and continuous assessment. The intervening variables include parents' input and commitment.

## **1.10 Significance of the Study**

It was anticipated that the findings and recommendations of this study would go a long way in generating the much needed information that would be used by various stakeholders in education to improve on the quality of education of their children. Through this study, the assessment results could be guideposts that would help both parents and pupils identify their areas of strength and weaknesses and make necessary adjustments to fill the gaps in their roles.

The study would help parents, educational managers and administrators, teachers, Ministry of Education and Sports officials and politicians see, recognize and appreciate the need for motivation and motivate their subordinates and children for an improved performance.

The study would also furnish policy makers, Ministry of Education and Sports, and politicians with information on parents' roles and their implications on pupils' performance; hence giving them a leeway to formulation of better policies regarding parents' roles within the education systems, based on researched information. It was also hoped to improve the level of parents' input for improved performance.

In the same vein, the study was expected to add to the existing body of knowledge and act as a stepping-stone for later researchers in similar studies. It would also help future researchers who have the quest for improving education for all the learners in primary schools in the said area of Uganda at large.

The study was intended for researchers to use in future as a source of reference for more investigation into similar academic issues in the Education sector.

The study was finally carried out to exhibit the learners' proficiency in reading, writing and numeracy in Hoima district.

### **1.11. Justification of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the usage of thematic curriculum and literacy levels in lower primary in Hoima District. Information generated would be used to provide decision-making and actions that would lead to the usage of thematic curriculum to improve on the literacy levels among children in lower primary schools.

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of Language policy on learner's reading abilities, how class teacher system could impact on learners' writing abilities and assess how instructional materials affected learners' literacy attainment in lower primary schools in Hoima district. According to the Government White Paper (1992), It has noted the capacity of many Ugandan children to learn quickly and enthusiastically when they are taught in English, even when they learn it for the first time in schools; and that children at the most malleable stage of early childhood have the capacity and desire to learn new languages especially those in urban centers. The same paper stipulates that children in rural schools should be instructed in their local languages from P-1 to P-3 because it is thought that performance of pupils will be improved especially in listening, reading and writing. This is the reason why the researcher was compelled to investigate the usage of thematic curriculum and literacy levels in lower primary in Hoima district.

### **1.12 Operational Definitions of Terms and Concepts**

**Thematic curriculum:** It is defined as a curriculum with content organized around themes with emphasis on competences, life skills and values across the different learning areas.



**Literacy:** It is defined as the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, use printed and written material. Or it is the state of being able to read and write.

**Continuous assessment:** Is the observation of children's performance of oral, practical and written activities for a specified period of time.

**The class teacher system:** Refers to a teacher managing a class without getting help from other teachers.

**Local language:** Is a language that is mostly spoken by people in a given locality or area. Or it is a language of wider communication in a given area or locality.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, literature review of the independent variable and the dependent variable was presented. Additionally, a review of past research findings on the relationship between the variables was undertaken. Literature therefore was reviewed in line with the objectives of the study.

#### **2.1 Theoretical Review**

In order to understand better the impact of thematic curriculum on literacy level in lower primary school a number of theories were used to guide the research to examine the impact of the problem under study. This research was guided by two theories as presented below:

The operant conditioning theory which was advanced by Skinner, (2012). It states that the learning act involves three identifiable stages. First the stimulus or situation with which the learner is confronted, then the behavior which it elicits from the learner and thirdly, the reinforcement which follows this behavior. Such reinforcement can best be thought of by the teacher as results that follow on from the behavior. The results can either be positive reinforcement or increase the likelihood of the learner producing the same kind of behavior or negative reinforcement which occurs when an unwanted response of some kind is removed. The assumption in the operant conditioning theory is that for any learning to take place there must be a stimulus. Each learning experience is a stimulus that produces a behavioral response (Farrant, 2000). Therefore, the theory helped to probe deeply how thematic curriculum stimulates learning and literacy levels in the pupils in lower primary.

However, the second theory was, thematic curriculum theory which was formed around aspects of five orientations to organizing thematic curriculum: academic rationalism, cognitive processes, self-

actualization, social reconstruction, and utilitarianism (Eisner and Vallance, 2014). Academic rationalists' orientations are primarily about disciplinary knowledge and cultural canons. Cognitive process orientations are primarily about intellectual reasoning skills such as problem solving. Self-actualization or personal relevance, orientations stress psychological conditions and are concerned with individuality and personal expression. Social reconstruction, generally called critical pedagogy, stresses sociological conditions, social justice and collective reform. Utilitarian orientations are primarily concerned with functional competencies, performance, procedure and instructional efficiency. Thematic curriculum designs are conceptually grounded in any one or a mix of these orientations. In 1992, a special issue of the Journal of Technology Education was published to explore each of these five designs (Herschbach and Sanders, 2012). A basic conclusion from this is that generic, neutral theoretical orientations and designs for organizing thematic curriculum simply do not exist (Beyer and Apple, 1988).

## **2.2 Related Literature**

This section reviews literature related to the respective specific objectives in this research.

### **2.2.1 The influence of Language policy on learner's literacy levels:**

In classrooms around the world, we find children engaged with Thematic Studies. Children usually enjoy the kind of learning that takes place in these ways of working, and meaning-centered teachers believe that thematic Studies are extremely effective both for integrating the curriculum and for teaching skills in context (Glewwe, *et al.*, (2001). The thematic curriculum approach consists of relating generative themes and concepts, with the themes being the starting point to elaborate the curriculum (Delizoicov, *et al.*, 2003). This process is called thematic reduction in and must be based on the fundamental concepts that allow giving a global vision of the theme.

The assimilation theory, presented by Ausubel et al. (2010), can help in this task. This educational theory describes how the children construct or acquire concepts and how these concepts are organized in their minds. For the assimilation theory, learning occurs when new information is obtained from a planned effort by the learner to link this information with some relevant concepts already existing in his/her cognitive structure. To accomplish this task, the suggestion is to start learning from the more general and comprehensive concepts and then move towards more specific ones.

Developmental studies in early childhood show that the most intensive period of speech and language development for human beings is during the first two years of life. This is a period when the brain is rapidly developing and maturing. Brain plasticity is at its highest. Language development at this age is quick if nurtured by a world rich with sounds, sights and consistent exposure to the speech and language of others. This is a critical period for speech and language development. The child at this age has the capacity to absorb any language. After this period, a child would require extensive exposure for them to become fluent and proficient in language, (Wanjohi and Susan, 2010).

The curriculum guidelines also stipulate that children should have an hour each day in which reading and writing is taught (for P1 to P3). This hour is divided up into two strands: “Literacy hour I and Literary hour II” (NCDC 2007:31). The guidelines for implementing these literacy hours are as follows: “The first hour focuses on reading, with presentations, practice, pre-reading activities and an emphasis on the sight words. The second-half focuses on pre-writing activities, drawing, labeling and developing handwriting”. Teachers are asked to ensure that the last 20 minutes of every literacy hour is devoted to writing or what NCDC (2007:31) calls “pattern practice.”

NCDC (2007:31-38) recommends six strategies or teaching procedures (TPs) for literacy development. This strategy aims at helping learners to recognize sounds, letters and pictures.

Children can do this by matching shapes or letters that are the same, finding the odd ones, and recognizing and describing pictures and shapes. Learners are also expected to match letters to words starting, for example, with the letter, writing that letter on a chalkboard, and saying the sound, then writing it out on their slates and drawing a picture of an object whose name starts with that letter. It is assumed that all these activities can enable learners to become fluent in reading in three years. In the next section of this paper, I will provide some examples of how these guidelines are actually translated into practice in different kinds of schools and classrooms.

Pre-primary education in Uganda is not compulsory (Ejuu 2012; Uganda Child Rights NGO Network 2006), but the elective nature of pre-school education has made the process of introducing children to reading rather complex. Government schools in rural areas do not have pre-primary classes while all private schools do. Children join government schools in P1 at the age of six (the official age for entry to P1) and they learn through MT (Mother Tongue) for the first three years while those who attend private schools join school at the age of three or four in pre-primary. Children in private schools attend pre-primary for two or three years before they join P1 at the age of six. Learning in private schools is introduced in English in many pre-primary classes, while those in government schools are introduced to reading in P1, in their MT, and they learn English as subject. Private schools teach MT as subject in P1 to P3 and in these three years, reading in MT is also included. In short, there is considerable variation, across the public/private sectors of schooling and between rural and urban areas, with respect to the timing for the introduction of early reading and with respect to the language used for teaching and learning at this crucial stage in a child's education.

The challenges related to reading are not only faced by learners but also by some teachers. In the 2011 assessment by the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB), teachers' reading skills were also assessed. UNEB (2011: xii) found that "pupils' weak performance in Literacy could have been due to the deficiency in the teachers' skills to teach, particularly reading, reflected by the

teachers' weak performance in Oral Reading; implying that they themselves might not have been taught reading skills." This remark implies that there are teachers in Uganda who are not fully prepared to handle the challenges involved in the teaching of reading (cf. Kyeyune 2012). As the UNEB report suggests, it is difficult for the teachers to properly manage reading when they themselves have some difficulties with reading tests.

The status of a family can have an influence on the performance of its children as observed by Obanya and Ezewu (2008) that the higher the status of a family the more likely it motivates its children to learn and perform better. They looked at this status in three ways: Level of education of parents, level of family income and parents' marital status which influences integration of language in child's learning. They defined education as acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes from parents to children. Nabbumba (2004) reports that pupils' performance and aspirations, are linked to the level of education of their parents.

### **2.3.2 The influence of Class teacher system on learners literacy abilities**

According to Case and Deaton (2009) a curriculum acts as a dynamic force in the development of young children and must be reviewed periodically to remain relevant and effective in preparing children for life in a rapidly changing world. Current early childhood curriculum practices throughout the world are increasingly influenced by new knowledge emerging from the growing body of research on brain development and early learning ,and the type of learning environments that best promote children's development and learning in ways that are age appropriate.

Ezewu (2000) argues that it is easy to assume that all human actions are directed towards the attainment of a goal or goals, but whether that goal is strategic enough to be perceived by another person is another matter. The goals of certain actions may be easily perceived while those of other actions may not. The teaching action of the teacher is expected to be strategic in the sense that it

should be easily perceivable and measurable. There are situations however, when a teaching action may not have clearly identifiable goals, but these goals are additional to the manifest consequences of the easily perceived goals.

Notwithstanding the limited data in developing countries, a number of studies have analyzed determinants of learning achievement on the African continent. For example, Case and Deaton (1999) use variations in school quality between the magisterial districts in South Africa to estimate the impact of school quality on enrollment and test score performance in thematic curriculum. Under apartheid South Africa, education resources and outcomes were differentiated by race with black households confined in homelands with no access to high quality schools. School quality is defined in terms of availability of teaching personnel, and schools with high pupil teacher ratio are considered poorly resourced. Controlling for household background variables the authors find strong and significant effects of pupil teacher ratio on test scores performance in thematic curriculum and conclude that poorly resourced schools had lower test scores.

Children could then independently construct projects on other famous inventors either closely following the structure of the model project, or diverging from that, depending on their own stage of development in such work (Hoxby, 2000). Uganda provides a good case for investigating issues of school quality for other reasons as well. First, as earlier mentioned, current policy debates casts doubt on whether supply side factors such as teachers, classrooms, and textbooks are the most important factors for improved learning achievement given the fact that increased education budgetary resources have coincided with reduced learning achievement.

In support of the above, the Government White Paper (1992) stipulates that the quality of teachers and the key roles of leadership and service delivery teachers' play in policy implementation for the Education sector is important. It further emphasizes that 'No nation can be better than the quality of

its Education and no Education system can be better than the quality of its teachers.’

Teachers are thus required to modify what they do in the classroom and to change their attitudes and practices in order to meet the specifications laid down by language-in-education policy and the curriculum (Smit, 2005). The overarching aim of this study is to ascertain how teachers manage and understand the process of transitioning from use of MT as LoLT to English as LoLT in multilingual contexts in Ugandan primary schools. Reforms involving MT instructed curricula are often challenged by stakeholders’ (including teachers’) perceptions, attitudes and practices at the implementation stage (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; Wang, 2008). This study investigates teachers’ understanding and management of the early-exit MT education model operative in Uganda in order to reveal the discrepancies and challenges that may arise between stated language-in-education policy and the practical implementation thereof in classrooms.

Reche *et al.* (2012) revealed that, majority of the head teachers check teacher’s lesson plans once a month, and that some check once a term. Head teachers should monitor lesson plan preparation frequently, otherwise it may lead to low literacy performance. The author further argues that, majority of the head teachers do not at all observe classes conducted by the teachers in a given term which may also lead to low literacy level performance. With regard to class sizes, Kraft (2014) argued that class sizes have also been identified as determinants of literacy. Schools with smaller class sizes perform better academically and in literacy than schools with larger class sizes.

Henson and Higgins (2007) study found that, teachers who are poor in the subject matter may doubt their capabilities and knowledge on literacy teaching, consequently avoid anything that accedes their knowledge. Since they are poor academically, in that situation they lack teaching skills and pupils’



motivation to learn will definitely be undermined by such teachers. They resist developing challenging activities for class and helping pupils to succeed in difficult literacy learning tasks.

### **2.3.3 The influence of Instructional materials on learner's literacy attainment**

Odaet and Bbuye (1997) defined instruction as a process whereby some human being directs and guides the growth and development of some human being towards some end or goal in life. It deals with preparing the right type of environment for the individuals to allow them physically, mentally and spiritually to develop harmoniously within themselves and together with their fellow human beings. The study conducted by Prewittz in Kenya on parents' education showed that parents' level of education is very crucial for the performance of their children because educated parents send their children to school early, in most cases at the age of five to six. Ezewu (2008) pointed out that children who join primary schools at an early age also complete their primary education early.

Medwell et al (2005) found that planning an exciting and stimulating school and classroom environment that supports and extends opportunities for English is a challenge. They continue to say that each school year teachers have the luxury of 'starting afresh,' transforming their empty classroom into an environment that promotes learning and reflects the curriculum back to the pupils. It is often helpful to create an outline of what you want. Bear in mind that the environment is for pupils to use and to learn in. They should feel at ease when they are reading, writing, discussing, exploring, touching, listening, asking questions, solving problems and making decisions. They go ahead to say that getting pupils interested in their environment also means helping them to take responsibility for feeding pets, watering plants and tidying displays, so that they develop a pride and sense of ownership over their classroom. George ( 2002) argues that for effective teaching and learning of English in schools, the relevant instructional materials should be available and be adequately used by teachers.

Ezewu (2008) asserts that educated parents provide adequate learning materials for their children, which stimulate them to learn and perform better in all subjects. These parents are concerned about their children's education/performance, which sometimes makes them coach their children themselves or appoint part-time teachers for them. They send their children to the best nursery and primary schools which serve as sure gateways to secondary and university education which in turn leads to higher educational qualification to occupy higher positions in societies.

Instructional materials are essential and significant tools needed for teaching and learning of school subjects to promote teachers' efficiency and improve students' performance. They make learning more interesting, practical, realistic and appealing. They also enable both the teachers and students to participate actively and effectively in lesson sessions. They give room for acquisition of skills and knowledge and development of self- confidence and self- actualization. Ibeneme (2000) defined teaching aids as those materials used for practical and demonstration in the class situation by students and teachers. Ikerionwu (2000) saw instructional materials as objects or devices that assist the teacher to present a lesson to the learners in a logical and manner.

Fadeiye (2005) saw instructional materials as visual and audio-visual aids, concrete or non-concrete, used by teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning activities in Social Studies. Agina-Obu (2005) submitted that instructional materials of all kinds appeal to the sense organs during teaching and learning. Isola (2010) also described instructional materials as objects or devices that assist the teachers to present their lessons logically and sequentially to the learners. Oluwag bohunmi & Abdu-Raheem (2014) acknowledged that instructional materials are such used by teachers to aid explanations and make learning of subject matter understandable to students during teaching learning process.

Ajayi & Ayodele (2001) stressed the importance of availability of instructional materials to achieving effectiveness in educational delivery and supervision in the school system. Ogbondah (2008) alerted on the gross inadequacy and underutilization of instructional materials necessary to compensate for the inadequacies of sense organs and to reinforce the capacity of dominant organs. He noted that school teachers should try their possible best in the provision of locally made materials in substitution for the standard ones to promote their lessons. Enaigbe (2009) noted that basic materials such as textbooks, chalkboard and essential equipment like computer, projector, television and video are not readily available in many schools.

Olumorin et al (2010) observed that instructional materials help teachers to teach conveniently and the learners to learn easily without any problem. They asserted that instructional materials have direct contact with all sense organs. Kochhar (2012) supported that instructional materials are very significant learning and teaching tools. He suggested the needs for teachers to find necessary materials for instruction to supplement what textbooks provide in order to broaden concepts and arouse students' interests in the subject. Abolade (2009), the advantages of instructional materials are that they are cheaper to produce, useful in teaching large number of students at a time, encourage learners to pay proper attention and enhance their interest.

### **The Summary of literature**

The above literature on thematic curriculum approach combines a thematic approach, along with the assimilation theory and concept maps. Allowing teachers and learners of computer networks to use this application in order to get some help and guidelines for their work. The application is supported by concept maps, a graphical representation of the relationships among concepts, used to model and organize the knowledge of the application domain. With the concept maps, the knowledge is organized in a hierarchical way, with the most general and comprehensive concepts on the top and

the more specific ones arranged at the bottom of the map. This organization facilitates the development of learning following a general-to-specific manner.

The thematic curriculum looks at the language policy and how the local language as a language of communication and instruction influences literacy attainment and that English is a pre-requisite for further studies. Since thematic curriculum follows the language policy as stipulated by government, this policy is not without its critics who are worried that differences in teaching between rural and urban centers have a negative effect on schools in rural communities. Some local languages up to now do not have instructional materials and lack core literature such as dictionaries, phonological and grammar books causing inadequate planning and teaching.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the study design, study population, sample and sampling techniques, data collection methods, instruments, validity, reliability, procedure and finally data analysis techniques.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The researcher used a cross-sectional survey design because the study intended to pick only some representative sample elements of the cross-section of the population (Kothari, 2004). The study was cross-sectional because it was conducted across respondents over a short period of time and it did not necessitate the researcher to make follow-ups of the respondents. The survey was also preferred because it allowed the researcher to get detailed inspection on the usage of thematic curriculum and literacy levels in lower primary in Hoima district. Quantitative and qualitative approaches were adopted. The data was collected in two forms- Primary data and secondary data. The primary data was collected from teachers, children and head teachers and a cross section of other stakeholders. The secondary data was collected to supplement the primary data. The secondary data included other peoples' research findings, instruction manuals, yearly primary school performance reports, among others.

#### **3.2 Population**

A study population is a set of individuals, objects, with common observable characteristics (Amin 2005). Sekaran (2001) defines population as a group of people, events and things of interest that the researcher wanted to investigate on. The study was carried out in Parajwoki coordinating center and in four primary schools in Hoima district. The study population composed of 4 head teachers,

16 teachers, 10 parents and 100 pupils from the four primary schools, thus the total population was 130 respondents.

### 3.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample size was determined basing on the expected outcomes of sampling process, but to be in time with acceptable research needs. This is in conformity with Krejcie and Morgan (1970) who contend that sample size larger than 30 or and less than 500 is appropriate for most studies. For this study, the sample size of 108 respondents was selected as categorized in the table below.

**Table 3.1:Study sample size from the four primary schools.**

<b>Category of</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Sample size</b>	<b>Sampling Technique</b>
Head teachers	4	4	Purposive Sampling
Teachers	20	18	purposive Sampling
Pupils	100	80	Simple random Sampling
Parents	10	10	Simple random Sampling
Grand Total	130	108	

Note: R.V.Krejcie and Morgan (1970) Determining Sample Size for Research

### 3.4 Sample Techniques Procedures

In determining the sample size, both probability and non-probability techniques were used. In probability method, the study adopted simple random sampling to avoid biasness as recommended by (Amin, 2005). In non-probability, the study used purposive sampling techniques in order to zero down to people who were critical and reliable for research.

### **3.5 Data Collection Methods**

In this section, the study used the data collection methods such as interview, questionnaires and documentary review.

#### **3.5.1 Interview**

The interview was used to categories of teachers and head teachers in selected primary schools in Hoima district in order to get clear information. This was used to uphold and supplement on the data collected from questionnaires. It was also used in order to add more information which had not been got from questionnaires and documentaries. The advantage of using interview was that, it allowed on spot explanations, adjustments and variations that can be introduced during data collection process and through respondent's incidental comments, use of facial and body expressions, tone of voice, gestures, feelings and attitudes (Amin, 2005). The study adopted this method because it gave opportunities to probe further in-depth information especially where the questions were not understood. It helped in Capturing verbal and non-verbal questions, it Kept focus during data collection, the interviewer is the one that has control over the interview and can keep the interviewee focused and on track to completion. It captured emotions and behaviors which could not be captured verbally.

#### **3.5.2. Questionnaire survey**

Amin (2005) suggests that a questionnaire is an instrument for data collection which brings out the research questions and hypotheses. The questionnaire was set using the 5-point Likert Scale, Strongly disagree, Disagree, Not Sure, Agree and Strongly Agree. Structured questions were expected to give information by way of content and purpose and it also provided multiple alternatives for ticking off the most appropriate. A questionnaire was adapted because at least all respondents were literate. It also saved time as it was easy to administer. This was used to find out other variables that might be

of interest to parents but which management of the selected lower primary schools might have thought was not possible to administer to promote privacy.

### **3.5.3 Document Review**

The researcher checked the available literature related to the study topic (Sekaran, 2001). These included documents from District Education reports of Hoima district, text books, reports, journals to get required data for the study and documents from Ministry of Education that concerned with the role of thematic curriculum on literacy level. The advantages in conducting documentary research were that, the researcher had access to information that was difficult to get from people in a formal research interview. It helped the researcher in the collection of data over a longer period of time as well as larger samples than might have been collected from questionnaires or interviews. It also helped the researcher to collect some documents that contained spontaneous information, such as feelings and referred to actions that were recorded in a specific context, not with a view to answering a particular research question.

### **3.6 Data Collection Instruments**

These were the tools used to collect the data from the field. In this study the researcher used the interview guide and the self-administered questionnaires.

#### **3.6.1 Questionnaires**

A questionnaire is a carefully designed instrument for collecting data in accordance with the specifications of the research questions and hypotheses (Amin, 2005). Questionnaires had open ended and close ended questions. The study used questionnaires because it could gather large amount of information within a short period of time. A five point Likert scale questionnaire was used to



measure the responses on the usage of thematic curriculum and literacy levels in lower primary schools.

### **3.6.2 Interview Guide**

An interview guide is an oral questionnaire where the researcher gathers data through direct verbal interactions with the respondent (Kothari, 2004). The oral questions were open ended and close ended. The study used interview guide because it gives room for probing and making clarifications. Both structured and unstructured questions helped to carry out face to face interview with the respondents. The interview guide allowed for probing and extracting other unknown information, and getting exactly what the respondent meant.

### **3.6.3 Documentary guide**

These are lists of documents that the study consulted in order to get relevant data for the study. It helped the study to verify facts especially during data collection (Sekaran, 2001). A documentary review guide helped the researcher to have extract materials on thematic curriculum to help elaborate and analyse data from the field.

## **3.7 Quality Control**

Research instruments had to be pre-tested to ensure validity and reliability of the study. According to Amin (2005), pre-test ensures the validity of appropriate instrument and reliability refers to consistency in measuring whether what is being measured is what was intended.

### **3.7.1 Validity of Instruments**

Vogt (2007: 117) defines validity as —the truth or accuracy of the research. Saunders et al (2009) add that it is the extent to which the data collection instrument measures as well as the appropriateness of the measures coming to accurate conclusions. Validity tests were conducted for

content, criterion and construct validity to test how well the instrument represented, captured relationships between the variables as well as measured concepts (Saunders et al, 2009; Vogt, 2007; and Sekaran & Bougie, (2010). This study utilized triangulation to ensure validity of research findings prior to the administration of the research instruments. This instrument was checked by experts including the supervisors of the researcher. Content validity ratio was used to calculate the Content Validity Index, using the formula below:

$$CVI = \frac{\text{Total Number of items rated by all respondents (61 items)}}{\text{Total Number of items in the Instrument (82 items)}}$$

$$\text{Total Number of items in the Instrument (82 items)}$$

$$CVI=61/82$$

$$CVI = 0.74$$

A content validity index of 0.7 and above, according to Amin (2005) qualified the instrument for the study.

### **3.7.2 Reliability of instruments.**

Reliability is defined by Vogt (2007) as the consistency of either measurement or design to give the same conclusions if used at different times or by different scholars. The first step in ensuring reliability was providing clear operational definitions of the variables under study. Thereafter, internal consistency was measured through internal consistency reliability Sekaran & (2010) as well as split-half reliability using Cronbach's alpha. If R2 (Alpha) value equaled to 0.7 and above, then the instrument was considered satisfactory (Cronbach, 1951; and Sekaran and Bougie, (2010). After the data collection, reliability analysis was done and the findings for each of the variables are presented in the table

**Table 3.2: Reliability of Statistics**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>No. of Items</b>	<b>Alpha</b>
Language policy	25	0.74
Class teacher system	18	0.89
Instructional materials	18	0.77
Employee Performance	13	0.83
<b>Overall</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>0.88</b>

From Table 3.2 above, the overall reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was 0.88. Class teacher system seemed to have had the most reliable items but, generally, all the items in the questionnaire were reliable. This implies that the instrument was reliable for use in data collection.

### **3.8 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative techniques for data analysis. Quantitative analysis was used in interpreting numerical data while qualitative analysis was used in interpreting non- numerical data.

#### **3.8.1 Analysis of Quantitative Data**

In quantitative technique, questionnaires were administered and data was coded, sorted, categorized and fed into the computer using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (Kothari, 2004). Data was analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation. Correlation analysis was also used to show the relationship between variables. Pearson's correlation coefficient and the significance levels were used to test the hypotheses at the 99% and 95% confidence levels in the correlation analysis. A positive correlation implied positive relationships between variables while a negative correlation implied negative relationships.

### **3.8.2 Analysis of Qualitative Data**

In qualitative analysis, the researcher used the content analysis technique to analyse data (Amin, 2005). This technique involved first; conducting face to face sessions between key informants where all conversations were recorded in a book. Thereafter, all interview content was reviewed and only extracts with relevance to the study was presented in a narrative statement or themes, placed in quotes and was used to supplement the quantitative data that was obtained from the questionnaires. Interview questions were arranged according to objectives and content scope. They were interpreted and explained.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

Ethics is a moral philosophy which deals with one's conduct and serves as a guide to one's behavior (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The researcher did not take the study as a personal gain with negative effects on others; they were considered people of integrity. Permission was sought from the participants before getting information from them through questionnaires and interviews. The study also took into account other ethical issues like plagiarism and fraud. To avoid plagiarism, the researcher acknowledged all the work of others which was consulted or reviewed in relation to this study. This was done by quoting the authors and the year of the literature that was used. Fraud refers to a situation where the researcher fakes data (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The study also protected the identity of the respondents in order to avoid being misquoted by others. Confidentiality of all data and privacy of individuals contacted in this study was kept. Participant's names were not quoted in this report. It also took into account physical or psychological damage that arose due to inappropriate questions or conduct from the research respondents (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents data analysis, presentation and interpretation. The main objective of the study was to investigate the usage of thematic curriculum and literacy levels in lower primary taking lower primary schools under Parajwoki coordinating Centre in Hoima district as a case study. The study intended to examine the influence of Language policy on learners' reading abilities, establish the impact of the class teacher system on learners' writing abilities and investigate the effect of instructional materials on learners' literacy attainment in lower primary schools. The study targeted a sample of 108 respondents who comprised of head teachers, teachers, pupils and parents of Bulemwa, Kitoba, Bukerenge and Kiseke primary schools in Hoima district.

#### 4.1 Response Rate

From the study, out of the 130 questionnaires distributed to the targeted sample, 108 responses were received, and these constitute the realized sample. The total response rate was 83%. Additionally, face-to-face interviews were conducted with randomly selected respondents.

**Table 4.1: Questionnaire response rate**

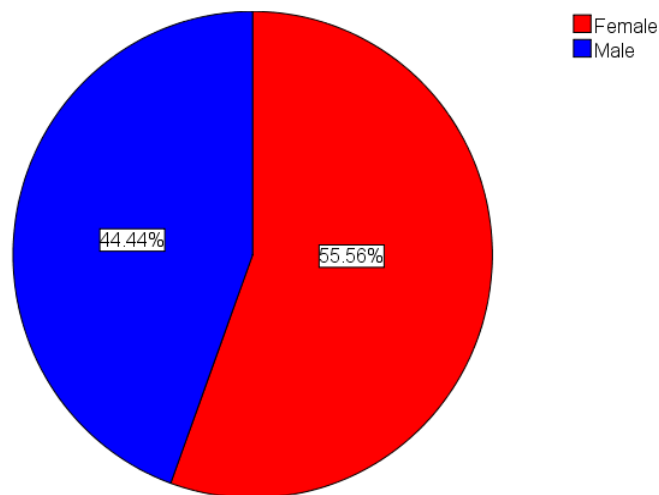
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>%AGE</b>
Number of questionnaires Sent	130	100
Number of questionnaires Not Returned	5	3.8
Non-qualifying questionnaires	17	13.1
Total realized sample	108	83.1
<b>Response Rate</b>	108 out of 130	83.1.

*Source: Field Findings 2016*

## 4.2 Social Demographic characteristics of the Respondents

The first part of the data presentation was social demography of the respondents. This included aspects of sex of respondents, the class the pupils under study were in, and the language pupil used in class in the selected primary schools in Hoima district. This data was presented, beginning with “gender”.

### 4.2.1 Sex of the Respondents



**Figure 2: Showing Sex of the respondents**

*Source: Research Findings 2016*

According to the findings of this study, out of a total number of 108 respondents, 55.56% were female while 44.44% were male. This shows that the schools under Parajwoki Coordinating Centre admitted or enrolled more girls than boys in lower primary. During the study, though there were boys in the selected primary school, girls were the most common pupils utilizing thematic curriculum in Hoima district. Although females were more than males the study was free from bias. This further indicates that in the villages surrounding the schools, the population of females was more than that of males

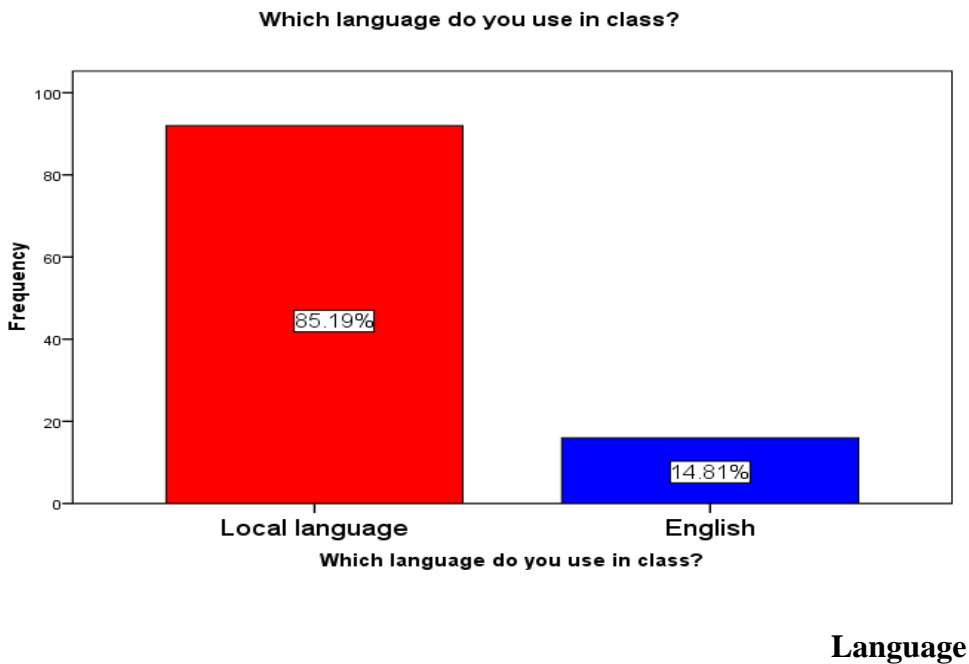
#### 4.2.2 The class which pupils under the study were in

**Table 3.2: Showing the class which pupils under the study were in.**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
P1-P2	62	57.4	57.4
P3-P4	46	42.6	100.0
Total	108	100.0	

*Source: Research Findings 2016*

The study finding in Table 4.1 shows that the majority of the respondents (57.4%) were pupils in P1-P2 while 42.6% were pupils from P3-P4.



**Figure 3: The Language used by Pupils in Lower Primary classes**

*Source: Research Findings 2016*

The study findings presented in figure 3 show that majority (85.19%) of the respondents agreed that in an attempt to use the thematic curriculum and develop literacy levels in lower primary in Hoima district, most of the schools under Parajwoki Coordinating Centre were using Local Language while 14.81% were using English in communication and teaching. This implies that in Hoima district, most teachers in lower primary were using Local Language when giving instructions or teaching as per the language policy. Therefore, Runyoro-Rutooro was the language mostly used by teachers and pupils for both teaching and communication in lower primary in Hoima district. This indicates that it was easy for the pupils to grasp the subject content since it could be translated into their local language which they were versed with. However, English as a key subject was not used for communication and instruction and therefore learners were not well prepared for the transition class where they were going to have all the instruction in English except their local language.

#### **4.3 The Influence of Language Policy on literacy levels in Lower Primary Schools.**

This first objective was to investigate the influence of Language Policy on learner's reading abilities in lower primary schools. The descriptive statistics below show the different opinions on the usage of thematic curriculum and literacy levels in lower primary under Parajwoki Coordinating Centre in Hoima district. The descriptive statistics in table 4.2 below shows the response on the influence of Language policy on learner's reading abilities basing on the rating of each question on each questionnaire; Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Not Sure, Agree and Strongly Agree. Frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were computed using SPSS and the results shown in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.3: Showing the influence of Language policy on literacy levels in lower primary schools.**

		SD		D		NS		A		SA		Me an	Std. Dev
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		



1	My school uses local language as a medium of instruction in lower primary	0	00%	3	2.8%	2	1.9%	64	59.3%	39	36.1%	4.7	.64
2	Some lessons are taught in English	3	2.8%	14	13.0%	0	00%	53	49.1%	38	35.2%	4.2	0.06
3	Class teacher uses demonstration in teaching	2	1.9%	8	7.4%	4	3.7%	37	34.3%	57	52.8%	4.6	.97
4	The language used in schools is understood by all children	0	00%	4	3.7%	1	.9%	45	41.7%	58	53.7%	4.5	.70
5	The learning areas draw connections from the real world	3	2.8%	4	3.7%	10	9.3%	50	46.3%	41	38.0%	3.8	.93
6	English is only taught as a learning area in some lessons	2	1.9%	5	4.6%	10	9.3%	56	51.9%	35	32.4%	4.2	.88
7	Thematic unit consists of facts, sub themes and a theme	1	.9%	3	2.8%	7	6.5%	61	56.5%	36	33.3%	4.6	.75
8	Thematic approach is one of the integrated approaches	17	15.7%	50	46.3%	25	23.1%	13	12.0%	3	2.8%	2.4	2.98
9	Pupils involve actively in thematic approach	5	4.6%	10	9.3%	15	13.9%	36	33.3%	42	38.9%	3.5	1.14
10	Pupils find it easy when English is used as medium of instruction	24	22.2%	54	50.0%	9	8.3%	8	7.4%	13	12.0%	2.62	2.25

**Source: Research Findings 2016**

The results of the study were interpreted by regarding responses with mean close to 1 as Strongly Disagree, 2 as Disagree, 3 as Not Sure, 4 as Agree and 5 as Strongly Agree. The study result in Table 4.2 show that majority of the respondents agreed with the statements that in attempt to utilize thematic curriculum and literacy levels in the lower primary, the primary schools under Parajwoki Coordinating Centre use local language policy to teach, interpret and communicate to pupils at

school. When asked whether the school used local language as a medium of instruction in lower primary, majority 59.3% of the respondents agreed with a mean of 4.7. The study also revealed that 36.1% strongly agreed, 1.9% were not sure, 2.8% disagreed and none of the respondents strongly disagreed. The findings show that local language was used as a medium of instruction in lower primary which was also obviously the language of communication.

Similar response where majority 49.1% of the respondents agreed that some lessons were taught in English in primary schools under Parajwoki Coordinating Centre with a mean of 4.2 The study also revealed that, 35.2% of the respondents strongly agreed, 13.0% disagreed, and 2.8% strongly disagreed. This was as a result of the fact that English language was one of the learning areas under thematic curriculum. Out of the six lessons per day in five days, English would be given thirty minutes which was a very small percentage.

The result indicates that majority 52% of the respondents strongly agreed that class teachers in the selected schools were using demonstration in teaching with a mean of 4.6. The study also revealed that, 34.3% of the respondents agreed, 3.7% were not sure, and 7.4% and 1.9% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively.

From the study, the results point out that 53.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that, the language used in schools was understood by all children with a mean of 4.5. Others were 41.7% agreed, 5.3% were not sure and only 3.7% disagreed. Runyoro-Rutooro was the language used by most schools which was familiar to the learners since it was their mother tongue.

Furthermore, 46.3% of the respondents agreed that, the learning areas drew connections from the real world with a mean of 3.8. It was also revealed that, 38.0% strongly agreed, 9.3% were not sure, 3.7% disagreed and only 2.8% strongly disagreed to the facts. This showed that the content taught under thematic curriculum related much with learners' environment and experience.

The respondents were further asked to state whether English was only taught as a learning area in some lessons. The findings of this study show that 51.9% of the respondents agreed that, English was only taught as a learning area in some lessons with a mean of 4.2. Though others strongly agreed, that is 32.1%, 9.3% were not sure, 4.6% disagreed and only 1.9% strongly disagreed.

However, it was not given the practice it deserved since it was not used in daily communication.

The result point out that 56.5% of the respondents agreed that, thematic unit consists of a theme, sub themes and facts with a mean of 4.2. In addition, the study also indicated that, .9% strongly disagreed, 2.8% disagreed, 6.5% were not sure and 33.3% strongly agreed. That was how the thematic curriculum was structured.

It was equally important to find out whether thematic approach was one of the integrated approaches. From the study, 46.3% of the respondents agreed that thematic approach was one of the integrated approaches with a mean of 4.6. The result also indicated that, 15.7% strongly disagreed, 23.1% were not sure, 12.0% agreed and only 2.8 strongly agreed to the fact. The findings showed that the respondent did understand the meaning of integration as the curriculum had different strands embedded in it.

Respondents were asked to tell whether pupils found it easy when English was used as medium of instruction. The result revealed that 50.0% of the respondents disagreed that pupils found it easy when English was used as medium of instruction with a mean of 2.4. The study also revealed that, 22.2% strongly disagreed, 8.3% were not sure, 7.4%4% agreed and only 12.0% strongly agreed to the fact. This implies that learners could not understand when taught in English because they did not know the language well and were not familiar with it.

However, in general, the respondents agreed that, the selected schools were using local language as a medium of instruction in lower primary, class teachers used demonstration in teaching, the

language used in schools was understood by all children, the learning areas drew connections from the real world, English was only taught as a learning area in some lessons, pupils involved actively in thematic approach, thematic approach engaged hands-on activities, English and local language were used in p.4 class for instruction, and teachers could interpret questions for their pupils at p4 level. Refer to table 4.3 above.

#### **4.2.1 Language Policy Cross Tabulation**

The table 4.3 below shows the respondent's views and opinions in line with Language policy and learners' reading abilities in selected primary schools. The data was collected using questionnaires and key informants of the interview. However, the Likert scale was used in ranking the data ranging from 1-5, with 5 indicating strongly agree, 4 agree, 3 not sure, 2 disagree and 1 strongly disagree. Agree was combined with strongly agree to form an agreement side and strongly disagree was combined with disagree to constitute the disagreement side. This was the case with all the dependent and independent variables as seen in table 4.3 below.

**Table 4.4: Cross Tabulation between Language Policy and literacy levels**

			Learner's reading abilities		Total
			Strongly Disagree / Disagree	Strongly Agree / Agree	
Language Policy	Strongly Disagree / Disagree	Count	11	17	28
		% within Learner's reading abilities	22.2%	28.4%	25.9%
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Count	37	43	80
		% within Learner's reading abilities	77.8%	71.6%	74.1%
Total	Count		48	60	108
	% within Learner's reading abilities		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Source: Research Findings 2016**

From Table 4.4 above, out of 108 population sample, 11 respondents (22.2%) strongly disagreed/disagreed that Language policy does not influence learner's reading abilities. However, 37 respondents (77.8%) strongly agreed/agreed that Language policy influenced learner's reading abilities. Comparing the percentages by subtracting strongly Agree/Agree from strongly Disagree/Disagree, 55.6% strongly agreed/agreed that language policy influenced learner's reading abilities and the total of 77.8% and 22.2% was 100% as shown above in the table 4.3.

Out of the 108 population, 17 responded to the key informants' interview (28.4%) strongly disagreed/disagreed that Language policy does not influence learner's reading abilities. In addition, however, 43 respondents (71.6%) strongly agreed/agreed that Language policy influenced learner's reading abilities. Thus majority of the respondents strongly Agreed/Agreed that Language policy influence learner's reading abilities. This indicates that learners could find it easy reading words and texts written in their local language.

#### 4.4 The impact of the class teacher system on literacy abilities in lower primary.

The second objective was to establish the impact of the class teacher system on learners' writing abilities in lower primary. The descriptive statistics below demonstrate the response as rated on each question and on each questionnaire where Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Not Sure, Agree and Strongly Agree were ranked from 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Where frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were generated using SPSS and the results shown in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5: Showing the impact of the class teacher system on literacy abilities in lower primary.**

	SD		D		NS		A				Mean	Std. Dev,
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
The school has only one teacher per class in lower primary.	4	3.7%	11	10.2%	14	13.0%	54	50.0%	25	23.1%	3.6	1.03
Children are taught in different languages by different teachers	31	28.7%	58	53.7%	5	4.6%	5	4.6%	9	8.3%	2.9	1.12
The school combines children when teaching them the local language they know.	32	29.6%	52	48.1%	8	7.4%	11	10.2%	5	4.6%	2.9	1.09
Children have choice in what they learn- topic choice.	27	25.0%	49	45.4%	23	21.3%	6	5.6%	3	2.8%	2.8	1.96
Teachers utilize collaborative and cooperative learning	4	3.7%	6	5.6%	23	21.3%	42	38.9%	33	30.6%	3.8	1.03
Teachers and children share the same learning goals.	4	3.7%	7	6.5%	8	7.4%	46	42.6%	43	39.8%	4.3	.91
Teachers give pupils opportunity to	25	23.1%	53	49.1%	23	21.3%	5	4.6%	2	1.9%	2.4	1.89

working dependently.													
Teaching and developing instructional materials need a lot of time and creativity	5	4.6%	25	23.1%	11	10.2%	19	17.6%	48	44.4%	2.9	1.35	
Teachers give pupils meaningful learning experience.	2	1.9%	4	3.7%	7	6.5%	37	34.3%	58	53.7%	4.7	.89	
Teacher and pupils get involved in thematic lessons.	2	1.9%	4	3.7%	7	6.5%	58	53.7%	37	34.3%	4.3	.84	
Pupils can read texts written in their local language.	5	4.6%	7	6.5%	10	9.3%	40	37.0%	46	42.6%	3.9	.89	
Pupils can interpret and answer questions in their local language.	11	10.2%	11	10.2%	26	24.1%	36	33.3%	24	22.2%	2.7	2.17	
Pupils can read text written in English.	13	12.0%	45	41.7%	24	22.2%	13	12.0%	13	12.0%	2.9	1.19	
Grand mean													

**Source: Research Findings 2016**

From the above table 4.5 the means for the thirteen questions were used to test the results regarding the impact of the class teacher system on learners' writing abilities in lower primary. The responses were given in relation to the five scale Likert ranking from 1 as Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 as Disagree (D), 3 as Not Sure (NS), 4 as Agree and 5 as Strongly Agree

Respondents were asked to state whether the school had only one teacher per class in lower primary. The majority, 50.0% of the respondents agreed with an average of 3.6. Others who strongly agreed were 23.1%, 13.0% were not sure, 10.2% disagreed, and 3.7% strongly disagreed. This is an

indication that learners could sometimes not get the required content in case the class teacher felt weak or was absent.

The respondents were also asked to indicate whether: children were taught in different languages by different teachers, the school combined children when teaching them the local language they knew and whether children had choice in what they learnt- topic choice. The findings of this survey revealed that, 53.7%, 48.1% and 45.4% of the respondents were not with a mean of 2.9, 3.8796 and 3.8426 which indicates that the respondents were not sure whether the above mentioned were practiced in the selected lower primary schools. Refer to table 4.5.

The result indicated that, 38.9% and 42.6% of the respondents agreed that, teachers utilized collaborative and cooperative learning and teachers and children shared the same learning goals with a mean of 2.9 and 2.8 respectively. Other responses were 30.6% and 39.8% strongly Agree, 21.3% and 7.4% Not sure, 5.6% and 6.5% disagreed, and 3.7% and 3.7% strongly disagreed respectively see table 4.4.

From the study, table 4.4 further indicates that, 44.4% and 53.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that, teaching and developing instructional materials needed a lot of creativity and teachers gave pupils meaningful learning experience with a mean of 3.8 and 4.3 respectively. The result also revealed that, 17.6% and 34.3% agreed, 10.2% and 6.5% were not sure, 23.1% and 3.7% disagreed and 4.6% and 1.9% strongly disagreed.

From table 4.4 above, the result indicated that, 33.3% of the respondents agreed that; Pupils can interpret and answer questions in their local language with the mean of 2.8 which however indicated that the respondents agreed. In the same vein, 22.2% also strongly agreed, but 24.1% were not sure, 10.2% disagreed and 10.2% strongly disagreed. This implies that not all learners could interpret the question in their Local languages and that children learn at different paces.



Last but not least, the study indicates that, 49.1% and 41.7% of the respondents disagreed that, teachers gave pupils opportunity to be independent and pupils could read texts written in English with a mean of 3.9 and 2.7 respectively. This is an indication that pupils in the selected lower primary schools learn, read and write according to the instructions of their teachers. It means that it is always the teacher's duty to guide and direct all learning activities that are planned for each school day. This is according to the five Likert scales ranking of agree and disagree. From the study, it was also revealed that, 1.9% and 12.0% strongly agreed, 4.6% and 12.0% agreed, 21.3% and 22.2%, not sure, and 23.1% and 12.0% 4.6% strongly disagreed respectively. Refer to table 4.5 still.

In general, the response on the impact of the class teacher system on learners' writing abilities in the selected lower primary schools was good. This is confirmed in table 4.5 where majority of the respondents agreed with the statements that, the school had only one teacher per class in lower primary, teachers utilized collaborative and cooperative learning, teachers and children shared the same learning goals with pupils, teaching and developing instructional materials needed a lot of creativity, teachers gave pupils meaningful learning experiences, pupils could read texts written in their local language and interpret and answer questions in their local language. Although some respondents were not sure whether children were taught in different languages by different teachers, each class was taught by one teacher and Local language was used for instruction. Children did not have a choice in what they learnt that is topic choice. Finally in the study there was total disagreement that, teachers gave pupils opportunity to be independent and that pupils could read texts written in English as shown in table 4.5.

**Table 4.6: Cross Tabulation between Class teacher system and literacy abilities**

		Learners' writing abilities			
			Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Total
Class teacher system & Selection	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Count	17	27	44
		% within Learners' writing abilities	42.5%	39.7%	40.7%
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Count	23	41	64
		% within Learners' writing abilities	57.5%	60.3%	59.2%
Total		Count	40	68	108
		% within Learners' writing abilities	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Source: Research Findings 2016*

The result on cross tabulation between class teacher system and learners' writing abilities indicated that, out of 108 population sample, 17 respondents (42.5%) strongly disagreed/disagreed that class teacher system management could not affect Learners' writing abilities. However, 23 respondents (57.5%) strongly agreed/agreed that class teacher system and management affected Learners' writing abilities. Comparing the percentages by subtracting strongly Agree/Agree from strongly Disagree/Disagree 15 % strongly disagreed/disagreed that class teacher system affected learners' writing abilities and the total of 40.7% and 52.3% was 100% as shown above in the table.

The study also revealed Out 108 population sample, 27 respondents (39.7%) strongly disagreed /disagreed that class teacher system did not affect Learners' writing abilities. However, 41 respondents (60.3%) strongly agreed/ agreed that class teacher system affected Learners' writing abilities. Thus majority of the respondents strongly agreed/agreed that Class teacher system in the selected lower primary schools affected Learners' writing abilities.

#### 4.5 The effect of instructional materials on learners' literacy attainment in lower primary schools.

This third objective was to investigate the effect of instructional materials on learners' literacy attainment in lower primary schools. The descriptive statistics and opinions on the effect of instructional materials on learners' literacy attainment in in table 4.7 below shows the number, percentage, mean and standard deviation of respondents' views the selected lower primary schools in Hoima district.

**Table 4.7: Showing the effect of instructional material on learners' literacy attainment in lower primary schools.**

	SD		D		NS		A		SA		Mean	Std. Dev,
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Teachers use various teaching techniques	6	5.6%	10	9.3%	9	8.3%	51	47.2%	32	29.6%	3.89	1.11
Teachers encourage pupils to give ideas	3	2.8%	7	6.5%	16	14.8%	32	29.6%	50	46.3%	3.76	1.05
Teachers make reflection after teaching sessions	5	4.6%	9	8.3%	22	20.4%	37	34.3%	35	32.4%	2.85	1.35
Teachers conclude the lessons presented	4	3.7%	9	5.6%	15	13.9%	45	41.7%	38	35.2%	2.99	1.02
Teachers encourage pupils to think creatively	6	12.0%	13	5.6%	10	9.3%	46	42.6%	33	30.6%	2.65	1.16
Teachers prepare various instructional materials to use in teaching	19	17.6%	68	63%	10	9.3%	8	7.4%	3	2.8%	2.14	1.89
Instructional materials are provided adequately by MOES	25	23.1%	52	48.1%	21	19.4%	7	6.5%	3	2.8%	2.11	1.95
Teachers find it easy to translate materials written	24	22.2%	41	38.0%	26	24.1%	9	8.3%	8	7.4%	2.40	1.44

in English into local language.												
Thematic classrooms are well displayed with materials and therefore conducive to learning	24	22.2%	51	47.2%	17	15.7%	7	6.5%	9	8.3%	2.31	1.14

*Source: Field research 2016*

From the above table 4.7, the response for nine questions we used to test for the effect of instructional materials on learners' literacy attainment show positive response after each questions had been measured against the five points Likert scale, where all the nine questions translate to an agreement to the positive statement in relations to five point Likert scale ranking of 1=Strongly Disagree (SD), 2= Disagree (D), 3=Not Sure (N), 4= Agree (A) and 5=.Strongly Agree (SA).

Respondents were also asked to state whether teachers in the selected lower primary schools used various teaching techniques, majority 47.2% of the respondents agreed with a mean of 3.89. The study also disclosed that, 29.6% strongly agreed with the statement, 9.3% disagreed and 8.3% were not sure whether teachers in the selected lower primary school use various teaching techniques or not.

Furthermore, respondents were asked to tell whether teachers encouraged pupils to give ideas. The findings of the study revealed that 46.3% of the respondents strongly agreed with a mean of 3.76 implying that they strongly agreed basing on Likert scaling statements. In addition the study revealed that, 29.6% of the respondents agreed with the statement and 14.8% were not sure, whether teachers of Bulemwa, Kitoba, Bukerenge and Kiseke primary schools encouraged pupils to give ideas in Hoima district

When respondents were asked to indicate whether Teachers in Bulemwa, Kitoba, Bukerenge and

Kiseke primary schools made reflection after teaching sessions, out of 108 population sample, 34.3% of the respondents agreed with a mean of 2.85. Others were 32.4% who strongly agreed with the statement, 8.3% disagreed and 3.6% were not sure whether teachers made reflection after teaching sessions.

The study indicates that, 41.7% of the respondents agreed that; teachers in the selected lower primary schools concluded the lessons presented with a mean of 2.99 which indicates that the respondents agreed with the fact as exposed in the five point Likert scale ranking. It was also revealed that, 35.2% strongly agreed, 13.9% were not sure and 5.6% and 3.7% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. This showed that some teachers were fully committed to their work as expected.

Furthermore, the respondents were asked to state whether teachers encouraged pupils to think creatively and that teachers planned various activities to attract pupils using a five point Likert scale. Table 4.6 further indicates that, 42.6% and 63.0% of the respondents disagreed that, teachers in the selected lower primary schools encouraged pupils to think creatively and that they planned various activities to attract pupils, with a mean of 2.65 and 2.14 respectively. The results also revealed that, 30.6% and 17.6% strongly agree, 9.3% and similar 9.3% were not sure, 12.0% and 7.4% disagreed and only 5.6% and 2.8% strongly disagreed to that issue.

The result indicates that, 47.2% of the respondents agreed that, teaching approach is learners centered with the mean of 2.11 which indicates that the respondents agreed. The study also the revealed that, 22.2% strongly agreed, 15.7% were not sure, 6.5% disagreed, and 8.3% strongly disagreed see table 4.6.

In general, the results indicate that, respondents agreed to four questions out of nine in an attempt to investigate the effect of instructional materials on learners' literacy attainment in lower primary schools. The respondents agreed that teachers use various teaching techniques, teachers make

reflection after teaching session, teachers conclude the lessons presented, teachers encourage pupils to think creatively, teachers plan various activities to attract pupils and that planning learning activities involves hands-on see table 4.7.

However, they disagreed that teachers prepare various instructional materials to use in teaching every lesson, instructional materials are adequately provided by Ministry of Education And Sports, materials used to teach are of high quality and that thematic classrooms are well displayed with materials and therefore conducive to learning.

Some teachers said that although they knew good materials existed, finding them was difficult and time consuming. Others indicated that while they knew good materials existed, they did not have funds to purchase them. Half of the respondents indicated that they use IMS they develop on their own.

**Table 4.8: Cross Tabulation between Instructional Materials and Learners’ Literacy Attainment**

				Learners’ literacy attainment		
				Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Total
Human Resource Training	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Count	33	25	39	
		% within Learners’ literacy attainment	62.1%	35.2%	20.0%	
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Count	14	46	79	
		% within Learners’ literacy attainment	37.8%	64.8%	73.1%	
Total		Count	37	71	108	
		% within Learners’ literacy attainment	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

*Source: primary data*

Table 4.8 above, out of 108 populations, 33 respondents (62.1%) strongly disagreed/disagreed that Instructional Materials do not affect learners' literacy attainment. However, 14 respondents (37.8%) strongly agreed/agreed that Instructional Materials affect learners' literacy attainment.

Out of the 108 population, 25 respondents (35.2%) strongly disagreed/disagreed that Instructional Materials do not affect learners' literacy attainment while 46 respondents (64.8%) strongly agreed/agreed that Instructional Materials affects learners' literacy attainment. Thus majority of the respondents strongly Agreed/Agreed that Instructional materials affect Learners' literacy attainment see table 4.8. although teachers agreed, what is in practice is different from what they are supposed to do and therefore instructional materials are not properly utilized. This highly affects the literacy levels and attainment of knowledge and skills in young pupils in lower classes.

#### 4.6. Relationship between thematic curriculum and Literacy levels

This section answers objective three of the study. The relationship between thematic curriculum and literacy levels in lower primary in Uganda was investigated using language policy, class teacher systems and instructional materials as dimensions for thematic curriculum while Competence developments, Development of life skills and values and Pupils ability to read and write were for literacy levels.

**Table 4.9: Pearson's Correlation analysis**

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Language Policy	1					
2 Class teacher systems	0.217*	1				
3 Instructional Materials	0.301**	0.502*	1			
4 Competence developments	0.294**	0.091*	0.291**	1		
5 Development of life skills and values	0.338*	0.447**	0.411**	0.094**	1	
6 Pupils ability to read and write	0.276**	0.389**	0.299**	0.179**	0.266**	1

\*\*  $\sigma=0.01$  (correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed))

\*  $\sigma=0.05$  (Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed))

### **Source: Primary data**

The correlation table presents the relationship between dimensions of thematic curriculum measured by language policy, class teacher systems and instructional materials against literacy levels, measured by competence developments, development of life skills and values and Pupils ability to read and write. The results show that all the dimensions relate positively. Specifically, language policy relates positively with competence development, development of life skills and values and Pupils ability to read and write ( $r = 0.294$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ;  $r = 0.338$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ;  $r = 0.276$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) respectively. These suggest that the language policy relates positively with literacy development.

#### **4.6.1 Language policy is related with literacy levels**

Table 4.11 above shows that the language policy is positively related to competence development with  $r = 0.294$  and standard error,  $p < 0.01$ , the language policy is positively related with development of life skills and values with  $r = 0.338$  and standard error,  $p < 0.01$ , and the language policy is positively related to Pupils ability to read and write with  $r = 0.276$  and  $p < 0.01$ . The results seem to agree with Whittington and Pany's assertion of the language policy setting the tone of the effectiveness of the programme.

The language policy (as reflected by the audit committee) is what DeZoort *et al.*, (2002) referred to as "protecting the owners' interests by monitoring management's actions, in terms literacy levels. This suggests that the language policy is related with literacy levels and therefore hypothesis one (H1), there is a relationship between the language policy and literacy levels in lower primary schools in Hoima Uganda is accepted.

#### **4.6.2 Class teacher systems and literacy abilities.**



The results in table 4.9 indicate a positive relationship between Class teacher systems and Competence development with  $r = 0.091$  and  $p < 0.01$ , Class teacher systems is positively related to development of life skills and values with  $r = 0.447$  and  $p < 0.01$ , and positively related to pupils ability of reading and write with  $r = 0.389$  and  $p < 0.01$ . These results seem to agree with Sebbowa (2009) where he notes that “Class teacher system is an independent, objective assurance designed to add value and improve on thematic curriculum implementation. It helps an institutions accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to implement and improve the effectiveness of thematic. Since there is a positive relationship between the Class teacher systems and the dimensions of literacy levels; competence development, development of life skills and values and pupils abilities to read and write, hypothesis two (H2); there is an effective relationship between the class teacher systems and literacy levels in lower primary schools in Hoima Uganda is accepted.

#### **4.6.3 Instructional materials and literacy attainment.**

Results in table 4.10 above indicate a positive relationship between instructional materials as a component of thematic implementation with competence development,  $r = 0.291$  with a standard error,  $p < 0.01$ . Instructional materials further relate positively with development of life skills and values,  $r = 0.094$  with a standard error,  $p < 0.01$  and with pupils abilities to read and write,  $r = 0.299$  with a standard error,  $p < 0.01$ . This seems to agree with Ray and Pany (2001)’s belief that “instructional materials helps ensure that thematic curriculum works better. Therefore, instructional materials affect literacy attainment, thus hypothesis three (H3),

**Table 4.10: Multiple Regressions**

Variable	Standard Coefficients	t-test	Sig	R <sup>2</sup>	AdjR <sup>2</sup>	F	SigF
		2.166	0.031	0.214	0.201	35.910	0.000

Language policy	0.2709	2.058	0.000				
Class teacher systems	0.1982	3.521	0.000				
Instructional materials	0.1527	2.710	0.000				

**Source: Primary data**

Table 4.10 above illustrates that, the independent variable (thematic curriculum), through its dimensions; language policy, class teacher systems and instructional materials) explains the variation in the dependent variable up to 20.1 % as denoted by adjusted  $R^2$  value in the table.

Similarly, considering the dimensions of thematic curriculum in this study, language policy seems to provide better explanation in the variation in the dependent variable by a standardized coefficient of 0.2709 followed by class teacher system 0.1982 and instructional materials 0.1527, respectively.

The results seem to re-enforce the correlations established under the correlation table 4.9. This finding further confirms the explanation given under the correlation analysis.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion of findings, conclusion and recommendations basing on the usage of thematic curriculum and literacy levels in lower primary with reference to primary schools under Parajwoki coordinating centre in Hoima District in Uganda. The study aimed at examining the influence of language policy on learners' reading abilities, establish the impact of class teacher system on learners' writing abilities and investigate the influence of instructional materials on learner's literacy attainment in lower primary schools.

#### 5.1. Summary of findings

The study established that the schools under Parajwoki coordinating center were using local language as a language of communication and instruction from P.1-P.3. English was taught as one of the strands under the thematic curriculum. Learners were able to read words, phrases, sentences and short stories in their local language but could not read English well. In primary four both English and local languages were used in teaching. Learners understood concepts taught in local language better than when taught in English. Each class had one teacher handling it and this positively affected the learners' writing abilities although in some other aspects such as the methods used made some learners fail to capture the concepts properly. Instructional materials were in some instances scarcely used and this also negatively affected learners' understanding of concepts.

#### 5.2 Discussion of findings

The study focused on evaluating usage of thematic curriculum and literacy levels in lower primary in Hoima district in Uganda, a case study of Parajwoki coordinating center. A total of 108

respondents was used to fill and return the self administered questionnaires and some of them were also interviewed. With the usage of thematic curriculum, a number of things were emphasized. The local languages were recommended to be used in teaching all learning areas except English. The curriculum mainly emphasized reading and writing in local language through the literacy hour (government white paper, 1992).

It is believed that Local Language literacy leads to improved English. However, the LL is not suitable for the wider world because it is only spoken in a limited geographical area and in addition to that little has been documented on how to improve literacy levels in the selected primary schools in Uganda to ensure good performance of pupils especially in reading, listening and writing.

### **5.2.1 Objective one:**

#### **The influence of language policy on literacy levels in lower primary schools.**

According to the findings, the majority of respondents agreed and said their schools use LL as a medium of instruction and communication which had an impact on the pupils' understanding of the content taught. However, the non Banyoro were disadvantaged for they could not measure to the level at which the Banyoro children were learning.

The respondents also agreed that the language used in schools was understood by children. A deputy head teacher described pupils who are taught in local language as motivated, easy to teach and that they also easily grasp the various concepts in class causing them to perform well in their studies. From the interviews, it emerged that the pupils themselves had similar views, as established through the questionnaire findings. They observed that their fellows who were not vest or familiar with the local language performed poorly. When asked if teachers interpreted questions for them, majority disagreed and said that tests and examination were set in local language. These findings are in agreement with those of Nakhamu (2009) who established that medium of instruction was affecting the performance of pupils. It was further established that some teachers could not competently

translate the thematic curriculum from English to local language. Some words could not easily be interpreted for the teachers were also not well versed with their own local languages.

### **5.2.2. Objective two:**

#### **The impact of class teacher system on literacy abilities in lower primary schools.**

According to the study, the majority of the respondents agreed with the statement that the school had only one teacher per class in lower primary. This was not good at all to both the pupils and the teacher in case of any unfortunate event, any other teacher finds it hard to proceed. The teacher is also overloaded with too many things to do such as preparing schemes of work, lesson plans and instructional materials, teaching all the learning areas alone, assessing and marking learners work, controlling the large class among others. This renders the teacher to fail to fulfill his/her obligation by dropping some learning areas which like music, physical education art/crafts and others that are not examined at the end of the primary school. However, Sallis Burke and Sass (2008), argue that without an appropriate and coordinating class teacher system, many pupils will perform poorly.

More still, the quality of teachers affects learners' performance. According to the education sector annual performance report (2012) out of 45 teachers visited in schools, only half (51 percent) were trained on thematic curriculum. This is an indication that many teachers were handling the curriculum when they were not well acquainted with what to do pertaining to planning and teaching. In relation to that, Kyambadde *et al* (2012) state that teachers who join PTCS are trained to teach the area/local languages. However, the training of teachers does not go deep enough to cater for training in particular area languages. The training is generally done in English, and these teachers are then expected to teach children in the area language or mother tongue.

According to the research findings, the biggest percentage of the respondents agreed that teachers utilized collaborative and cooperative learning. This was evidenced by the way the sitting arrangement of learners was being organized in groups which could help them share learning

experiences and instructional materials. To this end it draws on the theory of vygotsky which sees learning as a social process and Hallidays model of language as a social process and context. This kind of learning is also in conformity with Medwell *et al* (2005) who stipulate that working with the whole class means that children cannot only hear the teachers' views; they can also hear other children's contributions and evaluate them. It finally takes us to the utilization of collaborative and cooperative learning, which are in agreement with respondents views.

When respondents were asked if teachers gave pupils opportunity to work independently, there was total disagreement. Writing was done with the teacher's guidance and focusing mainly on hand writing and spelling. This is in relation to Chatry-Komarek's (2003) argument that, writing is sometimes reduced to calligraphy. She says that today many teachers still consider the art of handwriting more important than the ability to express ideas. She further says that reading and writing are related in many ways and should not be taught in isolation, and confesses that even when the two skills are integrated, learning writing in African schools is more of a challenge than learning reading. However, it was evident that handwriting was being taught and some progress made, but learners were not helped to put ideas in writing, which forms the foundation for writing essays.

According to the research findings, respondents also disagreed when asked whether pupils could read English texts on their own. English language was taught as a second language and as one of the strands to ensure that most or all the reading done in English was guided so that children are helped to read and interpret the text. Medwell *et al* (2005) compliments that, children learn to read more effectively when you can help them to understand the range of cueing systems or 'searchlights'. They can then select the cue that is most appropriate for them within a particular text or sentence, thus orchestrating their knowledge so that each searchlight or cue is used to reinforce and check the others. However different teachers teach differently and the handling of the class is according to the way

they were trained. Likewise, the teaching of English was not given the attention it deserved as per the timetable and actual classroom teaching.

### **5.2.3. Objective three:**

#### **The influence of instructional materials on learners' literacy attainment in lower primary schools.**

In some of the schools, documentary analysis provided exceptions to the above findings. Teachers normally reflected on the lessons after teaching. There are other factors to consider such as aptitude, parental guidance and administrators as well as academic foundation. Farooq et al (2011), for example established that variables that affect pupils' performance are inside and out of school. These could therefore be factors such as parental level of education, availability of study time and study habits. The department of early childhood education Kyambogo University, stresses that every child should have the opportunity to access developmentally appropriate early learning and stimulation experiences to expound the enormous capacities to learn and explore and discover their environment. From the interview, the respondents asserted that teaching and developing instructional materials needs a lot of creativity. One respondent explained that, looking for locally available material from the environment and adapting them for use is not that easy!" Under similar studies, Nakhamu (2009) and Odumbe (2012) established that low performance in school was led by pupils' failure to easily understand the subject content after transition classes. An analysis of available documents brought to light other reasons for pupils' poor performance being due to lack of instructional materials.

According to the findings from the interviews conducted on teachers, they disagreed that they used instructional materials in every lesson they taught. They said that some lessons could be taught without instructional materials. They also disagreed to the statement that the MOES provided adequate materials to all schools. Chatry-Komarek (2003) in her book titled, 'Teaching Reading and Writing in African Schools,' argues that to achieve a high standard, primary education needs to be valued. To learn successfully, children require a specific environment created by their parents'

expectations of the school, as well as by attitude towards learning in their mother tongue. Therefore the importance of instructional materials has been identified as indispensable in the teaching of thematic curriculum in primary schools. Irrespective of this invaluable importance, the availability of these instructional materials has posed great challenge to the realization of the objectives of teaching and learning the thematic curriculum in primary schools. This is an indicator that concepts are not properly taught as instructional materials play a vital role in the teaching and learning processes, and the fact that lower primary lays a foundation for upper primary, the performance of learners is negatively affected at the completion of primary level.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

From the study findings, it was concluded that language policy used by teachers had an effect on literacy levels. This was because the teachers tended to use the local languages that could express their views better to pupils in a simple and understandable manner. It was also established that language policy influenced learners and they were able to read words, sentences and short stories in their local language.

Concerning the influence of class teacher system on learners writing abilities, it was observed that in classes where teachers were committed, learners were gaining much in terms of competence attainment. It was also concluded that the class teacher system used by schools had an impact on literacy abilities. In the school where various practices were employed, they bring both the teachers and pupils together and learning becomes more enjoyable and simple.

The study also concludes that instructional material impacts on literacy attainment through creating group and teamwork ideologies in them. The more materials the pupils are exposed to, the better their literacy levels. However, some thematic teachers in parajwoki coordinating centre confessed



that making instructional materials to use in their daily lessons needed a lot of creativity and time and therefore they could not use them in every lesson as required.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

From the findings in the study the following recommendations were put forward:

The schools and the ministry should avail teachers with refresher courses to enable them have adequate knowledge and skills that can help to deliver content to pupils.

The schools should stock adequate instructional materials and physical facilities to enable their availability for easy teaching practices. This will help to engage the students in meaningful learning activities.

The Ministry of Education and Sports and publishers alike should ensure production and distribution of high quality instructional materials for thematic and subject based curricular in order to ease the work of the teachers.

#### **5.5 Implications and Contributions**

Basing on the above recommendations the performance of learners was negatively affected in that the rural UPE schools that implemented the local language policy remained at a loss compared to the urban schools which went ahead to use English as a medium of instruction. At primary four level, children who are instructed in local language from P.1 – P.3 take time to pick the language rendering it difficult for them to master the new concepts taught. The class teacher system has also affected learners in a way that those who are not friendly with that teacher will always miss out or if the teacher is weak, there will be no compensation and they will always fear to ask in case they have not understood a concept. More still lack of instructional materials was another difficult hurdle in the teaching-learning process. Instructional materials are indispensable and short of them will make

learners incompetent in many different ways causing low performance at the end of primary school cycle. The contribution of the study includes learners' ability to read and write in their own language and using it to communicate with their own people, understanding of concepts taught at a tender age is another important factor in the lives of learners.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRES FOR THE CHILDREN

Dear respondent,

I, Baseka Hamidah, a student of Uganda Management Institute (UMI) Kampala , School of Management Science, I am pursuing a Master's Degree in Institutional Management And Leadership. I am carrying out a research on ‘‘Usage of Thematic Curriculum and Literacy Levels in Lower Primary in Hoima District’’. The purpose of this questionnaire is to help me gather the available relevant information on the topic of the study. Your contribution will be treated with high level of confidentiality and respect.

Thank you in advance!

#### **SECTION A: Personal Data (Tick only the appropriate Box)**

1) Sex of the respondents

a) Female

b) Male

In which class are you?

a) Nursery

b) P 1-P2

c) P3-P4

2) Which language do you use in class?

a) Local language

b) English

**Section B:**

**The influence of Language policy on learner's reading abilities in lower primary schools**

Please rate usage of thematic curriculum and literacy levels in lower primary in Hoima district in terms of Language policy. Please use the following response scale by ticking the right number which you think is most appropriate. Kindly be as objective as possible.

**1. Strongly Agree, 2. Agree, 3. Neutral, 4. Disagree, 5. Strongly Disagree**

S/N	Language policy on learner's reading abilities in lower primary schools	5	4	3	2	1
1)	My school uses local language as a medium of instruction					
2)	Some lessons are taught in English					
3)	We have only one subject which is taught in local language					
4)	Class teacher uses demonstration in teaching					
5)	Thematic instruction can be a powerful tool for reintegrating the curriculum and eliminating the isolated					
6)	The nature of teaching is based on disciplines rather than experience					
7)	Thematic instruction requires a lot of hard, initial design work, plus a substantial restructuring					
8)	Local language helps children to understand connections and how to connect					
9)	The language used in schools is understood by all children					
10)	The themes taught draw connections from the real world					
11)	English is only taught as a subject in one lesson					
12)	All instructions and guidance are given in local language					
13)	Thematic unit consists of facts, topic and themes					
14)	There is Integration across learning areas					
15)	Thematic approach is one of the integrated approaches					
16)	Pupils involve actively in thematic approach					
17)	Thematic approach engages hands-on activities					
18)	Planning the activities are done with consideration of pupils interest, ability and experience					
19)	Teachers and pupils experience need to be engaged before start teaching thematically					

**Section C:**

**The impact of the class teacher system on learners' writing abilities in lower primary**

Please rate usage of thematic curriculum and literacy levels in lower primary in Hoima district in terms of class teacher system. Please use the following response scale by ticking the right number which you think is most appropriate. Kindly be as objective as possible.

**1 Strongly Agree, 2. Agree, 3. Neutral, 4. Disagree, 5. Strongly Disagree**

	<b>Class teacher system impacts on learner's reading abilities in lower primary schools</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1)	The school has only one teacher per class in lower primary					
2)	Children are taught in different language with different teachers					
3)	The school combine children when teaching them the local language they know					
4)	Children have choice in what they learn- topic choice					
5)	Teachers utilize collaborative and cooperative learning					
6)	Teachers and children share the same learning goals					
7)	Teachers create a community of learners in primary school					
8)	Teachers use both text books and non text books materials					
9)	Teachers ensures usage of technology in the classroom					
10)	Teachers Compacts the curriculum in primary school					
11)	Different strands are taught by one teacher in the class					
12)	Teachers integrate word processing skills into creative activities					
13)	Teachers give pupils opportunity to be independent					
14)	Learning through theme or topic corresponds with the times, place, interest, and pupils background					
15)	Pupil- centered strategies are employed when teaching					
16)	Pupils get meaningful learning experiences					
17)	Themes give direction and purpose in planning teaching and learning					
18)	Teaching and developing instructional materials need a lot of ideas					
19)	Various activities are combined when carrying out the teaching					
20)	Teaching using thematic approach needs creativity					
21)	Teachers Encourage pupils to think critically and creatively					
22)	Teachers and pupils get involved in thematic teaching / learning					

**Section D:**

**The extent to which Instructional materials affect learners’ literacy attainment in lower primary schools**

Please rate usage of thematic curriculum and literacy levels in lower primary in Hoima district in terms of Instructional material. Please use the following response scale by ticking the right number which you think is most appropriate. Kindly be as objective as possible.

**1, Strongly Agree, 2. Agree, 3. Neutral, 4. Disagree, 5. Strongly Disagree**

	1	2	3	4	5
Teachers use various teaching technique					
Teachers encourage pupils to give ideas					
Teachers make reflection after teaching session					
Teachers conclude the lessons presented					
Teachers encourage pupils to think creatively					
Teacher begins the lessons with asking question based on pupils’ interest to encourage pupils enthusiasm to learn					
Teachers give opportunity to pupils to be independent in learning activities					
Teaching approach is pupil centered					
Planning learning activities involves hands-on					
Teachers integrate knowledge, skills and values learning					
Teachers plan various activities to attract pupils					
Planning teaching approach is done with the consideration of pupils interest, abilities and experience					

## APPENDIX II

### Interview guide for CCTs and Head teachers

1. Are parents involved in their children's education?
2. Are teachers comfortable with the usage of thematic curriculum in their teaching?
3. How is the usage of local language important in the teaching of learners in lower primary?
4. Does the class teacher system contribute to pupils' academic performance?
5. Do class teachers work towards developing and improving learners' competences?
6. (a) Are instructional materials readily available in the teaching and learning?  
(b) Who provides those materials?
7. English is taught as one of the learning areas in the thematic curriculum from P.1 to P.3. How do learners respond to usage of English as a medium of instruction when they cross to P.4 class?
8. Suggest your views about the usage of thematic curriculum in future?
9. Do teachers follow the policy of Ministry Of Education And Sports on assessment of learners?
10. If not, who sets exams for the learners?
11. When do the pupils in your school use English?

**APPENDIX III: Table for Determining the Sample size of the Population**

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	246
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	351
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	181	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	180	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	190	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	200	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	210	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	373
65	56	220	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	230	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	240	144	550	225	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	250	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	260	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	270	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	256	2600	335	100000	384

Note: “N” is population size

“S” is sample size.

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