

Potential Impact of Language of Instruction on Labour Market Outcomes

Winford Masanjala

Department of Economics, University of Malawi, Chancellor College

Abstract

Despite a mountain of evidence on the merits of mother tongue instruction on later life outcomes across the world, in Malawi there is reticence to the use of mother tongue as the language of instruction. The 1996 directive to switch to mother-tongue as language of instruction was attended by lack of buy-in among parents, resistance by language experts and non-implementation by technocrats. While the proposed switch was principally based on the merits of mother tongue instruction on development of education capacities of learners, it's yet unclear whether beyond teaching and learning, the switch to mother-tongue instruction has a lasting effect on labour market outcomes including skills acquisition, transitions to work and wages. A major barrier to understanding this issue has long been the availability of data that tracks childhood education experience up to adulthood. Although recent availability of survey data makes this almost feasible, current cross-sectional survey data do not include questions on mother tongue, language used at home or those used as media instruction. This paper makes the case for purposively designed study aimed at teasing out the impact of language of instruction on labour market outcomes.

1. Background

Although there is growing evidence that mother-tongue instruction in primary school improves school performance, there is limited research on whether mother-tongue instruction has long-lasting effect on students' later labour market outcomes. Considerable ambiguity exists in the nascent literature on the link between language of instruction and labour market outcomes and the channels through which this might occur. This paper seeks to review the evolution of language policy in Malawi in the context of economic and labour market valuation of language. It highlights the fact that despite evidence language experts about the benefits of mother tongue instructions, society is moved by the utility of language as a tool for socio-economic mobility and commerce. Long held prejudices among parents about utility of local language can stymied any well-meaning and empirically supported attempts by the language experts.

This note proceeds in four section. Section 2 reviews the evolution of language policy in Malawi, highlighting the labour market value attached to languages in different regime. Section 3 discusses potential channels through which language policy may affect labour market outcomes and methodological issues that attend any effort to measure the economic and labour market impact of language of instruction policies. Section 4 considers the scope for applying studies done in other area of Africa to Malawi while section 5 gives a demonstration of the type of analysis and potential knowledge gains gained if existing labour market surveys had a language dimension.

2. Value of Language of Instruction in Labor Market in Malawi

This section looks at language policies adopted by different administration in Malawi from the colonial times to the present. Rather than rehash the history of the evolution of language policy, we review the literature to tease out perception about the economic and labor market value of being educated under particular language policy. These positions include those implied by the policy or indeed entrenched prejudices generally held by society.

2.1. Value of LoI in Labour Market during Colonial time

Malawi's post-colonial language policy or lack thereof, is an artefact of missionary effort and colonial administrative policy. Although Malawi attained the status of a British Protectorate in

the late 19th Century, education remained in the hands of missionaries and there was never a coherent national policy on both education and language of instruction (Kayambazinthu, 1998). At the turn of the 20th Century the missionaries adopted ChiNyanja for the Southern and Central regions and ChiTumbuka for the Northern region as languages of evangelization (Kamwendo, 2009). However, it took three decades of colonial administration for Government to start exercising leadership over education affairs with the creation of the Department of Education in 1926. Even then church control of the education system prevailed throughout the colonial period so that at the dawn of independence, only about 4,000 students went to government schools while approximately 280,000 went to missionary institutions ((Kayambazinthu, 1998; Kretzer and Kumwenda, 2018).

Although the colonial government was not the major provider of education services, in its regulatory capacity, it promulgated a language policy whose legacy has endured to this very day. In an attempt to influence language use in Malawi through status planning and as part of acquisition planning, the colonial language policy formalised English as the official language and also made ChiNyanja, ChiTumbuka and English as languages of instruction in schools (Kayambazinthu, 1999). ChiNyanja was used in elementary years of education in Central and Southern regions while ChiTumbuka was used in the Northern region. As Kamwendo (2009) notes, the “new” colonial policy was in fact a mere formalisation of the language of evangelization position earlier adopted by missionaries.

Although not much has been specifically written on the economic value of language in the colonial economy, a lot can be inferred from the way language was viewed in relation to social mobility. Although the colonial government had three languages of instruction, there is evidence that Chichewa and English had labour market value (moto, 2002). In fact ChiNyanja was partially formalized as national language to the extent that civil servants used to be assessed for their proficiency in ChiNyanja as a precondition for employment and subsequent deployment to their work stations as extension workers, police officers or other categories of civil servants (Kretzer and Kumwenda, 2016). Notwithstanding the use of Chichewa, it was English that proved more valuable and prestigious than any of the languages because only proficiency in English was closely associated with some level of formal education (Galafa, 2016). Moto (2002) observes thus:

Because the knowledge of English opened up opportunities for some jobs in the lower ranks of the Nyasaland civil service, it began to dawn on the 'natives' that *knowledge of spoken and written English was more useful and economically rewarding* than enhanced knowledge of the local languages.

The economic superiority of the English language was further cemented by the categorization of primary school teachers into two groups depending on their proficiency in the English language - with English Grade Teachers enjoying a higher social standing than the Vernacular Grade Teachers (Moto, 2002).

2.2. Value of LoI in the Labour Market in Independent Malawi

In independent Malawi, the colonial language policy subsisted for four years. At the 1968 annual convention of the ruling Malawi Congress Party (MCP), four declarations on language were pronounced: that Malawi would adopt ChiNyanja as a national language; That the name ChiNyanja was henceforth to be known as Chichewa (although the latter was a dialect within Chichewa but from Banda's own tribe); that Chichewa and English were to be the official languages of the state of Malawi; and that the other vernacular languages would continue to be used in people's everyday private lives in their respective areas (GoM, 1978). The immediate effect of this language policy was the elevation of ChiNyanja into a national language, and relegation of ChiTumbuka from a language of instruction and lingua franca to one of the "village" language. Although this declaration was not made by Ministry of Education and it was silent on the subject of language of instruction in school, it was universally understood that henceforth, only English and Chichewa would be used both in school and even in the media (Kretzer and Kumwenda, 2016). Subsequently, ChiTumbuka and other vernacular languages were phased out of both the national media and schools.

Under Dr Banda, it became obvious that only English had economic value and competence in English was axiomatically synonymous with being educated. Although both English and Chichewa were made national languages, in practice Dr Banda's policy promoted English. Dr Banda's entrenched belief that English was the proverbial "window to the world and to technological advancement" endured under his rule proficiency in English was equated with

being educated (Kamwendo, 2009). English had (and continues to have) veto power over education certification – that is regardless of their overall performance in examinations, a student was not certifiable at any level of the education system if they failed English. More importantly, not only were job applications and interviews conducted in English all branches of government performed their functions in English (for communication and record) and hence English proficiency had immense economic utility.

2.3. LoI and Labour Market Value in Democratic Malawi

After three decades in power, in 1994 Dr Banda and his Malawi Congress Party were voted out in favour of Bakili Muluzi and his United Democratic Front. In fulfilment of a campaign pledge in their manifesto, the Muluzi administration sought to revert to multi-lingualism in media and promote teaching in vernacular languages for the lower classes. In March 1996, the Ministry of Education issued a new directive which was much more in favour of the vernacular languages and preferred mother tongue education in standard 1 to 4 of primary education, with the introduction of English in standard 5 (GoM, 1996). With this new policy, Chichewa would remain one of the subjects on the curriculum to be studied throughout the primary and secondary school curriculum. Unfortunately, for the education sector some serious damage had already been done due to the 30 years of preaching English supremacy.

While effort to reintroduce multi-lingualism in Malawi's media were warmly embraced, attempts at re-introducing multilingualism or mother-tongue instruction in Malawi's education system unearthed deep-seated prejudices among Malawian elites about the utility and economic value of vernacular languages (Kamwendo, 2009; Kretzer and Kumwenda, 2016).. Critics of mother tongue policy objected to this policy by raising a number of disadvantages, two of which were economic. At the macro level, it was argued that while the intention was noble, limited materials existed for the promotion of indigenous Malawian languages as media of instruction and that their development would be too costly for an already economically struggling economy like Malawi's. The economic cost would even be greater given the fact that except for Chichewa, all the indigenous languages had a low level of corpus development (Kamwendo, 2009). The costs associated with investment in corpus development activities, such

as orthography reviews and standardization, compilation of lexicographic materials, such as dictionaries and grammar books would be prohibitive (Kamwendo & Kachiwanda, 2002)

The second line of economic argument was at a micro level suggesting that vernacular languages were not only bereft of labour market value but would stymie children's opportunity for upward socio-economic mobility. As such the majority of parents argued that mother tongue education would affect proficiency in English, result in declining English competencies and seriously impair Malawian youths' economic opportunities (Matiki, 2006; Galafa, 2018). In his observations, Green (2007:61) concludes that "...members of the Malawian society accused Muluzi of lowering the status of English in the nation, therefore *corresponding to a decrease in future prospects for Malawian youth and the place of the nation in the international community*"

Given the acrimony that attended the 1996 directive and the fact that it never really got off the ground and piloting beginning as late as 2004, it was just a matter of time before the policy would be reversed. The review of the Education act brought to the fore policymakers lack of faith in market value local languages and the reaffirmation of English as the only language with market value. The Education Act of 2013 (Section 78(1)) provides that the medium of instruction in schools and colleges shall be English. In addition, Section 78(2) empowers the minister prescribe the language of instruction in schools by mere Gazetting (Malawi Government, 2013). Given the unpopularity of the previous directive one would have expected people to be more enthused with the new policy. Yet the policy was, more or less dead on arrival with many of the same issues that bedevilled past policy changes being raised e.g. availability of materials and readiness of teacher resurfaced and political economy issues also arose¹.

Malawi's experience with policy reforms involving reversion to local language instruction is hardly unique. Across Africa there are serious disconnects among theory-based recommendations, policy, and practice (Piper et al, 2018; Clegg and Simpson, 2016). Informal institutions override the formal policy so that even when a government's official policy mandates initial literacy instruction in a mother tongue, such mandates are often disregarded at

¹ Although the policy had long been in the making, the fact that the president's sister was the Secretary for Education at the time it was passed made some believe it was her initiative to leave a legacy and spite previous efforts

the local level (Piper and Miksic, 2011; Trudell and Piper, 2014). One of the main reasons that stakeholders resist the implementation of mother-tongue instruction is their fear that it will somehow harm students' acquisition of English and other subjects seen as more valuable and prestigious for students (Jones, 2012; Trudell, 2007).

In the final analysis, the reversion to English as LoI, albeit poorly planned and implemented, cements the superiority of English. Although there is little debate among educationists and language experts about the merits of a well-designed and executed policy of mother tongue instruction and its lasting effects, Malawi's education problems seem to arise from an inability to plan and execute.. The general moods among experts about linkage between the language of instruction and labour market prospects has been summarized by Galafa (2018) who argues that "...[C]urrent and past policies have made the majority of Malawians not to participate adequately in the economic life of the country, especially women and the rural poor, most of whom are denied opportunity to use their vernacular languages in economic and administrative spheres." Beyond issues of English as medium of instruction, the way English is taught does not make room for Malawians to appreciate the role of their own histories, culture and languages in the representation of modernity and globalisation (Sharra, 2002).

3. Measuring Impact of LoI and labour Market Outcomes –

3.1. Potential Channels

Two strands of orthodoxy have held sway in most writing in the nexus between language of instruction and later life labour market outcomes. On the one hand are studies that suggest that mother tongue instruction in early grade has negative effects on labour market prospects, and two channels through which this operates have been identified. The first channel is that Mother-tongue instruction may negatively affect proficiency in national and international languages which open doors into the modern economy (e.g., Angrist and Lavy, 1997). The second strand argues that mother-tongue instruction potentially hampers performance in the labour market due to existence of premium for language proficiency in the labour markets of many developed countries. In countries where knowledge of foreign language is equated with education and is the official language, mother-tongue instruction may undermine labour market prospects. The existence of premium for proficiency in a dominant language in the labour market, coupled with the possibility that mother-tongue instruction may decrease language proficiency in

national and international languages, imply that mother-tongue instruction may negatively affect later labour market outcomes (Seid, 2016; 2019).

The other strand argues that rather than undermine future prospects mother tongue instruction enhances students' capacities in other courses including foreign language. As a natural extension of language studies it suggest that mother-tongue instruction has more benefits for child development and school performance. It has been observed that mother-tongue instruction in primary school not only improves educational outcomes (e.g., Hynsjö and Damon, 2016; Piper et al., 2016; Seid, 2016) but that gains in school performance due to mother-tongue instruction continue even after students transition to English instruction classrooms in later years in primary school (e.g., Seid, 2016; 2018).

The general position in the literature seems to be that link between language of instruction and labour market outcome can be inferred from the utility that one derives from use of a particular language. There are languages of communication, languages of administration and languages of commerce, and it is the latter two that have labour market value. To the extent that mother-tongue is not a national or official language, mandating that teaching and learning be done in mother-tongues may affect labour market outcome.

3.2 Methodological Issues

In order to assess and attribute differences in education and labour market outcomes to a language policy, a number of identifying assumption have to be resolved. First, in order to identify a cohort of affected youth, it is critical to determine the age at which children start school and the rate at which they progress (repetition rates). Second, assumption have to be made about child migration and children's expUnder mother tongue instruction migration poses a potential problem since some people may work and live in a place different from the place in which they have attended primary school, making it difficult to observe whether an individual is exposed to mother-tongue instruction in primary school. This is a common problem in researches that attempt to link early childhood conditions to later labour market outcomes using cross-sectional data and an assumption has to be made about internal migration and student mobility. Third, policies take time to be fully implemented. While it is easy to identify when a policy was promulgated, it is difficult to ascertain if, whether and when it was fully implemented and whether it was executed as planned.

To make the case for specially designed research in this area, we profile two studies that have spearheaded this effort in Africa. In this effort we highlight two things (i) the policy context and design issues and how they can affect identification and attribution of impact (ii) the methodology including data availability and strategy for identification of policy timing.

- a) Katherine Eriksson (2014) Does The Language of Instruction In Primary School Affect Later Labour Market Outcomes? Evidence from South Africa, *Economic History of Developing Regions* Vol. 29 (2) 2014: 1-25.

Policy Context: This paper examines the effect of mother-tongue instead of English or Afrikaans instruction on long-term educational and economic outcomes. Under the aegis of the Bantu Education Act of 1953, in 1955 South Africa's Apartheid regime changed the language of instruction in South African schools and the use of mother-tongue instruction for black students was increased from the first 4 to 6 years to the full eight years of education. In effect, in some provinces the mother tongue instruction was increased by two years while in other it was increased by four years

Approach: Using data from the 1980 South African Census, Eriksson applies a difference in difference approach to investigate two effects. First, she investigates differences in performance of cohorts depending on whether they would have been affected by the language policy or not. Second she studies heterogeneity effects due to differences in exposure to mother tongue across South Africa Provinces.

Identification Issues. Eriksson make three assumption to identify affected and control cohorts. Based on administrative documents, Eriksson assumed that in the 1950s South African students started school at age of eight and attended one level per year; Second, children attended and completed school in provinces of their birth; third, she assumes that the policy was executed as planned - starting in 1955 and had full implementation by 1957; and finally assumes that the policy must have been enforced.

Findings: The study makes findings in two domains. In the domain of general education, it finds that mother tongue training has positive effects on the ability to read and write, on educational attainment, and on the ability to speak English in predominantly English areas.

With regard to the labour market, it finds that mother-tongue instruction has a positive effect on wages which Eriksson interprets as evidence of increases in human capital. She further opines that the labor market effects may have been larger in the absence of labour market discrimination against blacks under apartheid.

- b) Seid (2018), “Mother-tongue Instruction and Later Labour Market Outcomes: Evidence from a Natural Experiment in Ethiopia”

Policy Context: In 1994 Ethiopia promulgated a policy allowing States to introduce mother-tongue instruction in primary school. Hitherto Amharic had acted as the lingua-franca and language of instruction for early grade teaching and learning. Upon introduction of the new policy, Amharic remained language of instruction before and after 1994 in Amhara but not in other states. The other states were allowed to introduce instruction in the commonly spoken languages in their states.

Approach: Seid (2019) Studies two effects of this policy change: a switching effect and an exposure effect. The former effect captures switch from Amharic due to the introduction of local-languages instruction in 1994. The exposure effect arises because the duration of exposure to mother-tongue instruction varies depending on the state, with state switching to English in Grades 5, 7 or 9. Using the Ethiopian Labour force Survey (ELFS) of 2013, he employs a difference in difference methodology. The study four labour market outcomes - probability of employment, and among those who are employed, the probabilities of permanent employment and whether an employee is satisfied with her/his current job and hourly earnings as their dependent variables.

Identification: To identify and attribute impact to the language policy Seid (2016) makes a number of assumption and restriction. First, he assumes that Ethiopian students start school at age of seven, although he does not come out clearly on repetition or progression rates. Second, he restricts the sample to only those who never migrated and excludes those who live in cosmopolitan or ethno-linguistically diverse neighborhoods e.g. Addis Ababa. Third, he assumes that the policy was executed as planned, it had full implementation and it must have been enforced. Since the Labourforce Survey does not capture either the mother-tongue of the

person or language of instruction the study uses the most dominant language in the state as a proxy for language of instruction.

Findings: on the switching effect the general finding is that mother-tongue instruction in primary school improves later labour market outcomes, particularly among those who ended up as private-sector employees. In addition, Individuals who were exposed to mother tongue instruction in primary school are more likely to be employed, earn more and have higher job satisfaction. However, exposure seems to have a negative effect in that the size of its effect decreases with the number of years an individual was exposed to mother-tongue instruction in primary school.

4. Scope for Investigating Economic Impact of LoI in Malawi

4.1. Problems of Identification of Policy Impact

As highlighted earlier, identification of policy impact requires a number of assumptions and the way Malawi implemented the 1996 and 2013 policies does not lend itself to a proper identification of the impact. First, to identify the treated cohort requires us to resolve the age at which children start school and the rate at which they progress (repeat). In Malawi It is difficult to retrospectively identify who was affected by the policy because age at entry may vary considerably across the public and private sector due to differences in the curriculum followed². The official age of entry into public primary school is six years (Hall & Mambo,) and the average repetition rate for standard 1 is 24 percent. The recent increase in repetition rates in primary schools from 14 percent in 2010 to 19.7 percent in 2014 translate into the primary school completion rate of 52 percent in 2014 (56 percent among boys and 47 percent among girls) (GoM/UNDP, 2016). It is estimated that due to repetition and drop outs, the primary school system is so inefficient that it takes 23 student-years to produce one graduate instead of eight years under normal efficiency (ESIP, 2009).

The second problem arises is the issue of timing of the policy. Since policies take time to be fully implemented one has to make an assumption regarding when the policy was fully implemented. For instance, although Government of Malawi directed in 1996 that henceforth

²² Those who go to private schools start early and graduate in Grade 6.

mother tongue would be used as media of instruction from standard 1-4, the project was not implemented immediately. The first language symposium to formalize the language policy occurred in 1999 and it was not until 2004 that the new policy was piloted (Kamwendo, 2009). Apart from the timing of the project, it appears the project was never executed in earnest. Commenting on the progress in implementing the 1996 policy, Galafa (2016) observes that.

Non-implementation raises other problem of identification has also arisen from non-implementation because the policy was not executed as intended. This was particularly the case with the language policy in the Education Act of 2013. Lack of consultation and preparation prior to the policy change resulted in poor buy-in and resistance and eventually the policy was not implemented in earnest. As Galafa (2018) concludes

In this case, even if one wanted to create a dummy to capture the timing of the policy switch, it is not clear whether and when the policy switch occurred, and when it did, if was fully implemented (Kamwendo, 2009).

4.2 Issues of Availability of Data

Malawi has conducted a number of surveys which could be leveraged to understand the labour market effects of language of instruction. Malawi has conducted national census since 1966, the latest one having been done in 2018. It has also conducted four Integrated Household Survey (Standard of Living Measurement Surveys) which are rich in economic and labour market information. Labour market specific studies include the TEVETA Skills Surveys (TEVETA 2008, 2016 & 2018) and the Labour force Survey (NSO, 2013), and the Schools to Work Transition (Mussa, 2014). In these surveys, there is a universal dearth of relevant proxies for mother tongue, language of instruction, competence in other local languages and indeed the language that one normally uses. Most of these surveys capture one's tribe with the erroneous assumption that one uses the language associated with the tribe as an alternative to the lingua franca in the area.

These studies do not take into account policy shifts and hence assume that the education has remained the same and the labour market is a language neutral arena. None of the studies sheds light on the link between the LoI on the one hand and skill acquisition, labour market readiness, school to work transitions and labour market outcomes (employment, retention,

salaries, promotion etc.). In addition, being cross-sectional surveys, they are by design, ill-equipped to capture effects of childhood education on adult life outcomes. This notwithstanding, while longitudinal studies are most ideal to understand the problem at hand, even in a cross-sectional design some of the defects are curable. The World Banks STEP surveys of skills (see Pierre et al, 2014) which are cross-sectional but capture labour market variables as well language variables show that cross-sectional design is not fatal.

5 Exploratory Data Analysis using STWT, 2014

In this section we just show that even existing data can almost be leveraged to study the impact of language. The STWT makes a number of observations, which could be leveraged, had there been a language dimension in the survey. The major findings include existence of a high mismatch between qualifications and jobs demands; that the majority of youth are in transition, and very few of those who have transited have found stable work; that Education has a significant influence on a young person’s labour market transition; and that the higher the educational attainment of youth, the higher their likelihood of finding stable employment.

That said, the next section presents indicative results, had the policy been implemented in 1996 or thereabout and assuming students did their eight years of primary education in the prescribed time.

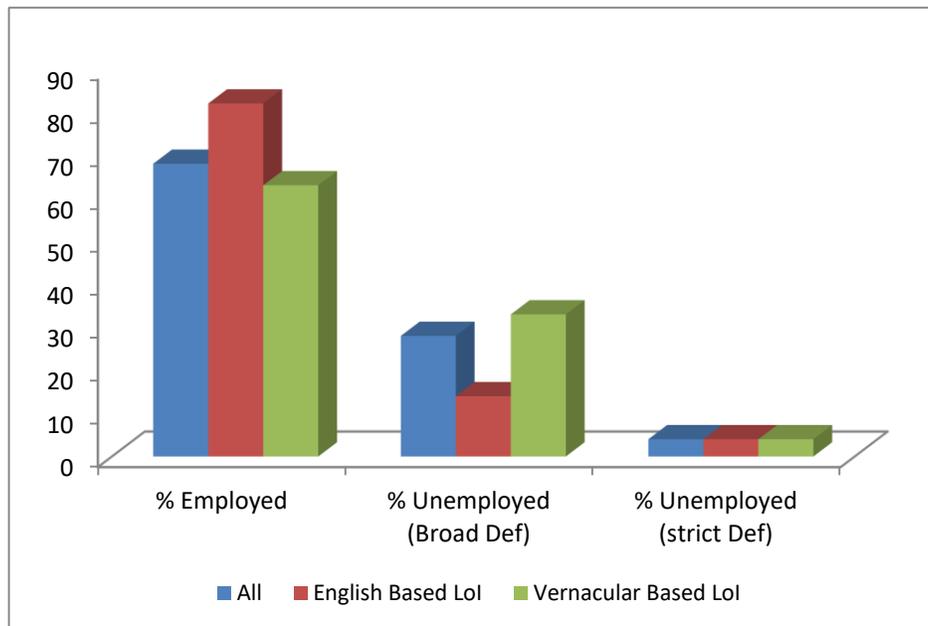
Table 1: Sample Distribution by Sex and Year of Birth (STWT, 2014)

	Sex/Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
1984	9	19	28
1985	63	85	148
1986	80	86	166
1987	66	83	149
1988	58	93	151
1989	72	99	171
1990	76	74	150
1991	66	103	169
1992	85	121	206
1993	87	116	203
1994	122	150	272
1995	128	120	248
1996	134	130	264

1997	142	122	264
1998	171	155	326
1999	81	101	182
TOTAL No	1440	1657	3097

Assuming the policy was implemented in 1996, then it would affect those who were born after 1990 who would be starting primary school at age six. There would be *prima facie* evidence that those students that started their primary school after 1996 (i.e. those born before after 1990) have different labour market experiences. Based on the School to Work Transition (STWT) survey, the evidence in figure 1 shows significant difference in employment and unemployment rates, especially under the broad definition of employment. Although 70 percent of the sample is employed, those educated under English as LoI have higher employment rate (87 percent) than those trained under mother-tongue LoI. The converse is conveyed by the unemployment rate, broadly defined.

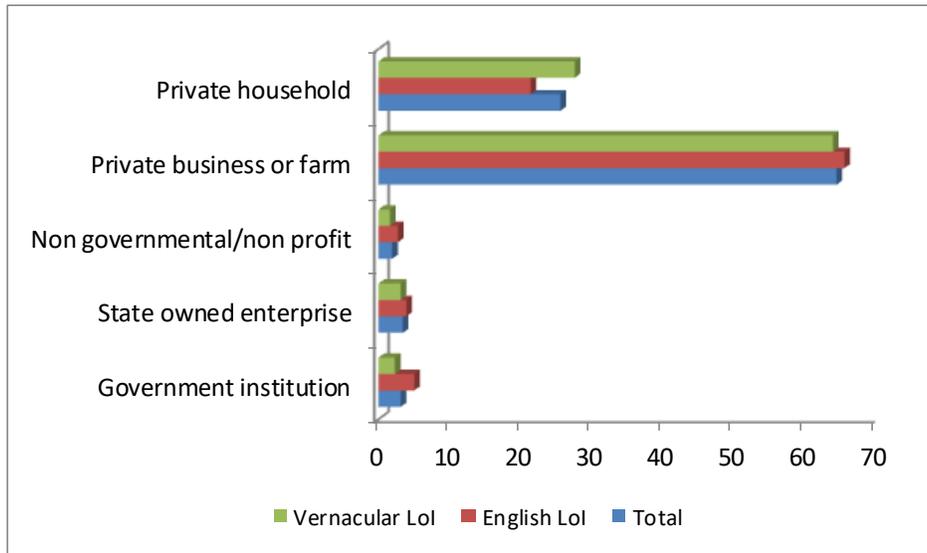
Figure 1: Difference in Employment rate by Language of Instruction



For those that were employed, further analysis gives anecdotal evidence of some impact of LoI on employment destination or sector. Figure 2 shows minor difference in sectors of employment among those employed. Employment is dominated by engagement on private businesses and farms and in general, formal sector employment which would be expected to give a premium

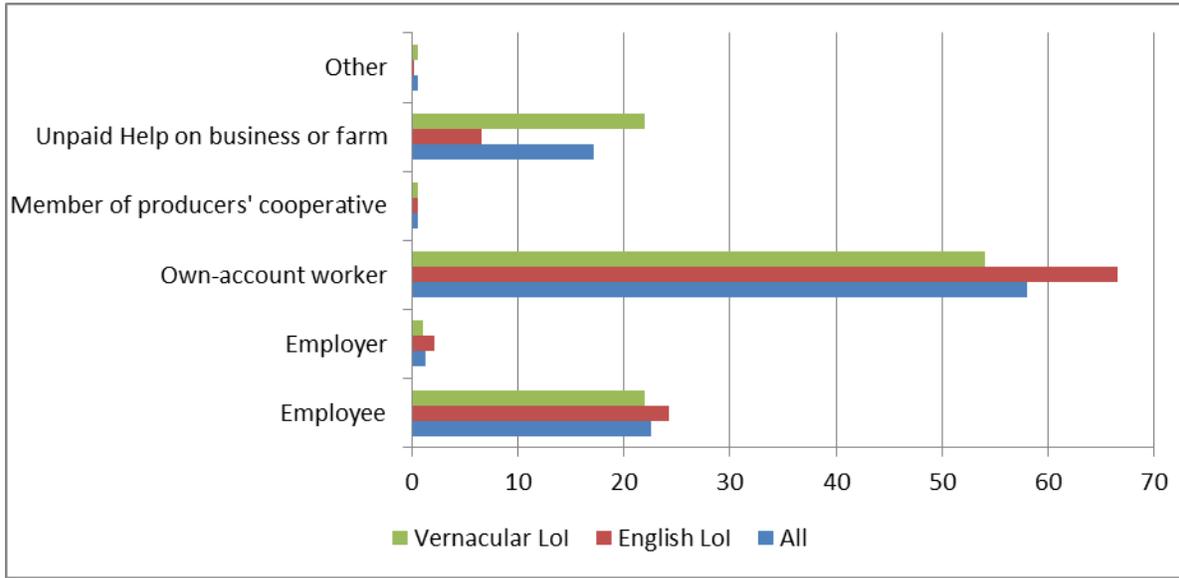
on language skills and competences accounts for less than 10 percent of overall employment. That notwithstanding, in all sectors where language skill would be demanded the share of those employed is significantly higher for those that used English than those that would have used mother tongue instruction.

Figure 2: Sector of Employment by language of Instruction



A closer look at employment status suggests that although self-employment dominates, those educated under English LoI were more likely to be own and run a businesses or be self-employed (66.5 percent) than those instructed under mother-tongue LoI (54.1 percent). In fact a far greater proportion of those under mother-tongue (22 percent) are in disguised unemployment as unpaid workers on farms and business while one-fifth of both cohorts consider themselves as employees.

Figure 3: Differences in Economic Activity by LoI



The dominance of informal sector and working for private enterprises and farms has differential repercussion on the young people’s job security. Table 3 shows that the majority of those who consider themselves to be employees are on long-term or unlimited employment contracts (54.3 percent). A breakdown by language of instruction shows that while almost half of those likely to have undergone mother-tongue instructions are equally split between those on perpetual contracts and limited contracts, three-fifths of those trained under English as medium of instruction are employed under more permanent terms (contract of unlimited duration).

Table 2: Types of Employment Contract by LoI (%)

	Total	Language of Instruction	
		English	Mother Tongue
Unlimited contract		62.1	50.3
Limited contract		37.9	49.7
Sub-sample Total (N)	Unlimited duration	161	314

Consideration of those under limited contracts suggests that the majority operate under annual employment contracts. Whereas close to 90 percent of those educated under mother tongue as LoI are on short term contract, slightly above three quarters of those educated under English as

LoI have short term contracts (of less than 12 months). Yet it cannot be inferred whether this reflects labour market impacts of the change in language of instruction or other.

Table 3: Duration of Contract by LoI (%)

	Language of Instruction		Total
	Mother Tongue	English	
Less than 12 months	89.7	77.0	86.2
12 to less than 36 months	7.7	13.1	9.2
36 months or more	2.6	9.8	4.6
Sub-sample size	156	61	217

Conclusion

The historical record has shown that society has entrenched views about the utility of the English language and any attempts to convince them about the merits or utility of mother-tongue instruction border on questioning someone's religion. Nonetheless, the brief has raised a number of empirical issues that if addressed we would start off on the path to evangelization on local language instruction: whether there is a language premium in Malawi's labour markets; and what channels do they operate through; are their differential returns to language of instruction and are students trained under English just as likely to succeed in life as those educated under vernacular language.

Efforts to investigate channels through which this operates are beset by identification issues, some of which are an artefact of data availability. A dearth of longitudinal data and the lack language variables that characterise conventional cross-sectional surveys, increase the need for purposive design. This brief has made a case for purposefully designed survey to catalyse teasing out the impact of language of instruction and indeed mother tongue language on economic outcomes, and labour market outcomes in particular. We have argued that broadening the debate on the impact of use mother tongue instruction beyond its effect on teaching and learning to economic outcomes would add value and contribute to demonstrating the utility of language in people's life, beyond the language's intrinsic worth in culture.

Bibliography

- Angrist, J. D., & V. Lavy. 1997. "The Effect of a Change in Language of Instruction on the Returns to Schooling in Morocco." *Journal of Labor Economics* 48-76
- Eriksson, Katherine, 2014. "Does the Language of Instruction in Primary School Affect Later Labour Market Outcomes? Evidence from South Africa," *Economic History of Developing Regions*, 29 (2), 311-335.
- Government of Malawi. (2013). Education Act No.21 of 2013. Lilongwe: Government Printer.
- Green, C. (2007). "Discursive strategies in political speech: the words of Dr. Bingu wa Mutharika". *Journal - Issues in Political Discourse Analysis*, 2 (1), 59-74.
- Kamwendo, G. H. (2016, April). "The new language of instruction policy in Malawi: A house standing on a shaky foundation", *International Review of Education*, 62(2), 221-228.
- Kayambazinthu, E. (1988). "The Language Planning situation in Malawi." *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 19(5), 32-66.
- Kretzer, M. M., and I. Kumwenda (2016) "Language Policy In Malawi: A Study Of Its Contexts, Factors For Its Development And Consequences." *Marang: Journal of Language and Literature*, 27.
- Malawi Congress Party (1978). Annual convention resolutions 1965 - 1983. Blantyre: Department of Information.
- Matiki, A. J. (2001). "The social significance of English in Malawi" *World Englishes*, 20 (2), 201-218.
- Moto, F. (2002). "African language and the crisis of identity: The Case of Malawi." In F. R. Owino (Ed.), *Speaking African languages for education and development* (pp. 33-44). Capetown: CASAS.
- Piper, B., S. S. Zuilkowski, & S. Ongele. 2016. "Implementing Mother Tongue Instruction in the Real World: Results from a Medium-Scale Randomized Controlled Trial in Kenya." *Comparative Education Review* 60 (4): 776-807

- Piper, B., S.S. Zuilkowski, D. Kwayumba & A. Oyanga "Examining the secondary effects of mother-tongue literacy instruction in Kenya: Impacts on student learning in English, Kiswahili, and mathematics", *International Journal of Education Development*,
- Seid, Y. (2016). "Does Learning in Mother Tongue Matter? Evidence from a Natural Experiment in Ethiopia." *Economics of Education Review* 55: 21-38
- Seid, Y. (2019). The impact of learning first in mother tongue: evidence from a natural experiment in Ethiopia." *Applied Economics*, 51(6):577-593
- Sharra, S. (2002). The heart of alien conquest: constructing modern-global identity and marginality through language arts in Malawian classrooms. A paper presented at the comparative and international education society, Orlando, Florida, USA, March 6-9, 2002.
- Trudell, B. 2005. "Language Choice, Education and Community Identity." *International Journal of Educational Development* 25 (3): 237-251.
- Kamwendo, G. H. (2016). "The new language of instruction policy in Malawi: A house standing on a shaky foundation".