



THE IMPACT OF SOCIO-POLITICAL CHANGES ON THE OUTCOMES OF A
CABTAL MOTHER TONGUE-BASED LITERACY PROGRAMME: CASE OF THE
NORTH WEST OF CAMEROON

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THE IMPACT OF SOCIO-POLITICAL CHANGES ON THE OUTCOMES OF A CABTAL
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OF CAMEROON

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Abstract

THE IMPACT OF SOCIO-POLITICAL CHANGES ON THE OUTCOMES OF A CABTAL
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Approaching the literacy programme from humanistic and constructivist perspectives, which pay particular attention to the human and social needs created in the learning environment of individuals, and using a case study and an ongoing action research, (McNiff, 2016; Stringer, 2014) this dissertation investigated and analysed an existing literacy programme in the Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen, and Weh communities of the Northwest Region of Cameroon and explored the impact of the Socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme that is operating in these communities. The research used a sample of 100 participants; literacy learners, literacy teachers and literacy programme facilitators who were interviewed individually and through focused groups. The research sought to answer three questions.

1. What are some results that have come about in the mother tongue literacy programme because of the socio-political changes?
2. What modifications should be made in the mother tongue literacy programme to accommodate the current results?

3. What are the implications of these modifications on the future of the mother tongue literacy programme?

Although many people desired to learn how to read and write, they also have daily realities that confront them, inhibiting their progress and limiting their opportunities for study. The greatest motivation for overcoming these challenges comes from an understanding of how literacy will help them to achieve their desired purposes (Alsawaier, 2018; Ross, Perkins, & Bodey, 2016). In the Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen, and Weh contexts, the socio-political changes of the Northwest and Southwest Regions has greatly impacted the mother tongue literacy programme and based on the results obtained, this dissertation foregrounds and emphasises the need for a better understanding of such impact which will help to inform the design of a more appropriate literacy model for the Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen, Weh and other people in similar contexts.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgement, the work presented is entirely my own.

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Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation work to my family and CABTAL colleagues.

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List of Abbreviations

CABTAL:	Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy
LL:	Literacy Learner
LPF:	Literacy Programme Facilitator
LT:	Literacy Teacher
MT:	Mother Tongue
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID:	United States Agency for International Development

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the international community has significantly improved its support for literacy provisions (USAID, 2011; World Bank, 2011; UNESCO, 2012). This increasing support has been expressed by the adoption of policies and programmes that seek to ameliorate those literacy provisions (Nutbeam, McGill, & Premkumar, 2018). The heightening support for literacy is motivated by the perceived benefits of literacy. Literacy is considered a tool that empowers people to participate fully in society and leads to improved livelihoods. Literacy is also considered to be a catalyst for sustainable development in that it facilitates better participation in the job market; improves child and family health and nutrition; reduces poverty and expands life opportunities (McKay, 2018; TRENDS, 2017). In several contexts, acquiring literacy skills is viewed as an opportunity that empowers individuals to participate fully in their personal development and the development of their society (Bhargava et al., 2015; Sørensen, 2018).

Literacy is also seen as a catalyst for sustainable development in that it facilitates lifelong learning; ascertains better engagement in society; ameliorates child and family health and nutrition; curbs poverty and expands life opportunities (McKay, 2018; Rieckmann, 2017, UNESCO, 2015). Furthermore, literacy has been regarded as a means of “identification, understanding, interpretation, creation, and communication in an increasingly digital, text-mediated, information-rich, and fast-changing world” (Yusuf & Mairiga, 2017, p. 155).

UNESCO defines literacy as:

The ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, develop their

knowledge and potential, and participate fully in their community and wider society (Montoya, 2018, p. 1).

This perspective of literacy takes into consideration the specific context and the wider context of the learner. An individual's ability to read and write helps them to stay abreast with current events, communicate effectively, and perceive the issues that are shaping their society.

The specific context of the learner allows him/her to use different forms of language in everyday life to operate in his/her society. In PIRLS 2016 Reading Framework, reading literacy is defined as:

The ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual. Readers can construct meaning from texts in a variety of forms. They read to learn, to participate in communities of readers in school and everyday life, and for enjoyment (Mullis, Martin, & Sainsbury, 2016, p. 11).

What stands out in this definition is the motivation for literacy which could be a demand by society or valued by the learner. This allows individuals to use various approaches to understand the connection between text and meaning so that the reader can read the world and bring about transformation (Vasquez, Janks, & Comber, 2019).

The increasing support and advocacy for literacy efforts have encouraged various stakeholders to continue to work to step up the number of children and adults around the world who can read, write, calculate and communicate either in a language of wider communication or in a minority language. Over the past few years, the increasing efforts have contributed to raising the literacy rate and more resources are being invested in advocacy programmes regarding literacy to ensure that more people become literate.

In a rapidly changing world, the growing literacy efforts seek to facilitate the use of both analogue and digital approaches to enable individuals to achieve various goals of reading and writing. Ideally, the amazing energy and resources put in place to encourage literacy efforts and to guarantee the dignity of every human being irrespective of their context should facilitate the attainment of literacy outcomes. However, the increasing support for literacy has not guaranteed an increase in outcomes. For example, in some contexts students have demonstrated a declining interest in learning their language despite increasing efforts (Mugo, Kaburu, Limboro, & Kimutai, 2011; Piper, 2010; Piper & Mugenda, 2012; Shaykhislamov, 2020). Although current data indicates that the global adult literacy rate is 86% (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020; The World Bank Group, 2021), it has been observed that a considerable number still need to acquire the skills of reading, writing, and calculating so that they can access information and various opportunities that can contribute to personal and community development. Recent statistics show that about 775 million adults lack basic reading and writing skills and approximately 60.7 million children are out of school or rarely attend school (Batra, 2021). In sub-Saharan Africa, figures show that there has been a decline in efforts to curb the drop-out rates in schools. An estimated “244 million children and youth between the ages of 6 and 18 were out of school in 2021, of which 118.5 million were girls and 125.5 million were boys” (Antoninis et al., 2020).

There are divergent views regarding the cause of declining outcomes in literacy programmes. In research conducted in the Spanish context, declining outcomes in the learning of the minority languages (Basque, Catalan, or Galician) were connected to the existence of diglossia between Spanish, the minority languages, and English where students were motivated to enrol in programmes that promoted these minority languages but dropped along the line because they

perceived more benefits in learning in Spanish and English than continuing to learn the minority languages (Lasagabaster, 2017).

In other cases, declining outcomes have been blamed on the fact that literacy efforts are carried out as a demand but not as what is valued by the learners. In such contexts, there could be compulsory schooling and literacy programmes, but participants “have remained without sufficient competencies in reading and writing to fully participate in their society” (Hanemann, 2015, p. 10). Some declining outcomes could also be connected to the lack of acquisition of contemporary skills that can help learners to continue to navigate through lifelong opportunities (Goldie, 2016). Despite the unwavering commitment of major stakeholders to support various literacy efforts around the world, there are still several restrictions that have hindered many from learning the basic skills of reading and writing. Research shows that despite the progress made over the past five decades, at least 773 million adults and youths around the world, lack the basic skills of reading and writing (Julayanont et al., 2015; Khuluvhe, 2021).

Learning outcomes could also be influenced by the gaps that exist in the learning environment. These gaps could come because of families or the socio-political changes of the communities in which the literacy programmes are operating. With increasing natural disasters, wars, and pandemics, many countries, and communities around the world have continued to experience severe implications on the outcomes of their literacy programmes (Schleussner, Donges, Donner, & Schellnhuber, 2016; Polinkevych, Khovrak, Trynchuk, Klapkiv, & Volynets, 2021). In Africa, where there is the emergence of several armed conflicts or wars, stakeholders have observed significant variations in the learning outcomes of literacy provisions. Wars or conflicts have had severe effects on the learning environment and have affected the daily lives of

people (Joshi, Hughes, & Sisk, 2015; Kadir et al., 2018; McMullen et al., 2012; Mingst, Karns, & Lyon, 2018). This is the experience of the Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy (CABTAL) which has observed a drop in participation and variations in learning outcomes in a literacy programme facilitated in the Northwest region of Cameroon due to persisting socio-political changes that have affected the learning outcomes of a mother tongue literacy programme operating in the area. This study will investigate the impact of socio-political changes on the development and implementation of a mother tongue literacy programme that seeks to provide a second chance and lifelong learning opportunities.

There is varied literature on the effects of conflict on learning programmes. However, almost all studies focus on available data to estimate the impact of conflict on schooling or formal education attainment. Nevertheless, to investigate the impact of socio-political changes on the outcomes of a mother-tongue-based literacy programme which is already plagued by other challenges like colonial legacies, government policies on language use, and the language attitudes of individuals enrolled in the mother-tongue literacy programme will require a more extensive approach (Wiley & García, 2016). This would require data, which are not very easy to elicit in conflict-affected environments. For example, speaking to learners in the socio-political environment who have been traumatised by their daily experiences required tact and emotional intelligence in order not to get evasive responses from the participants. In most cases, the impact of conflict is addressed at a macro level but it would be desirable to measure the impact of conflict at a very basic level of detail, which means getting firsthand information from those who are residents in the conflict area and who are enrolled in the mother tongue literacy programme as learners, teachers or facilitators. This research seeks to bring a contribution of this perspective to

the existing literature on the impact of conflict on learning programmes. This research investigates the impact of ongoing sociopolitical changes on the outcomes of a mother tongue literacy programme in the Northwest of Cameroon. We use primary data from learners, teachers, and literacy programme facilitators.

This research contributes to the literature on the impact of conflicts on learning programmes in three ways. First, it provides an analysis of the impact of sociopolitical changes on the outcomes of an informal literacy programme in Cameroon. Second, this research contributes to previous research on the impact of conflicts on learning programmes by providing qualitative data from individuals who are residents in the area of conflict and are involved in the learning programme. Third, this research does not only look at the negative effects of conflict on the literacy programme but brings out the positive effects of the conflict on the mother tongue literacy programme.

This dissertation proceeds as follows. Chapter 1 presents the general background to the research presenting the research problem statement, aims, the significance of the research, and research questions. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature by providing a theoretical and conceptual framework for this research, a description of the context of the mother tongue literacy programme, an empirical review of the impact of conflicts on learning outcomes, various literacy paradigms, and strategies for mother tongue literacy. Chapter 3 presents empirical strategies implemented in the collection and analysis of data. Chapter 4 presents the results while chapter 5 discusses the results and draws conclusions on possible applications of the findings.

1.1 Mother Tongue-Based Literacy as a ‘Second Chance’ for Many

The design of appropriate mother-tongue-based literacy programmes in ethnolinguistic contexts in Africa is quite a challenging endeavour (Opoku-Amankwa, Edu-Buandoh, & Brew-Hammond, 2015; Ouane & Glanz, 2011). Irrespective of the efforts of various stakeholders to contribute to successful mother-tongue-based literacy programmes, it is evident that there cannot be a ‘one size fit all’ perspective on how to develop such literacy programmes. However, in the context of Cameroon where more than 280 languages are spoken (Anchimbe, 2006), there has been an increasing trend toward the documentation and standardisation of Cameroonian languages. Language documentation activities have targeted mostly rural areas where the majority of the population is not able to access information that has been published in official languages. In addition to language documentation activities, civil society organisations like the Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy (CABTAL), are involved in the translation of the Bible into several Cameroonian languages. During the process of translating the Bible, some literacy activities are carried out to facilitate the process for speakers of the language to read the translated Bible. However, in recent times, the demand for mother-tongue literacy has gone beyond religious purposes to include accountancy and social mobility. With the increasing demand for mother-tongue literacy, mother-tongue literacy programmes, therefore, provide a second chance to many in different language communities. Several mother-tongue-based literacy programmes are seen as opportunities that allow learners to acquire more than just the skills of reading and writing. Increasingly, being literate in one’s mother tongue is linked with several benefits ranging from individual to community development (Dahm & De Angelis, 2018). While more Cameroonians are using English, French, and other languages of wider communication like Pidgin and Fulfulde

for their daily operations, many others can only express their dreams, ideas, and feelings in their mother tongue. In several communities where people have limited exposure to the official languages (English and French), they not only face challenges in understanding and speaking these languages but they struggle with the reading and writing of these official languages. Such a scenario is common in countries with a colonial past, where indigenous languages are still highly used for social mobility and other aspects of daily life. In most cases, regardless of the enthusiasm to learn, several people are still deprived of accessing important information about health, agriculture, human rights, and other life-saving information because they are not literate in the official languages. The mother tongue literacy programme was originally designed to help several adults who either dropped out of school because of a lack of finances to continue their education or because of other challenges that they encountered during their expedition of learning how to read and write in the official languages. The literacy programme targets people of varied ages, ethnicities, and various categories of vulnerable people living in the context of socio-political changes. Through mother tongue literacy, this section of the population can access important information that previously was communicated only in the official languages. Mother tongue literacy, therefore, provides an opportunity to many who have not had the chance to access important information that was previously available only in official languages.

The mother tongue literacy programme in the Northwest region is delivered mostly in a non-formal style, such as community centres, homes, school buildings, and churches. The Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy (CABTAL) is committed to supporting ongoing literacy efforts amidst the socio-political changes of the North West region of Cameroon.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The recent changes in the socio-political situation of the North West and South West regions of Cameroon have greatly influenced the mother tongue-based literacy programme of the Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy (CABTAL). In an effective and functional mother tongue literacy programme, learners, teachers, literacy programme facilitators, and other stakeholders collaborate to achieve phonemic awareness in the language concerned, basic reading and writing, an improvement in the vocabulary of the learners, fluency in reading, comprehension, and an application of reading and writing skills to solve some problems at an individual or community level (Benson, 2022; Olshtain & Sayag, 2022). However, the socio-political nature of the learning environment (Lingard, Sellar, & Baroutsis, 2015) has resulted in several challenges and unresolved expectations from various stakeholders (Jamila, 2012). CABTAL facilitates a mother tongue-based literacy programme among eighty-five (85) language communities in Cameroon and a number of these languages are found in the North West and South West Regions which have been affected by the ongoing socio-political changes. The persistence of the socio-political changes in these regions has generated challenges related to the enrollment, teaching and learning outcomes and the commitment of various stakeholders of the mother tongue literacy programme in the area. With sudden changes, it is worth noting that the implementation of the literacy programme may require more extensive efforts, to face the challenges that these changes may bring (Badugela, 2012).

The persistence of the socio-political changes coupled with existing negative language attitudes (Chiatoh, 2014; Chiatoh & Akumbu, 2014; Mforteh, 2008) has reduced the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme by a constant failure to meet up with planned literacy

activities and the non-attainment of some components of the literacy programme. Failure to understand the impact of the socio-political changes on the mother tongue literacy programme may result in a mismatch between projected and achieved outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme and this may even lead to a stop of the literacy programme. If nothing is done, the mother tongues concerned may eventually die.

However, there are great opportunities for the mother tongue-based literacy programme to survive in these contexts (Richards, 2015).

For the literacy programme to continue to thrive, the programme designers and implementers need to intentionally incorporate some modifications in teaching methods and desired learning outcomes to reflect the realities of the evolving socio-political context (Swain & Lapkin, 2005). Learners and facilitators will need to learn to think in creative ways to survive the crisis while managing the effects of the sociopolitical changes (Shrivastava & Statler, 2012).

1.3 Purpose of the Study, Research Aims, and Objectives

In the last four decades, several countries especially those in Sub-Saharan Africa have been affected by armed conflicts (Anosike, 2018; Boerma et al., 2019; Fjelde & Höglund, 2016). Research has showed that such conflicts have had significant effects on learning and learning outcomes. During such conflicts, the young and the old are exposed to various forms of danger which may affect their daily life and their future. In most cases, these armed conflicts have affected learning outcomes by provoking a decline in school completion or a drop in the attainment of learning goals. Armed conflicts may result to injuries, death, disabilities, hunger, unplanned movements and other bi-products of insecurity (Burde, Guven, Kelcey, Lahmann, & Al-Abbadi, 2015; Khamis, 2015; Poirier, 2012). In several contexts, education is one of the most affected

sectors during conflicts or socio-political changes (Malik, 2018; Milton, 2019). The educational sector is often targeted during armed conflicts because in most cases conflicting parties assume that an attack on the educational system will attract the attention of the government and the international community.

The general assumption is that conflicts or wars have a negative impact on learning environments and learning outcomes. In this research, we do not begin with this assumption. We, however, approach this study with the intention of exploring possible negative and positive effects of socio-political changes on the mother tongue literacy programme.

The purpose of this research is to show the impact of the socio-political changes in Cameroon on the mother tongue literacy programme of the Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy (CABTAL). An understanding of this impact could be instrumental in the modification of the objectives, teaching methods and desired learning outcomes for the mother tongue literacy programme.

To this end, the research will examine existing literacy efforts and their efficacy for people who have been affected by the socio-political changes of the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon.

This study aims to probe into the impact of the socio-political changes on the teachers, learners and on the CABTAL literacy programme facilitators, by examining the objectives that were set for the mother tongue literacy programme before the socio-political changes and the degree of attainment of those objectives. This study will examine possible modifications to be made on the mother tongue literacy programme as a result of the socio-political changes and will

also cosely investigate and analyse the implications of the socio-political changes on the future of the mother tongue literacy programme operating in the area.

As part of the sustainable development goals, adopted by the United Nations in September 2015, the UN General Assembly enacted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in January 2016 (UN, 2016). Among the 17 sustainable development goals, goal 4 lays particular emphasis on the attainment of literacy and numeracy skills by adults. Several scholars have indicated the important role played by education in promoting sustainability (Jeronen, Palmberg, & Yli-Panula, 2017, Shephard, 2010). Despite such support, McCloskey (2015) argues that there needs to be a critical reawakening to mobilise various stakeholders for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Current realities such as socio-political changes in various parts of developing nations could be an indicator of the need for critical reflection in ongoing literacy and education programmes in such environments.

During the years I served as a literacy specialist and eventually as a literacy consultant for CABTAL literacy programmes in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon, I was progressively bothered by the gap between acquiring the skills of reading and writing and the humanistic needs of the literacy learners and the literacy teachers as well. These needs ranged from lack of means to pay hospital bills, limited resources to cover transportation costs to teach literacy classes that were far away from the homes of the learners or literacy teachers, the destruction of farm produce due to inter-tribal conflicts in some cases, and very little means to buy farm inputs because farm produce was sold at very miserable prices. I had the privilege of being involved in the conceptualisation and development of a functional literacy project in 5 communities of the Northwest Region of Cameroon, in which apart from basic reading and writing, participants were

also able to learn practical skills in the area of human rights and social issues, business, agriculture, health, hygiene and nutrition, as a way of empowering them to handle their humanistic needs after learning how to read and write. After implementing the functional literacy programme for about 5 years, there was a glimpse of hope as literacy participants began to discuss openly what affected them and their communities. I continued to follow up with these teachers and learners who were able to start and manage their own savings groups from which they could have loans at affordable interest rates to buy farm inputs, there was a reduction of domestic violence in several homes as people participated in the functional literacy classes. In some of the communities, participants started income-generating activities like animal rearing through which they were able to raise resources to send children to school and take care of some of their basic needs. Just before I thought the functional literacy programme was bringing hope to the teachers and learners of the functional literacy programme, a new reality emerged. The socio-political changes of the Northwest and Southwest region was unexpected but considering that it persisted, there was the need to think otherwise regarding the literacy programme.

The quest for a literacy programme that is relevant to learners and teachers facing different physical and emotional instabilities is a major source of motivation for this research and the hope is that the insights drawn from the findings of this research would be applied when redesigning a literacy programme for the affected communities and other communities that may have similar realities. The focus of this research will not be on all the communities in which CABTAL is carrying out the mother-tongue literacy programme. An assessment of the entire literacy programme of CABTAL will be an area of interest for further research. The efforts here will be focused exclusively on examining the impact of the sociopolitical changes on the mother-tongue

literacy programme that is located in the Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen and Weh communities of the Northwest Region of Cameroon.

The next section presents the nature and significance of the research.

1.4 Nature and Significance of the Study

1.4.1 Nature of the Study

With a focus on the mother tongue literacy programme in the North West area, this research will make use of an action research case study. Action research constitutes a metamorphic act of acclimating to knowledge conception in that action researchers attempt to take knowledge production outside the gatepost of non-amateur knowledge makers (McNiff, 2016; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2017). Action research is a 'systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday lives' (Stringer, 2014, p. 1). To a greater extent, action research is considered an outstanding tool to improve the teaching and learning process (Johnson, 2012; Mills, 2014). Using action research will allow for an in-depth understanding of the socio-political changes, and will provide an opportunity to suggest desired changes to the mother tongue literacy programme as a way to generate knowledge and empower various stakeholders (Amran et al., 2013; Baccarne, Mechant, & Schuurman, 2014; Kazadi, Lievens, & Mahr, 2016). On the other hand, this research is a case study. Although there is no one definition of case study, this research draws inspiration from the work of Heale and Twycross, (2018), who consider a case study as 'an intensive study about a person, a group of people or a unit, which is aimed to generalise over several units'. A case study can also be depicted as an in-depth, step-by-step inquiry of a single person, group, community or some other unit in which the researcher studies and analyses in-depth data concerning various variables (Hancock, Algozzine,

& Lim, 2021). A case study is a research tool which helps the researcher to carry out a detailed analysis of a particular or defined number of units (Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills, 2017). In writing about qualitative research methodology Merriam (1998, p. 6) argues that “the key philosophical assumption upon which all types of qualitative research are based, is the view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds”. As stakeholders of the mother tongue literacy programme adapt to the realities of the socio-political changes of the North West region, an action research case study will allow for an application of knowledge to solve some existing challenges of the mother tongue literacy programme. (Coghlan, 2019). Such an approach will inform possible modifications to the mother tongue literacy programme. Action research is undertaken with collaboration between the researcher and the participants. Action research would facilitate a reflection on historical, political, economic, and geographic issues related to the mother tongue literacy programme to make sense of circumstances and experiences that need action to take place for the situation to improve. With the combination of action research and case study, I will seek to explore the experiences of learners, teachers and the CABTAL literacy programme facilitators of the mother tongue-based literacy programme as they operate in the socio-political context (Skovdal & Cornish, 2015). The choice of the qualitative approach is motivated by its ability to allow the researcher to explore the situation from “a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 244)

In the context of this research, the use of a qualitative research method will allow me to have an in-depth understanding of how the socio-political changes have affected the performance of learners, teachers and CABTAL Literacy programme facilitators. Furthermore, as this research

focuses on exploring the impact of the socio-political changes in a specific context, the need for a qualitative research methodology quickly surfaced. A qualitative approach will allow me to get involved in the daily routines of learners and teachers to investigate the situation. Additionally, qualitative research allows the researcher to explore complex human experiences which may not easily be concluded as a simple cause-and-effect process for uncovering predictable outcomes (Cheffy, 2008).

Using a quantitative research method could cause several people to fill in questionnaires and other documents to please the researcher, which would not necessarily provide accurate data. Secondly, I would want to capture the experiences of learners, teachers and literacy programme facilitators of the mother tongue literacy programme as they face the challenges of the socio-political changes and seek to accomplish the learning outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. Such an investigation could have been difficult to follow through with a quantitative methodology. Finally, as an insider to the context, the aim is to have a culturally meaningful representation of both the context and the topic under investigation (Jackson, 2004; Papen, 2005; Young, 2011). This research method will be applied with clear research questions that have been designed to enable me to proceed.

1.4.2 Significance of the Study

Considering that literacy is understood and applied differently in diverse contexts, the findings of this research could be instrumental to inform the designing and implementation of literacy programmes in various contexts, especially in challenging circumstances like the socio-political context of the North West Region of Cameroon. This research seeks to bring a contribution to ongoing discussions regarding literacy in crisis areas and to help literacy

programme organisers to maximise the effectiveness of literacy programmes amid diverse challenges.

For the Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy (CABTAL), this research will help the CABTAL administration to modify the objectives, teaching methods and desired outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. Literacy programme facilitators will be able to emphasise specific aspects of the literacy curriculum that can enable learners and literacy teachers to achieve key learning and teaching objectives. The quest to suggest a literacy programme that is relevant to specific contexts is a major source of motivation for this research and the hope is that the insights drawn from the findings would be applied when designing literacy programmes for communities that have similar realities to those of the North West region. In addition to uncovering the multiplicity of perceptions underlying the literacy programme, this study will help to improve my understanding and to make suggestions regarding literacy in a specific social context. This study will be guided by several research questions.

1.5 Research Questions and Theoretical Assumptions

This research aims to show how the socio-political changes has affected the mother-tongue literacy programme in the North West of Cameroon. The focus of this research will be on how the situation has forced the literacy programme to change and how an understanding and management of the change (Main, 2017) could be instrumental to the modification of learning outcomes of ongoing literacy initiatives to accommodate current realities. This research will not make an assumption and try to test. On the contrary, the researcher seeks to get into the research activity to try to understand the unfolding of different phenomena. The research will, therefore, use an

inductive approach that seeks to elicit information and make observations by examining the impact of the socio-political changes in the context of the mother tongue literacy programme by considering the perceptions of participants about the situation (Creswell, 2009; Finlay, 2009; Liu, 2016). To this end, the research intends to examine the different perceptions of learners, literacy teachers and literacy programme facilitators on how the socio-political changes have affected learning outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. To achieve this aim, the research seeks to address the following questions.

Q1. What Are Some Results that Have Come About in the Mother Tongue Literacy Programme Because of the Socio-Political Changes?

Q2. What Modifications Should Be Made in the Mother Tongue Literacy Programme to Accommodate the Current Results?

Q3. What are the Implications of these Modifications on the Future of the Mother Tongue Literacy Programme?

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

To examine and establish the impact of the socio-political changes in Cameroon on the mother tongue literacy programme and to suggest possible modifications of objectives, teaching methods and desired to-learn outcomes for the mother tongue literacy programme, this chapter, which prefaces part two of this dissertation, is related with the theoretical framework adopted for this research. I will begin by discussing and examining possible theories that were considered for this research before presenting the theoretical foundation that corroborates the situating of this study. After describing the context of the field in which this research takes place, intending to give an overview of the historical background of the socio-political changes in the North West and South West Regions and the influence of colonialism on culture and language attitudes in Cameroon, I will examine the application of a humanistic approach to the social constructivist theory to the context of the mother tongue literacy programme. At the end of this chapter, I intend to examine some strategies for mother-tongue literacy by looking at some types of literacy programmes. I conclude the chapter by examining the role of technology in mother tongue literacy programmes. In the next section, I examine the theoretical framework for this research.

2.1 Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

In an attempt to further explore the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme, I will examine some theoretical perspectives before elaborating on the theory which has been quite instrumental in building the perspective of my research. In the social sciences, researchers on some occasions combine theoretical perspectives to explain the phenomenon under investigation, to attain saturation of data and reliability of results

(Fusch & Ness, 2015; Hayashi Jr, Abib, & Hoppen, 2019). Using more than one theoretical view in a given research is referred to as theoretical triangulation (Denzin, 1978; Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2018; Roulston, 2018). Theoretical triangulating can facilitate the researcher's perception of the phenomenon under study and this can contribute to increasing the validity of the findings (Ngulube, Mathipa, & Gumbo, 2015; Noble & Heale, 2019). In situations where using a single theoretical perspective will be inadequate to capture a phenomenon that has many sides, researchers may employ a mixture of theories to better explain and depict the phenomenon under investigation. In the context of this research, the socio-political changes are multifaceted and therefore may require the use of two or more theoretical perspectives to study the situation to present a better understanding of the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. However, choosing these theoretical perspectives comes with some challenges because of existing multiple and frequently contravening views that exist in the various theoretical perspectives. Nevertheless, every effort will be made to ensure that the theoretical perspectives chosen for this research will facilitate the process of attaining the *raison d'être* of this research.

In the same vein, this research hinges on a conceptual framework, which includes a description of the main factors, conceptions, or variables that are being investigated in research and the presumed connection among those factors, concepts, and variables. (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2018; Ngulube, Mathipa, & Gumbo, 2015; Tamene, 2016). Although some researchers use the terms 'conceptual framework' and 'theoretical framework' to refer to the same idea, others make a distinction between the two terms (Gregory, 2020). In this research, the conceptual framework is based on several perspectives of literacy and particularly a perspective of mother

tongue literacy which helps to determine the relationship between the socio-political changes and the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. With several definitions of literacy, this research seeks to contribute to the ongoing discussions regarding concepts like mother tongue literacy, literacy programme, socio-political changes, and learning outcomes. These concepts are examined progressively in this chapter depending on their relevance to the particular section. In order to apply some degree of pragmatism, I will first introduce the concept of mother tongue literacy before developing the discussion on the theoretical perspectives and other relevant concepts examined during this research.

2.1.1 What is Mother Tongue Literacy?

Mother tongue literacy is one of the key areas in which CABTAL excels in Cameroon. In the context of this study, mother tongue literacy refers to the use of indigenous languages to facilitate the process of reading, writing and applying the skills of reading and writing to encourage the active participation of various stakeholders to use their mother tongue to construct and explain their world, articulate their thoughts and add new concepts to what they already know. Although some scholars consider western education as the panacea for the ills of education in Africa (Ukwuoma, 2016, p. 1), it is also possible that mother tongue literacy especially in indigenous African languages can facilitate the transfer of knowledge from the context of these indigenous languages into a wider context of society (Perez & Alieto, 2018). Literacy in the context of CABTAL is attained through training language community members on how to teach basic reading and writing and functional literacy in the mother tongues. Through mother tongue literacy, CABTAL can ensure that various materials available in the mother tongue are effectively used by the targeted population. The mother tongue literacy process is facilitated through the development

of curriculums and learning materials for use in different socio-cultural settings including; neighbourhoods, churches, schools, homes and other relevant contexts. The mother tongue literacy programmes of CABTAL are facilitated by a team of well-trained consultants and specialists with great experience in African languages, and Cameroon languages in particular. This mother tongue literacy programme is motivated by the fact that:

- The mother tongue develops an individual's personal, social and cultural identity.
- Using the mother tongue helps an individual to develop their critical thinking and literacy skills.
- Skills learnt in the mother tongue literacy programme could be transferred to other languages.

“Mother languages in a multilingual approach are essential components of quality education, which is itself the foundation for empowering women and men and their societies.” (Bokova, 2016, p. 2)

2.1.2 Mother Tongue Literacy as a Humanistic Construction

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in debates that focus on the importance of sociocultural and intercultural perspectives in the learning and teaching process (Faas, Hajisoteriou, & Angelides, 2014, Zeidler, 2016). Advocating for the importance of the sociocultural context in learning, it has been stated that “most language learning takes place in social and cultural contexts that play a role in the learning process” (Hulstijn, et al, 2014, p. 365). The learning theories that have influenced recent language learning and teaching efforts have been, behaviourism, cognitivism, constructivism and Humanism (Al-Jarrah, Mansor, Talafhah, & Al-Jarrah, 2019, Amineh & Asl, 2015, Muhajirah, 2020). In the context of this study, I will examine three learning theories that seemingly overlap yet are particular in their understanding of the learning and teaching process. The learning theories were considered because of their historical

and contemporary relevance to language learning and teaching in particular social environments and the implications of these perspectives on the mother tongue literacy programme.

The behaviourist perspective

The Behaviorist learning theory owes a deep debt of gratitude to the work of John B. Watson who first coined the term behaviourism to mean the specific study of human behaviour with the ethical goal to provide the basis of prediction and control of human beings (Watson, 1913). In 1939, B. F. Skinner took the discussion on behaviourism further by elaborating on the aspect of radical behaviourism which focused on “finding ways to make life, culture and the world better through behaviour analysis” (de Melo, de Castro, & de Rose, 2015, p. 39). One key assumption of the behaviourist philosophy is that the learner is passive and responds to environmental stimuli. Furthermore, it is assumed that the learner comes into the learning environment as *tabula rasa* (clean slate) and his/her behaviour is shaped through positive or negative reinforcement. This learning theory emphasises changes in behaviour that result from stimulus-response connections established by the learner. One contention of this theory is the idea of ‘operant conditioning’ which posits that there can be three responses from the environment (neutral operants, reinforcers and punishers) that can follow behaviour (Zhou & Brown, 2015).

The contribution of the behaviourist theory on the aspect of motivating learners through reinforcement is relevant to the mother tongue literacy programme where learners and teachers are facing socio-political challenges and need to be motivated to continue learning and teaching. However, with the realities of the socio-political environment which already has a huge bearing on the mother tongue literacy programme, the highly controversial behaviourist theory with its

mechanic and reductionist philosophy which does not encourage rational thinking of the individual might not be relevant to this research. Learners and teachers will need to rather exercise rational thinking to continue learning and surviving in the sociopolitical environment. I will next consider the constructivist perspective and its possible application to this discussion.

The constructivist perspective

The Constructivist perspective of learning is founded on the premise that as people reflect on their experiences they construct their understanding and knowledge of the world in which they live. Historically, the constructivist perspectives of learning have their origins in the work of Dewey (1929), Bruner (1961), Vygotsky (1962), and Piaget (1980). The several views of proponents of the constructivist perspective indicate that there is no ‘rigid dogmatic’ perspective of constructivism (Kiraly, 2014). The central idea of constructivism is that individual learners are required to actively take part in the learning processes to construct their knowledge on previous knowledge (Bada & Olusegun, 2015, Mogashoa, 2014). With the view of constructivism as a continuum (which includes various aspects such as cognitive constructivism, radical constructivism and social constructivism), the concept of social constructivism considers that social relationships and interactions actively contribute to creating knowledge and reality (Lee & Bonk, 2016). This perspective is in contrast with the behaviourist perspective which considers learning as a passive transmission of information. The mother tongue literacy programme is built on the premise of situated learning, which considers that learning should be applicable in the same environment in which the learning takes place (Catalano, 2015). However, with the current realities of the complex socio-political environment of the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon, and in the context of the mother tongue literacy programme, applying a constructivist

approach to learning requires that teachers allow individual learners to construct knowledge differently based on their reality of need created by the sociopolitical changes.

On the other hand, social constructivism uniquely views reality and the world. The Social constructivist theory focuses on how individuals give meaning to experiences, interactions and relationships (Bozkurt, 2017; Cottone, 2017). Social constructivism is rooted in the work of Lev Vygotsky (1978) and emphasises that more learning takes place through collaboration with others and the interaction between the learner and his/her social context.

Social constructivism seeks to examine how reality is created and how individuals ascribe meaning to the experiences that they go through amidst societal and cultural rules, norms and expectations. The basic assumptions of social constructivism comprise of the following: (1) Each individual has her/his reality and way of viewing the world that cannot be fully understood by another person; (2) an individual's reality is based on societal rules and norms, culture, history and the person's interaction within these structures and forces; (3) the meaning of such interactions and societal forces are processed through one's cognition, which forms her/his reality; (4) the only way to attempt to understand another person's reality is through the use of communication; and (5) there is no one reality or one truth (Teater, 2020, p. 32-33).

In the context of the socio-political changes, there are several expectations and a new normal that has a bearing on the learners, teachers and literacy programme facilitators of the mother tongue literacy programme. With social interactions greatly restricted by the socio-political environment, applying a fixed constructivist approach to this research might not be of particular interest to the current discussion since teachers are required to provide the necessary orientation to help learners in such challenging circumstances. A social-constructivist approach will therefore help to identify

the connection between events, and the response of different people to the event. Not only will each participant have different practical and emotional experiences about the impact of the socio-political changes, but capturing the description of these experiences needs a more interactive communication approach which will help the participants to maintain their dignity and identity (Yuan & Lee, 2016). In the next section, I present a humanistic perspective and its efficacy for this research.

The humanistic perspective

The humanistic perspective is rooted in the work of Abraham Maslow (1962), Carl Rogers (1954), and James F. T. Bugental (1964). According to humanistic theories, individuals are viewed as conscious beings, able to make meaning from phenomena in a purposeful way. One prominent perspective in this humanistic philosophy is Maslow's research into the hierarchy of human needs which classifies human needs into five categories (Physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem and self actualization) to help the individual to achieve personal growth through Self-Actualization.

According to Carl Rogers, for a person to develop self-actualisation, they need an environment that enables them to feel, experience, and behave in ways that are consistent with their self-image and self-worth. Such an environment provides them with authenticity, acceptance, and empathy (Glazzard, & Trussler, 2019; Neufeld, 2022; Stevenson-Taylor, & Mansell, 2012). Carl Rogers believed that humans have one basic motive, which is the tendency to fulfill their potential and achieve the highest level of their existence (Aliakbari, Parvin, Heidari, & Haghani, 2015; Proctor, Tweed, & Morris, 2016). However, human beings can only achieve their full potential if the right conditions are in place. Therefore, if the self-concept of an individual and the external constraints are distorted, the individual cannot be in a state of congruence. Self-

actualisation cannot be achieved if the person is not in a state of congruence (Buckley, 2017; McGuire, 2015).

According to James F. T. Bugental (1964), “We live in a multifaceted reality which profoundly affects what we experience and what opportunities and obstacles we encounter in carrying out this basic responsibility for our lives.” Generally, life is influenced by several factors including where one is born, whether they are female or male, the nature of the family into which one is born, the society in which one lives, and the circumstances surrounding life at a given moment in time.

According to the perspective of Carl Rogers, learning is learner-centred and the teacher can serve as a facilitator. With the learner-centred approach, “the learner has the freedom to plan and control his learning by choosing what, when and how to learn in compliance with their own needs, interests and abilities” (Boyadzhieva, 2016, p. 36).

It has been noted that the humanistic view of learning provides a platform for “personal growth and the development of knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in the world” (Johnson, 2014, p. 2). In this philosophy of learning, learners take responsibility and make choices about what they want to learn, and they contribute to setting standards and evaluating their learning. Consequently, the experiences of learners in the learning environment should enable them to mature positive relations with other learners (Biesta, 2015, Luna Scott, 2015).

A humanistic approach recognizes that each learner is endowed with “unique dignity critical reason, moral sensitivity, creative imagination, autonomous will, and unique personality” (Aloni, 2011, p. 35-46). In the context of the sociopolitical changes surrounding the mother tongue literacy programme, it will be hard to examine the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme

without considering the various needs of the learners induced by the socio-political changes. An understanding of the student's unique needs will enable facilitators and programme designers to redesign or modify the teaching strategy to support the individual learner's intellectual and emotional development. This can be achieved by ensuring that literacy classes are located in a non-threatening environment that supports learning. Following Maslow's hierarchy of needs, this research will examine the areas of needs created by the sociopolitical changes and the impact of these needs on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy program.

Approaching learning and teaching from the humanistic perspective helps the literacy programme providers to see potential, creativity, hope, purpose and ability in the learners and teachers of the mother tongue literacy programme as they face the socio-political changes. As individuals experience the impact of the socio-political changes, they are conscious about making sense of their experiences and attributing meaning to what they are going through (Sharf, 2016). In Roger's Experiential Learning Theory, the teacher is required to tailor learning activities to incorporate the daily experiences of learners. This will help learners to identify learning methods and materials that take into cognizance their realities (Kohonen, Jaatinen, Kaikkonen, & Lehtovaara, 2014). Approaching this research from a humanistic perspective will help to establish new paradigms on how the specific needs of learners are considered by the teachers as they teach in the socio-political environment. The humanistic approach is in line with the Freirean approach to learning which posits that knowledge stems from the process of reflection on activities performed by active subjects during the transformation of their natural and social worlds (Grollios, Giroux, Gounari, & Macedo, 2015).

Although the humanistic perspective has been criticized for being narrow in considering individual perspectives and limited in terms of its generalizability or transferability, proponents of this approach have argued that in-depth sampling can lead to generalization since the social world is composed of concrete empirical phenomena which exist independently of particular human beings. Furthermore, the humanistic approach does not consider generalization as a goal. It should also be noted that the complementarity of theories (e.g. humanistic, social-constructivist) has brought new research perspectives in the past few decades. Consequently, as we considered the realities of the socio-political environment, with unpredictable happenings that cause fear, defeat, and stress, there was the need for a humanistic approach to capture these feelings. A humanistic perspective will therefore promote and respect the fundamental rights of the learners to learn and the rights to feel as human beings. However, emphasizing the humanitarian aspects of the mother tongue literacy programme might distract learners from achieving some key learning objectives (Freire, 2015). Nevertheless, it is worth noting that learning without humanization might produce stereotype human beings without a developed personality to promote baronial values (Firdaus & Mariyat, 2017).

Applying a humanistic approach to the social-constructivist theory

What does it mean to apply a humanistic approach to social constructivism? In this section, I will highlight a few theoretical and methodological perspectives regarding the relevance of applying a humanistic approach to social constructivism as a theoretical perspective to this research. In seeking to understand various categories of needs created by the socio-political changes and how these have had an impact on the participants and the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy

programme, there was a need to find the easiest, most significant, and non-threatening way to encourage participants to share their views regarding the impact of the socio-political changes. With regular gunshots, abductions, and threatening phone calls from unidentified people, we intend to find out how the learners, teachers, and literacy programme facilitators handle these stressful experiences as they continue to make efforts to achieve the goals of the mother tongue literacy programme. We sought to understand how participants continue to make efforts to find coping techniques and how they demonstrate a deeper understanding of the socio-political environment (Saunders, Kotzias, & Ramchand, 2019).

Practically speaking, having served in the socio-political environment as a literacy specialist and literacy consultant, it became evident that there was a need to understand how the socio-political changes have affected individuals and the broader context of the mother tongue literacy programme. First and foremost, considering that the socio-political changes of the Northwest and Southwest regions is a social phenomenon, that takes place in a specific context, it was important to examine the several social forces that influence the socio-political environment. The socio-political situation has affected various aspects of social life (Dafouz & Smit, 2016; Orne, 2017). The socio-political changes have caused damaging effects on the physical and psychological health of learners and teachers and this had an expanded impact on the mother tongue literacy programme. As I have watched social construction at work in my career as a literacy consultant, several basic life needs that have inhibited learning and teaching have also necessitated the application of a humanistic approach to identify several realities of the socio-political environment. As the research set out to examine the everyday experiences of learners, teachers, and literacy programme facilitators, we wanted to examine how participants viewed the impact of the socio-political

changes and how the learners, teachers, and literacy programme facilitators found ways to navigate the socio-political environment. Since one of the research aims is to suggest positive modifications to the mother tongue literacy programme, the demand to understand the physical and emotional realities of the learners, teachers, and literacy programme facilitators as they shared about the direct and indirect effects of the socio-political changes on the mother tongue literacy programme surfaced. As we interacted with learners, teachers, and literacy programme facilitators, we could observe first-hand that their lived experiences were characterized by frustration, heartache, and tears, mixed with some degree of hope for some. Using a humanistic approach to social constructivism seemed quite relevant to help us capture the reality of these social experiences.

Human experiences constitute a source of knowledge (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2019; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). In engaging with the participants of the mother tongue literacy programme, we desire to capture individual impressions, feelings, and opinions regarding the impact of the socio-political changes. As opposed to the positivist perspective on reality, we intend to focus on a constructivist approach to gaining an understanding of a particular social context (Ward, Hoare, & Gott, 2015). Combining the humanistic and social constructivist perspectives will allow us to be immersed in the details of the context of the mother tongue literacy programme by examining the experiences, emotions, and feelings of the learners, teachers, and literacy programme facilitators. This investigation, therefore, seeks to make sense of the subjective experiences of the participants of the mother tongue literacy programme. In approaching research from this perspective, the researcher's role goes beyond just using the participants as objects of research. We go further by creating a 'safe environment that encourages participants to speak freely about their experiences (Kisfalvi & Oliver, 2015). In an environment where no one seems to be trusted, we intend to help

the participants of this research to tell their own stories as it is regarding the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. We believe their stories will offer a way for us to access their deep understanding of the impact of the socio-political changes. We, therefore, do not approach this research from a perspective of having superior knowledge but being aware of our personal biases, we intend to capture the verbal and non-verbal communications of participants as they share their rich experiences about the socio-political environment of the mother tongue literacy programme (Råheim et al., 2016).

In seeking to capture individual perspectives we intend to bring out a big picture of the realities of the socio-political environment of the mother tongue literacy programme. By sharing their experiences, the participants will rationalize their wealth of knowledge regarding the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. As the participants interact with the socio-political environment, they will make sense of some reality and construct their knowledge concerning survival techniques in the socio-political environment. As the learners, teachers, and literacy programme facilitators engage in the activities of the mother tongue literacy programme, they can build meaningful experiences that can inform the modification of teaching methods and learning outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme.

Applying a humanistic perspective of social constructivism would help the researcher to employ reason, experience, evidence, and respect for the dignity of others to explore and present a more detailed and accurate account of the impact of the socio-political changes on the mother tongue literacy programme (Broudy, 2017). A humanistic approach would also help us to understand how the participants are adapting to the new normal of the socio-political environment.

Applying a humanistic approach to social constructivism will help the researcher to identify the way the learners, teachers, and literacy programme facilitators make sense of their experiences as they face the socio-political changes and how they can adapt to the new demands of the socio-political environment while continuing to learn or teach the mother tongue (DeLamater & Collett, 2019).

Applying a humanistic perspective to social constructivism will require that the literacy programme facilitators be empathetic and have positive regard towards the learners and teachers of the mother tongue literacy programme in the context of the socio-political changes. The literacy programme facilitators will be able to identify the genuine experiences of the learners and teachers and to consider those humanistic needs and experiences while helping them to achieve the desired learning outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. Additionally, applying a humanistic approach to social constructivism will help the researcher to take a position of curiosity concerning the perspectives of learners, teachers, and literacy programme facilitators and how these perspectives influence language learning. Although they all live these experiences, the researcher will approach them with the perspective that the learners and teachers will have their unique view of the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme (Teater, 2020).

This research will therefore through a humanistic social constructivist approach seek to explore the experiences of learners, teachers, and literacy programme facilitators and will identify new constructs that can enable the beneficiaries of the mother tongue literacy programme to continue to achieve better outcomes albeit the socio-political changes. In the next section, I present a description of the setting for this research.

2.2 Field Description

Being a Cameroonian from the North West Region, it seemed appropriate to research the Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen and Weh communities, because it provided an opportunity for me to learn more about the impact of the socio-political changes on the mother tongue literacy programme operating in the area. In addition, as a member of CABTAL, I have been involved in the mother tongue literacy programme of CABTAL in the North West and South West Regions for more than fourteen years. I desired to have a better understanding of the impact of the sociopolitical changes on the mother tongue literacy programme so that it could inform the design and implementation of literacy programmes that would yield better results. However, my research and research findings were not constrained by any expectations from CABTAL. The Socio-political changes in the Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen and Weh areas of the North West Region have been ongoing for over four years and has greatly affected the physical participation of learners in mother tongue literacy classes. This provided preliminary evidence that the impact of the ongoing socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme needed to be studied. Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen and Weh are located in the North West Region of Cameroon, where English is the official language. Pidgin is used as a trade language across the Region. In the Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen and Weh communities, there are learners and teachers of the mother tongue literacy programme who have been affected by the socio-political changes to varying degrees and this guided my choice. Another factor in favour of choosing these communities was their geographical accessibility. CABTAL literacy specialists are working with these communities and I had worked closely with these specialists for over fourteen years, so it was possible and easy

to contact them to assist in making arrangements for my research. These relationships and the ease of contact were extremely helpful. Conducting my research across these communities was quite challenging, nevertheless, to speed up data collection, I decided to take advantage of available technology and social media platforms, where large numbers of people were enrolled for mother-tongue literacy lessons. Having made my decision, I proceeded to design data collection tools to be used to understand the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. In the next section, I will present a picture of the socio-political changes and teaching and learning processes in the mother tongue literacy programme.

2.3 Empirical Review of the impact of Socio-political Changes on Teaching/Learning

In recent times, there has been growing evidence of research on the impact of socio-political changes on learning and teaching. Over the last decade, the number of people, including children and adults, affected by political violence and armed conflict has increased dramatically across the globe (Diwakar, 2015; Slone & Mann, 2016). Such socio-political changes and armed conflicts have impacted adults and children at several levels including economic, social, educational and emotional dimensions (Justino, 2016; Williams, 2016).

Guariso and Verpoorten (2018) carried out a research aimed at exploring how armed violence affected educational outcomes in Rwanda during the genocide and insurgence of the nineties. Their research depended on two population census rounds collected in Rwanda in 1991 and 2002. Using a difference-in-differences identification strategy (Callaway & Sant'Anna, 2021), they investigated the overall, nationwide impact of the violence on schooling, by comparing the

schooling outcomes between a group of individuals whose schooling attainments were unaffected by the armed conflict (pre-genocide census) and a group of individuals whose schooling attainments were affected by the war (post-genocide census). Furthermore, they examined the diversity of the impact across gender and analysed how changes in school enrolment, dropouts, and school delays contributed to the overall change in educational attainments. They also studied the within-country variations of the effects of the armed conflicts on educational outcomes.

The outcome of the described analysis indicated that the violence caused a drop of about 1 year of education for the individuals exposed to the violence at schooling age. Their findings also showed that the drop in educational attainments was slightly larger for girls than for boys. While examining the impact of the violence in the primary and secondary contexts, the results indicated that a drop in primary schooling was affected by increased dropouts and school delays, meanwhile secondary schooling was mainly affected by a drop in enrolments. Finally, in a within-country analysis, they found out that there was no robust link between subnational variations in the drop in schooling and the intensity of the 1994 genocide.

In their research to examine the impact of the conflicts in Northern Ireland on child adjustment, Cummings, Merrilees, Schermerhorn, Goeke-Morey, and Cairns, (2011) using a social-ecological perspective, examined the implications of such adjustments on families and the learning of children. Learning environments with such adverse ecologies generate physical, psychological and emotional needs in the lives of both learners and teachers (Kosciw, Palmer, & Kull, 2015; Shernoff et al., 2016). It is worthy of note that emotional insecurity/security has a direct bearing on the learning of both children and adults (Miller-Graff, Cummings, & Bergman, 2016; Shankar, Chung, & Frank, 2017). Learning programmes in environments that provoke

emotional insecurity like that of the mother tongue literacy programme in the North West region of Cameroon may necessitate some alteration in the learning objectives through contextually adapted capacity building and involvement of stakeholders who understand the realities of the learning environment. Alluding to learning programmes for youth affected by political violence and armed conflicts, Cummings, Merrilees, Taylor, & Mondy, (2017, p. 8) suggest that such adapted learning programmes should have:

- (a) an integrated curriculum that integrates socio-emotional learning models with high-quality reading and math curricula; (b) Teacher Training and Coaching, a school-based collaborative professional support system; and (c) community mobilization via the establishment of school management committees and parent-teacher associations.

In the context of Africa, the 20th century has been marked by dozens of armed conflicts that have dramatically and directly affected learning environments and learning outcomes (Burde, Guven, Kelcey, Lahmann, & Al-Abbadi, 2015; Cummings et al., 2017). A subject of increasing interest is how such conflicts and/or socio-political situations have affected learning programmes and how the designers and implementers (including supervisors and teachers) of the learning programmes may support learners to adapt to the realities of the socio-political environments as well as integrating with their new learning environments. Learners in such environments may need to be supported and accompanied as they go through various psychosocial transitions while seeking integration into a new learning environment (de Wal Pastoor, 2015). The pressure from the sociopolitical environment and the emotional stress of the learners and teachers may require change and innovation in learning and teaching approaches (Tanaka et al., 2016).

In a research on the impact of the Boko Haram conflict on various educational outcomes of individuals living in North-East Nigeria, Bertoni, Di Maio, Molini, and Nistico (2019) using individual panel fixed-effects regressions and exploiting over-time and cross-village variation in conflict intensity during the period 2009–2016, demonstrated that the conflict reduced school enrolment. Different mechanisms were examined to show the effect of conflict. Firstly, they looked at the aspect of child labour. Their research showed that those more exposed to the conflict were adopting a coping strategy where the male child was more likely to work to support the household (Naufal, Malcolm, & Diwakar, 2019; Seddighi, Salmani, Javadi, & Seddighi, 2021). Regarding the learning environment, their findings depicted that where there were serious devastating effects on the school infrastructure, the government took more steps to safeguard and provide new infrastructures. On the other hand, they found out that while the school infrastructure seemed not to have been worsened by the conflict because of the measures taken by the government, the conflict negatively affected the quality of the learning environment. They also demonstrated that conflict resulted in a decline in household wealth and this caused children to drop from school because of the adverse economic consequences in order to work and provide additional support to the family (Brück, d'Errico, & Pietrelli, 2019; Ford, Jampaklay, & Chamratrithirong, 2019). Their research also shows that the conflict negatively impacted the educational outcomes by worsening the health conditions of the learners because of declining household wealth and the difficulty to see a doctor. (Noury & Speciale, 2016). Their findings also established that conflict reduced the years of education completed. They however did not find differential effects by gender, religion, or type of residential location.

With the persistence of the socio-political changes, it is possible that the situation could have an impact on the wealth and health of learners, literacy teachers and literacy programme facilitators. However, it is possible that other external factors in specific environments could affect the wealth and health of households.

In research implemented in three conflict-affected provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Aber et al., (2017) concluded that the International Rescue Committee's Learning to Read in a Healing Classroom approach (LRHC) positively improved the learning and emotional outcomes of learners through ameliorating the learning environments.

With the sociopolitical changes in the North West Region of Cameroon, learners, literacy teachers and literacy programme facilitators of the mother tongue literacy programme are faced with diverse external and internal pressures. It has been noted that social, institutional and personal forces contribute to shaping the emotional ecology of teachers and learners (Benesch, 2017; Khong & Saito, 2014; Loh & Liew, 2016). Although there is increasing literature showing the need for various forms of adjustments for children and adults exposed to political and socio-political violence, there is however no universal consensus on the psychosocial effects of such violence on particularly children (Barber, 2013). Such an understanding calls researchers to:

- (a) a move beyond conceptual frameworks that assume widespread trauma and dysfunction, (b) the identification of protective factors and processes across multiple ecological levels, and (c) the utilization of this knowledge to inform prevention programs and interventions promoting positive outcomes among high-risk populations (Cummings, Merrilees, Taylor, & Mondy, 2017, p. 5-6)

Considering the role of emotions in teaching and learning, it is important to continue to explore the connections between the emotions of the teachers and learners and the learning outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. In light of the current realities of the sociopolitical environment, it is mandatory to evaluate whether the expected learning outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme are still realistic.

It is worth noting that new social and cultural standards of society could be instrumental in shaping learning institutions by urging them to adhere to the current realities of society (Wang, Tseng, & Yen, 2014). The current sociopolitical changes and the search for a new normal have forced the Mother tongue literacy programme to adapt proactively and innovatively to the new challenges (Moore, 2015; Vlado, Denizos & Chatziniolaou, 2018). The induced shift in teaching methods and learning environments will need strong psychosocial support to enable the teachers and learners to overcome the stress and frustration created by the new demands of the socio-political environment (Datnow, 2018). The purpose of considering the change that has taken place will help provide an additional level of understanding of the context of the mother tongue literacy programme which can also serve as a base for future research to gain an understanding of the modifications that will take place in the mother tongue literacy programme after examining the impact of the socio-political changes.

In another research carried out on the impact of armed conflicts on education and educational agents and using a multivocal review of reports (voices) found in two databases: Web of Science and PROQUEST in the period between 1995 until 2014, Cervantes-Duarte, and Fernández-Cano, (2016) investigated the short and long-term negative impact of armed conflicts on education and educational agents. Using an integration and qualitative analysis approach and

focusing on a sample of 60 participants (students, teachers and students' parents), the research captured and categorized the voices of participants into nine categories. In other words the review showed that the impact of armed conflicts could include a) Refusal and impediments to a return to education; b) Educational infrastructure damaged or destroyed; c) Cuts in or withdrawal of spending on education; d) Loss of the educational and protective functions of the family; e) Loss of the academic community; f) Non-qualified teaching staff; g) Drastic loss of skills; h) Abandoning school (population movements, destruction of networks and social environment); i) Behavioural problems: traumas, pedagogical roles and self-victimization (Cervantes-Duarte, & Fernández-Cano, 2016, p. 1).

In his research on the effects of armed conflict on schooling in Sub-Saharan Africa, Poirier, (2012), reveals that most of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have been affected by armed conflicts. Using a time-series cross-sectional (TSCS) database, and using a sample of 43 countries in Africa from 1950 to 2010, he attempts to probe into the impact of armed conflicts on the educational performances of these countries. His results showed that civil wars, have had a strong negative effect on the educational performances of the countries studied. He highlights the non-attendance of school by children and the dwindling enrollment rates of secondary schools as key areas that are impacted by armed conflicts.

In the Context of Cameroon and particularly the North West region, the perceived right to some colonial legacies is seemingly deteriorating and this contributes to rising tensions between armed separatist fighters and government forces. It is likely that the ongoing power relationship has not only impacted the development of the area but has also influenced the formal and informal learning environments. In government circles and within the ranks of the separatist fighters, western

political systems are accused of perpetuating and/or reinforcing chaos among this already marginalized group that has little access to economic opportunities. One offshoot of social, political and other ecological changes is the need for adaptation (Ungar, 2015). There is, therefore, a need to consider possible physical, emotional and ideological adjustments of both learners and teachers if the mother tongue literacy programme has to survive within the prevailing circumstances.

2.3.1 Determinants of Learning Outcomes of a Literacy Programme

In considering the teaching and learning process applied in the mother tongue literacy programme, it is accommodating to appraise the determinants of the desired learning outcomes of the programme within the context of the socio-political changes. Such an assessment will bring out the constituents that contribute towards the efficacy of the literacy provision and related language development initiatives (Batterham, Hawkins, Collins, Buchbinder, & Osborne, 2016; Xu & Brown, 2016). In this section, I will examine some individual and social factors that affect the outcomes of a literacy programme.

Although access to mother-tongue literacy opportunities has improved significantly in the last decade (Morrell, 2015; Tupas, 2015), learners of the mother-tongue literacy programme are faced with some factors that they need to overcome to increase the degree of attainment of the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. The growing access to mother tongue literacy opportunities is due partly to the growing support of governments and the international community (Piper, Schroeder, & Trudell, 2016; Rieckmann, 2017), and to strong evidence that mother tongue literacy opportunities are instrumental in achieving learning outcomes (Benson, 2016; Piper,

Zuilkowski, & Ong'ele, 2016). However, it is worth noting that despite the efforts put in place to ensure the attainment of these outcomes, it is never as simple to accomplish the outcomes as initially anticipated because various interventions appear to achieve varying degrees of attainment of objectives (Glewwe & Muralidharan, 2016; Oxford, 2016). After more than 4 years of the socio-political changes in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon, less than two-thirds of the mother tongue literacy programme learners have fully engaged with the teaching materials of the literacy programme. Such an alarming image was revealed as the literacy statistics for the concerned communities were analyzed for the past four years. The statistics also disclose the existence of some constraints to student learning (Young, 2011; Khalil & Ebner, 2015) in the context of the socio-political challenges. In the next section, I will examine the individual factors that affect learning outcomes.

2.3.1.1 The Individual Factors Determining Learning Outcomes.

Among the many studies focusing on external or social factors that affect learning outcomes (Eom, & Ashill, 2016; Panigrahi, Srivastava, & Sharma, 2018), few studies have focused on investigating the individual factors influencing learning outcomes within a specific learning environment (Baber, 2020; Nortvig, Petersen, & Balle, 2018; Wulf & Lewthwaite, 2016). This section examines the influence of individual factors of learners on learning outcomes with specific consideration of the context of the mother tongue literacy programme. Individual learners will be required to have the right attitude and motivation for learning, and unique prior individual experiences (emotional intelligence) that will enable them to navigate through the socio-political

context of the mother tongue literacy programme and to have better learning outcomes (Dörnyei, 2009; Macfarlane, 2016; Yuan & Lee, 2016).

Language attitudes

Research has shown that learners and teachers have negative attitudes towards teaching and learning in various mother tongues (Ahmed, 2015; Alrabai, 2016). It is important to have an understanding of the attitudes of the Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen and Weh people with respect to the use of their languages, in order to appreciate the different choices that people make and the value that they attach to their languages in the midst of the socio-political changes. This reasoning about language attitudes is of great significance because of its relationship with the learning outcomes of the literacy programme. Having the right attitude is very instrumental in determining the learning process and learning outcomes in a particular environment (Tódor & Dégi, 2016). Possessing the right attitude will enable learners to be motivated to learn. Positive attitudes from learners may likely result in high motivation and this may be quite encouraging, especially for teachers who are making every effort to achieve better learning outcomes amidst the challenges of the socio-political environment (Rahman et al., 2017). Learners with negative attitudes and low motivation will not demonstrate the desire to learn their mother tongue amidst socio-political changes. Considering the aspect of attitude and motivation of learners will be quite subservient in determining the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme in the socio-political environment. The contribution of colonial languages in building negative attitudes towards learning mother tongues cannot be overemphasised (Ndille, 2016; Wolff, 2017). However, the exceptions of countries like Tanzania with English being the “de facto national language” for education and communication show a better attitude toward Kiswahili than English (Mohr &

Ochieng, 2017, p. 12). Negative attitudes towards mother tongues are motivated by learners' and teachers' preferences for foreign languages as a mode of communication, education and accessing wider opportunities (Ong'uti, Aloka, & Raburu, 2016). The unavailability of resources and opportunities to practice the language outside of the classroom context has also contributed to building negative attitudes and consequently negative outcomes of language learning programmes (Alharbi, 2015). However, it is worth noting that to accurately evaluate the individual differences of learners in terms of language attitudes, it is incumbent on researchers to consider the individual characteristics of the learners concerning the specific temporal and situational context that is being studied (Dörnyei, 2009).

In the context of the mother tongue literacy programme, the attitude of learners is quite instrumental in determining learning outcomes. The value that the Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen and Weh place upon the various languages used in their area is directly reflected in the value that they place upon literacy in their mother tongues. There are three languages that are used on a daily basis in the different language areas involved in this research. In these areas, apart from the mother tongues (Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen and Weh), people also use Pidgin and English and it appears that people are motivated to use those languages that will firstly, enable them to gain access to the resources that can meet their daily needs and, secondly, bring them rewards in the future. English falls into the latter category. The people of these language communities consider English to be a prestigious language that allows them access to formal employment opportunities especially in the North West and South West regions, where all such opportunities require English language literacy skills. In contrast, Pidgin and the mother tongue both fall into the first category, with Pidgin being generally regarded as a useful but inferior lingua franca in the multilingual environment. Parents

are keen to send their children to school, where English is the medium of instruction, because they believe that it is through education in English that their children can gain access to information and opportunities that are generally not available in the mother tongue. Negative perceptions of one's ethnic identity will greatly affect self-esteem. Learners cannot take pride in themselves if they have an inferior perspective of their language or identity (Abdel-Khalek, 2016; Cooper, Smith, & Russell, 2017).

In the early twentieth century, during Cameroon's colonial period, the promotion of indigenous languages was considered a menace to colonial administration. This negative attitude towards indigenous languages, considered by Momo (1997:13) as 'an act of vandalism', greatly contributed towards a similar view in the minds of Cameroonians. Although parents believe that their children have to learn English in order to cope with the demands of formal employment and the majority of them also hope that their children will have the opportunity to travel abroad and perceive a command of the English language as beneficial to this aim, the mother tongues (Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen and Weh), remain the choice languages in the home, as it alone is held to be capable of expressing the ideas and emotions of the people. While most Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen and Weh people currently consider their language as a tool for communicating at home and acknowledge that it does not open up the same opportunities as English does, the hope is that the mother-tongue literacy programme will contribute to an improvement in the prestige of these languages and provoke a change in current attitudes.

The internal and external motivation of learners

Although there is growing attention, on the factors that enable or obstruct the involvement of learners in second language learning programmes (Butler, 2015), learners in mother tongue

literacy programmes in minority language contexts face greater challenges in achieving learning outcomes than learners of literacy programmes in languages of wider communication. In the language learning process, the motivation of learners can alternate depending on prevailing circumstances. It has been stated that:

“Even for the most successful learners, learning a language is a long and often arduous process in which motivation fluctuates over time and in response to events; for any individual learner the motivation to learn a language is likely to vary greatly across the learning experience (Ryan & Dörnyei, 2013, p. 90).

Mindful of the challenges involved in the language learning process, there is, therefore, need for such challenges to be identified and dealt with if the mother tongue literacy programmes have to take root and achieve desired learning outcomes (Ojanen et al 2015; Tupas, 2015). This section examines the impact of internal and external motivations on learning outcomes.

Learners come to the learning event with varied motivations (Lasagabaster, 2017; Ramadhan, Sukma, & Indriyani, 2019, August). In summarising some of the factors that contribute to the motivation of learners, Cook, and Artino Jr, (2016, p. 997) state that the key themes are “competence, value, attributions, and interactions between individuals and the learning context”. Arguing for the importance of motivation in language learning, Lamb, (2017, p. 1) states that “Motivation is recognised as a vital component in successful second language learning”. Motivation can be internal or external and both internal and external motivations are important for the individual learner as they seek to achieve various learning outcomes. Elaborating on the difference between internal and external motivation, Anjomshoa, and Sadighi, (2015, p. 126) state that:

Intrinsic/extrinsic motivation refers to whether the motivation is more inside a person or outside of him/her. Intrinsic motivation refers to the motivation which is originated inside a person. There is no reward except the activity itself. It means that the essence of motivated action that is, sense of autonomy and the desire is self-initiating and self-regulating while in extrinsic motivation there is an anticipation of reward from outside and a person is motivated from an outside source rather than the self... In order to achieve internal locus and self-motivation, one should be eager to give up the security of making excuses and to take responsibility of all her/his decisions and actions. Extrinsically motivated behaviours are carried out to get a reward from outside and beyond the self.

Intrinsic motivation can be instrumental in achieving learning outcomes (Kintu, Zhu, & Kagambe, 2017). It has been shown that intrinsic motivation can help learners to be more engaged in the learning process thereby contributing to school achievement and better learning outcomes. In their research on high school and college students in Canada and Sweden and using a self-determination theory approach to predicting school achievement over time, Taylor et al., (2014) argue for the unparalleled importance of intrinsic motivation for the future academic success of high school and college students.

In another research that examined the relationships among intrinsic motivation to learn, learning goals, behavioural engagement at school, and academic performance, and using students from ethnically and racially diverse backgrounds, Froiland & Worrell, (2016) showed that schools that promote intrinsic motivation will be beneficial to students and the learning outcomes of those institutions. It should be noted that different learners go through moments of motivational surges. During such moments of heightened internal motivation of learners, individual learners can go

beyond expectations and defile various restrictions to achieve great outcomes in the language learning process (Dörnyei, Ibrahim, & Muir, 2015). Such achievement in language learning can be a result of the vision and a better mental picture of what the learner is pursuing in the language learning process (Csizér & Magid, 2014). Such motivation achieves much when motivation becomes part of the learner's self/identity (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009).

Extrinsic motivation

Legault, (2016, p. 1) defines extrinsic motivation as the “performance of behavior that is fundamentally contingent upon the attainment of an outcome that is separable from the action itself”. With the varied forms of extrinsic motivation, when learners are governed by ‘Identified regulation’ their behaviour or attitudes towards learning becomes motivated from inside and is self-endorsed (Legault, 2016, p. 3). In his studies on the motivational Self System, Dörnyei, (2019) suggests that the quality of the learners’ engagement with various aspects of the language learning process may contribute to building motivation. In the context of the mother tongue literacy programme, this type of regulation will occur when the individual learners value what they are learning and are ready to associate with the outcomes of the Mother tongue literacy programme. Viewing motivation from a Humanistic perspective, Maslow (1970) described a hierarchy of needs that influence motivations. Adhering to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, which gives more credit to extrinsic motivation, and mindful of the various physical and psychosocial needs created by the socio-political changes, there is a need for designers and implementers of the mother tongue literacy programme to take responsibility for providing a ‘motivational’ learning ‘environment’ (De Vito, Brown, Bannister, Cianci, & Mujtaba, 2018) for all the learners of the mother tongue literacy programme as a means of helping them to survive in the context of the socio-political

changes. However, one setback of this approach to motivation especially in the context of the mother tongue literacy programme will be the unavailability of adequate material and financial resources to meet the needs that have been created by the socio-political changes. Although extrinsic motivation has proven to have a negative correlation with outcomes (Kuvaas, Buch, Weibel, Dysvik, & Nerstad, 2017), it will be of great interest to further investigate the effects of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme.

The emotional intelligence of the learners

Learners come to a learning environment with varied personal and professional experiences. It has been stated that they come along with their “background, ideologies, beliefs, and learning styles” (Paolini, 2015, p. 22). The benefit of such experiences is that they confer on individual learners the ability to navigate through diverse situations associated with the learning context and also foster students’ attainment of different learning outcomes (Kintu, Zhu, & Kagambe, 2017). One of the experiences that learners bring to the learning environment, especially in the case of the socio-political context of the mother tongue literacy programme is emotional intelligence. Serrat, (2017, p. 330) states that:

Emotional intelligence describes the ability, capacity, skill, or self-perceived ability to identify, assess, and manage the emotions of one’s self, of others, and of groups. People who possess a high degree of emotional intelligence know themselves very well and are also able to sense the emotions of others. They are affable, resilient, and optimistic.

With good emotional intelligence, learners will be able to have an adept understanding of their context and will be able to regulate and express their emotions in a way that enables

them to adapt to the learning environment while maintaining their well-being (Petrides et al., 2016).

It takes resilience and optimism to survive as a learner in the context of socio-political challenges. The emotional intelligence of learners will help them to easily navigate the area without being mistaken for an enemy and to be successful in achieving learning outcomes. Learners with higher emotional intelligence will have higher learning satisfaction because they will learn to manage feelings of anxiety, especially in the context of the socio-political changes. It will also enable learners to have a higher commitment to learning (Miao, Humphrey, & Qian, 2017; MacCann et al., 2020). Considering that emotional intelligence can be learned (Carson, Carson, & Birkenmeier, 2016, Dolev & Leshem, 2017; Magnano, Craparo, & Paolillo, 2016), it will be of great benefit to include aspects of emotional intelligence in the curriculum for training teachers of the mother tongue literacy programme and the lessons designed for learners operating in the socio-political environment. Such inclusion may bring about a shift in the attitudes of learners and teachers as they interact among themselves in the learning environment and may consequently affect learning outcomes.

2.3.1.2 Social and Pedagogic Factors Determining Learning Outcomes

Despite an increasing effort to improve the learning outcomes of learners of various learning programmes, there is still a great divide between results obtained in several social contexts (Casey & Goodyear, 2015, Niemi, 2016, OECD, 2015, Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 2017). This section reviews the literature on social and pedagogic factors that will inform policymakers and learning programme designers and implementers, about available opportunities for improving learning outcomes. Some of these required pedagogic and social factors are seemingly not

considered in several learning programmes and this greatly affects learning outcomes (Conde & Hernández- García, 2015; Templaar, Rienties, & Giesbers, 2015; Nguyen, 2015). As literacy practitioners and educational professionals, implementing learning programmes and achieving learning outcomes, will require a proper analysis of the pedagogical and social competencies of teachers as they facilitate learning (Hakim, 2015). Writing about the determinants of students' perceived learning outcomes in an online learning environment, it has been stated that: "Course design, instructor, and dialogue are the strongest predictors of user satisfaction and learning outcomes." (Eom & Ashill, 2016, p. 185).

In a survey of participants enrolled in Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), at a university in Cairo, Hone and El Said (2016), concluded that the course content and interaction with the instructors stood out as significant predictors of MOOC retention and learning outcomes.

With a growing interest to focus on the importance of learning design in forecasting and understanding the learning context, behaviour and performance of learners in various learning programmes, there is a need for more empirical studies which show how students can achieve better outcomes by connecting with pedagogically informed learning designs within specific environments (Broadbent & Poon, 2015; Dichev & Dicheva, 2017). Considering the volatile nature of the learning environment and arguing for a rethink in higher education pedagogy which is 'complex', 'ambiguous', 'controversial' and 'uncertain' in nature, and proposing a transformative, transgressive social learning approach, it has been stated that if we are to fully expand the:

'learning modes' needed for responding to and engaging the wicked problems of sustainability, via pedagogies that are not constrained by the current use of conservative

and maladaptive concepts ..., or by disciplinary decadence..., then there is need for more exploratory, transgressive forms of learning in our institutions (Lotz-Sisitka, Wals, Kronlid & McGarry, 2015, p. 78).

A change to such a 'hybrid model', can be instrumental to help literacy programme designers and policymakers to create learning systems that are more inclusive with respect to the choices of individual learners, on content, duration and instructor competencies which contribute to sustainability and improved learning outcomes (Akers & Jennings, 2016; Kromydas, 2017).

In order to obtain better-desired learning outcomes, stakeholders can ameliorate teaching and class interactions to meet the needs of learners (Mountford-Zimdars, Sanders, Jones, Sabri & Moore, 2015). Such consideration will take into cognizance the goals of the learning programme and the aspirations of the learners as they come to the learning environment. Furthermore, to enhance effective teaching and the accomplishment of better learning outcomes, it is possible to conduct assessments at various levels of society. Such assessments of effective teaching and learning at several levels of a learning programme can serve as a key indicator of student learning outcomes. (Ronfeldt, Farmer, McQueen, & Grissom, 2015; Stronge, 2018). In most recent studies, teacher assessment can be a direct determinant of student achievement (Adnot, Dee, Katz, & Wyckoff, 2017). Such evaluations can include the interactions between learners and teachers, and the giving and receiving of feedback to promote collaboration among teachers and learners. Such feedback can encourage a learner-centred approach to teaching that promotes rational thinking and better interaction with the learning environment (Nilson, 2016). Teachers and learners in such learning environments are committed to achieving teaching goals and learning outcomes and will be flexible to modify objectives to achieve better outcomes.

Several learning programmes are perceived differently by learners. The negative attitudes of learners can lead to unfavourable learning outcomes. This section has reviewed a range of individual, social and pedagogic factors that affect learning outcomes within different learning environments. Internal and external motivations and the attitudes of learners characterize the individual factors that determine learning outcomes. Concerning social and pedagogic factors, instructional design (course content), learner interactions, and instructor competencies stand out as pertinent factors that influence learning outcomes (Kauffman, 2015). However, these factors may influence at varying degrees depending on the particular learning environment. Therefore, identifying particular factors in the context of the socio-political changes of the North West region may help in predicting possible learning outcomes for such a learning environment.

This section has highlighted the social and pedagogic factors that influence learning outcomes. Generally, conflicts bring about severe effects on learning outcomes. Based on the review of different factors that influence learning outcomes, there is proof that violence or war has a negative impact on educational outcomes. The role of context in determining the outcomes of literacy programmes can be viewed differently by various stakeholders. In the next section, I will present my views on the role of context in literacy programmes.

2.3.2 The Role of Context in Literacy Programmes and Learning Outcomes

In this section, I expand on the role of context (learning environment) in literacy programmes and present my view on the influence of context on literacy and literacy programmes.

For effective teaching and learning, there is a need for the providers of literacy programmes to understand the context that is shaping the way the literacy programme is being implemented and the influences that this is having on the learners, teachers, and other stakeholders of the literacy

programme. The context of the literacy programme seems to influence several aspects of the learning programme including the curriculum, the allocation, and use of learning or teaching time, the relationship between teachers and learners and between fellow learners, and the expectations that ensue because of the realities of the learning environment (Ball, 2021; Hallinger, & Murphy, 1986). Although the goal of literacy is to facilitate reading and writing, the process is shaped by the social context which includes social interactions within the learning environment and the bearing of such interactions on learning outcomes. Every literacy programme, therefore, operates within a specific context and the realities of the context are quite instrumental in determining the direction and the learning outcomes of the literacy programme. Literacy programmes may therefore operate in specific social contexts and the form and processes followed in a particular literacy programme will be specific to that unique social context. Therefore, literacy programme providers should be concerned with understanding the contextual realities within which a literacy programme is being implemented. Different learning outcomes will depend on the realities of the learning environment. Every literacy programme is therefore situated within contextual realities which cannot be easily separated from the literacy programme. This perspective of understanding the context of literacy and literacy programmes is known as literacy as a situated social practice (Brandt, & Clinton, 2002; Barton, & Hamilton, 2005; Papen, 2005; Street, 2017; Gee, 2015). This view of literacy considers that learning and teaching take place within daily interactions between people in their specific environment. Some of the learning environments are influenced by socially-critical discourses, moral uncertainties; cultural redefinition, renewed forms of economic challenges, armed conflicts, and socio-political changes like that of the mother tongue literacy programme of the Northwest Region of Cameroon (Bulger, & Davison, 2018; Luke, 2018).

To explain the role of context on literacy as a whole and literacy programmes in particular, I take the view that literacy and literacy programmes are impacted by the individual perspectives of learners, teachers, or programme implementers and the social realities of the context in which the literacy programme is being implemented. I consider that the implementation of literacy programmes is influenced by the individual perspectives of those involved in the literacy programme and the complex social or political environment in which the literacy programme is being carried out. The context of the literacy programme can include the narrow environment or the wider environment of the literacy programme. The narrow environment of the literacy programme will encompass the geographical location or the social or digital space in which the literacy programme is being implemented. The narrow context of literacy, therefore, includes the social, economic, linguistic, cultural, religious, and political factors surrounding the particular location where the literacy programme is being implemented. On the other hand, the wider environment of the literacy programme includes the individual, social, economic, political, cultural, religious, linguistic, and other influences that are beyond the 'boundaries' of the literacy programme but which influence the outcomes of the literacy programme. In the context of this research, the influences on the outcomes of the literacy programme could emanate from the narrow and/or the wider contexts of the socio-political changes. Some key elements of the wider context could include the motivation of stakeholders who are not residents in the area of the mother tongue literacy programme but whose contribution can influence the sustainability of the mother tongue literacy programme. The context of the mother tongue literacy programme is influenced by the political legacies of colonisation which have metamorphosed into an identity crisis of individuals, families, ethnic groups, and residents of a given geographical area who are citizens of a particular

country. To achieve better outcomes in the literacy programme, the literacy programme providers will need a better understanding of the narrow and wider contextual influences on individuals and the entire mother tongue literacy programme. Having this broad understanding of the contextual influences on the literacy programme will be quite instrumental in providing a comprehensive picture that can inform the design and implementation of literacy programmes that take into account the contextual realities of the literacy programme. Such an understanding will produce key implications for programme implementors, and beneficiaries of the literacy programme.

This was therefore the understanding of the influence of context on literacy and literacy programmes which I applied in my research as I explored the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme in Cameroon.

In the next section, I will focus on various literacy paradigms and their application in different contexts.

2.4 Literacy Paradigms in Multilingual and Sociocultural Contexts

The field of Literacy especially in a multilingual and sociocultural context is broad enough and has been an area of significant research (Hyland & Hyland, 2019). Moreover, literacy provisions and literacy practices within a specific environment are connected to particular sociocultural, political and ideological realities that affect learners differently (Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2020, Street, 1995). Despite the efforts made to explore various literacy paradigms, the versatility of arguments and unresolved issues concerning individual differences of learners and situated sociocultural dimensions of language acquisition continue to offer viable future directions for research (Dornyei & Ryan, 2015; Hyland, 2015).

In this section, after first exploring the history of mother tongue literacy and the contributions of various stakeholders with regard to different literacy paradigms, I will present a framework for literacy with particular attention on literacy as a humanistic social construction which draws inspiration from the social practice perspective, referring to peculiar social and cultural contexts (Gee, 2015, Street, 1984). In an attempt to further explore the difference between various literacy paradigms, I intend to examine, literacy trends in the world, the history of mother tongue literacy in Cameroon, literacy as skills, literacy and societal development, literacy and critical reflection and literacy as a social practice. These contributions, concerning the literacy paradigms, have been quite instrumental in building the perspective of my research.

For more than four decades, there has been an increasing effort to codify local languages in Cameroon. The recent paradigm of implementing mother tongue literacy programmes continues to face some socio-political and sociocultural realities of the context in which the literacy programmes are operating.

During the colonial era, the effects of colonialism, imperialism, nationalism and globalization, imposed a certain paradigm for the implementation of mother tongue-based literacy programmes. Although some of the colonial masters demonstrated passive support for the development of indigenous languages, the use of the mother tongue was somewhat marginalized in diverse ways by the different colonial masters (Echu, 1999; Ndille, 2016; Nana, 2016). Such marginalization was determined by the paradigms of the Western powers. It has been noted that such a “Western mindset would view the European standard languages of the former colonial powers as being ‘essentially superior’ to the ‘essentially inferior’ indigenous vernaculars, often belittled as ‘dialects’, outside the Western world” (Wolff, 2017, p. 2). Such mindsets about literacy

in indigenous languages have contributed to building negative concepts, hypotheses, or theories about the use of these languages (Dragojevic, 2017; Gkaintartzi, Kiliari, & Tsokalidou, 2015). Such negative attitudes have been influenced by an imbalance of power that has been at play during the colonial and post-colonial eras. These power imbalances that have existed have projected the bounded literacy perspective which allows the “enlightened” to get more enlightened with their ability to access information while the “less privileged” speakers of indigenous languages remain impoverished in terms of access and use of information that is available in languages of wider communication (Esala, 2020; Khajavy, MacIntyre & Hariri, 2021). Promoting literacy in the mother tongue seeks to open up access to the wealth of knowledge and possibilities that exist in other languages of wider communication.

Regretably, a majority of such programmes are operated with funds from foreign governments, mission agencies and other stakeholders who determine the curriculum and the direction of the mother tongue literacy programme while considering the language of the colonial master as a sublime means to communicate the ideologies of the colonial power and to subdue the colonized. (Nana, 2016; Wolff, 2017).

In post-colonial Cameroon, the mother tongue literacy programmes continue to struggle with the exacerbated influences of colonial legacies that have resulted in negative language attitudes and some socio-political upheavals (NGEFAC, 2016; Spolsky, 2018). The socio-political environment of the North West and South West Regions of post-colonial Cameroon is an indication of the remains of colonial ideologies that have refused to recognize the multilingual reality of the Cameroon context.

In recent times, pursuant to the attainment of the U.N. sustainable development goals, there is a heightening community-based action that seeks to address various forms of social inequalities that prevent people from developing their capacities and acting in creative ways in social, political, cultural and economic environments to contribute to personal and community development (Rieckmann, 2018; Schorr, 2018; Verma, Petersen, & Lansford, 2019; UNESCO, 2016).

The multiplicity of languages in Cameroon has required the involvement of several players as they attempt to surmount various inequalities to bring mother tongue-based literacy to the marketplace. Such inequalities have a major tore on ethnolinguistic groups that are already plagued by poverty and various forms of marginalization. An analysis of such inequalities coupled with emotional stress shows that there is a huge effect on the cognitive and social functioning of both children and adults (Blustein, Kenny, & Kozan, 2014).

The mother tongue literacy programmes of CABTAL are aligned with a recent paradigm which favours a community-driven process of developing and teaching these mother tongues which serve as tools for the social cohesion of these ethnolinguistic communities. Such an effort will continue to foster self-esteem and the attainment of basic needs through cognitive development and psychosocial support for members of the community who have not had enough opportunities to learn and express themselves in a language that revitalizes their dreams and aspirations (Banks, 2004; Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2012).

2.4.1 Trends of Literacy in the World

The growing importance of sustainable development for the entire world has caused several stakeholders to affirm the need to use economic, educational, environmental, and social

opportunities, to achieve specific objectives in various sociocultural environments (Holden, Linnerud, & Banister, 2017; Sachs, 2012). In seeking to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), governments, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders of literacy and education are required to employ complementary actions to curb the increasing unprecedented destabilization activities of the world, that have greatly hampered the attainment of some key global objectives for development (Assembly, 2015). Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) continues to be a focal building bloc as those entrusted with the task attempt to realize better sustainable development goal outcomes (Pauw, Gericke, Olsson, & Berglund, 2015; Sachs et al, 2019). Education for Sustainable Development means incorporating various key issues that influence sustainable development into the teaching and learning process. Some of the issues that affect sustainable development include poverty, climate change, war, socio-political changes, disease, and health pandemics. To include such key issues in the teaching and learning process will require various stakeholders to use participatory methods that engage, motivate and empower learners with key competencies and critical thinking ability to change their behaviour and take action for sustainable development (Buckler, & Creech, 2014; Leicht, Heiss, & Byun, 2018). It has been stated that:

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) aims to develop competencies that enable and empower individuals to reflect on their own actions by taking into account their current and future social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts from both a local and a global perspective. It requires individuals to act in complex situations in a sustainable manner – to explore new ideas and approaches and participate in socio-political processes, with the objective of moving their societies progressively towards sustainable

development. ESD, understood in this way aims to enable learners to take responsible actions that contribute towards creating sustainable societies now and in the future (Rieckmann, 2018, p. 39).

Trends in sustainable development have also influenced trends in literacy and education in narrower and wider contexts. With recent global trends, there has been a strategic shift in literacy paradigms. Literacy and education have evolved from the traditional transmission of the skills of reading and writing to include practical aspects that can enable the learner to survive in the 21st century. Kivunja (2014), presents 4 domains of skills required in the 21st century. He states that:

First are the core subjects and skills such as the orthodoxy 3Rs [reading, -riting and –rithmetic] that every educated person should have mastery of. Second is the learning and innovations skills domain requiring skills such as critical thinking and problem solving. The third is the career and life skills domain, calling for skills such as collaboration, teamwork and leadership. Fourth, is the digital literacy skills domain, requiring skills such as computer literacy and digital fluency. (p.81)

This categorization reflects the move from traditional literacy perspectives to recent literacy paradigms that encourage the use of digital platforms and other available tools to meet the basic needs of participants. One could argue that the experiences of learners come as a result of their involvement or participation in different literacy domains within their social context. Like education, the use of literacy is part of everyday life and to examine different literacy paradigms, one must examine the implications of different understandings of literacy. People are generally constrained by the elements of particular literacy practices that are shared with a given group. In seeking to examine the various views of literacy, this research attempts to analyze the relevance

of these views and the contributions of various stakeholders to the literacy debate and current literacy initiatives in minority languages. In the next section, I will examine the history of mother tongue literacy in Cameroon and its contribution to the current literacy paradigm.

2.4.2 The History of Mother Tongue Literacy in Cameroon

Efforts to develop indigenous languages in Cameroon have been plagued by numerous challenges. The colonial heritage of Cameroon dates back to 1884 when it was annexed by the Germans. Between 1916 to 1961, Cameroon was re-colonised by Britain and France. This already linguistically diverse territory has had explorers of Portuguese, Spanish, French and British origins (Ndille, 2016). Western education was introduced in Cameroon in 1844 by British missionaries and this effort was reinforced during the various colonial era. The different colonial Governments and Missionary societies implemented diverse approaches to language development and education and this brought about diverging perceptions of especially vernacular education. During the different colonial regimes, efforts to promote literacy and vernacular education were treated either with tepidity or suspicion. Another era of the promotion of vernacular education and literacy in Cameroon can be traced back to the 1920s when the Basel Mission spearheaded the teaching of Douala and Mungaka in schools in the coastal areas and the grass fields respectively.

In Cameroon, some of the colonial legacies of France and Britain included their languages which they left with their colonies. After French Cameroon became independent, French became the single official language, which was to be used and accepted at all levels of society. When former British Cameroon became independent, English became the single official language, which was to be used and accepted at all levels of society. After the United Nations-organised plebiscite on 11 February 1961, the then Southern Cameroon which was part of a British-administered trust territory joint with French Cameroon and competence in English or French became heavily connected to access to education and professional career opportunities (Takam & Fassé, 2020).

Mother tongue literacy in Cameroon has its early beginnings in the work of Sultan Njoya (King of the Bamun people who developed a writing system for Shūpamom around 1895. This language was standardised and used for teaching among the Bamun people long before the arrival of western missionaries (Nana, 2016). It should be noted that Mother tongue literacy in the North West and other regions of Cameroon was introduced by German missionaries who promoted the use of the Mungaka language in primary schools in the North West Region (Albaugh, 2014; Tasama, 2016). In other regions, efforts in mother tongue literacy promoted the use of languages like Ewondo, Douala, Pidgin, and Ffulde in order to facilitate reading and writing and the work of evangelisation through the use of Bible stories and Bible lessons that were crafted in the mother tongue (Anchimbe, 2013; Fonyuy, 2022; Kouega, 2007; Nana, 2016). In 1906, a primer was developed in the Mungaka language and was used for teaching in primary schools which were opened by the missionaries. In 1915, Bible stories were available in the Mungaka language and the New Testament was translated in 1933 and in 1961 the entire Bible was translated into the language.

However, the actions of the missionaries were influenced by their understanding that Mungaka for instance was the mother tongue of the grassfields while a language like Douala was considered as the mother tongue of the coastal areas. Such a view induced the teaching of Mungaka and Douala even to speakers of other ethnolinguistic communities.

After independence, the respective constitutions of Cameroon have continued to uphold the use of French and English as official languages. For example, Article 1 (paragraph 3) of the 1996 Constitution of Cameroon of 18 January 1996 states that: “The official languages of the Republic of Cameroon shall be English and French, both languages having the same status. The State shall guarantee the promotion of bilingualism throughout the country. It shall endeavour to protect and promote national languages.” Despite the enshrinement of such a statement on the constitution, the government of Cameroon has had as the main focus to promote bilingualism in English and French. The exaltation of English and French has seemingly created a situation of

diglossia with the numerous indigenous languages being relegated to a lower position, forcing them to increasingly battle with attrition. These huge remains of decades of colonization and the dominance of these two languages have had an enormous influence on the educational system and literacy programmes of Cameroon (Chiatoh, 2014). This is evidenced by the various official texts that in most cases only mention these national languages in passing. Although these mother tongues continue to have unofficial status in Cameroon, it is, however, worthy to note that the government has taken encouraging steps towards promoting especially adult literacy by initiating many literacy campaigns such as the National Literacy programme to improve the literacy level of the population. Additionally, the creation of a department of African languages and cultures at the Higher teachers training college in Yaounde is a laudable step by the government towards promoting literacy and this has contributed to shifting literacy paradigms in Cameroon. Nevertheless, it is important to underscore that the lukewarmness of several authorities towards mother-tongue literacy in Cameroon continues to enhance resistance and negative perceptions about using local languages in the educational system. The development and promotion of Cameroonian languages in informal learning and non-formal literacy programmes have been mostly conducted in unofficial circumstances. This accounts for why it has taken more than four decades of efforts by researchers as they travelled to make the various Cameroonian languages tools for social mobility and the transmission of some important knowledge that has previously been monopolized by ‘the languages of wider communication’.

After the period of the Basel mission, efforts continued in the domain of standardizing Cameroonian languages. These efforts yielded fruit with the institution of the General alphabet of Cameroonian languages in 1979 (Tadadjeu & Sadembouo, 1984). The contribution of these

Cameroonian linguists paved the way for a national experimental phase of a mother tongue education programme called PROPELCA (Operational Research Project for the Teaching of Cameroonian Languages) which was launched in 1981 by the Department of African Languages and Linguistics of the University of Yaoundé I in partnership with the Cameroon government and other civil society organisations. In recent times, there has been a coalition of civil society organisations like the Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy (CABTAL), Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) Cameroon Branch, National Association of Cameroonian Language Committees (NACALCO), that have worked in partnership with the Ministry of Scientific Research, the Ministry of Basic Education and the Ministry of Secondary Education to speed up efforts about promoting the use of national languages in Cameroon. With this synergy among partners, a lot has been achieved in terms of research projects, the number of languages documented and tremendous literature has been published in several Cameroonian languages.

The literacy paradigm is changing with the literacy experience of SIL and CABTAL. These two organisations share a lot in common in terms of language research, community-based language development and literacy programmes. However, the focus of this research is on some languages involved in CABTAL's community-based mother tongue literacy programme. This mother tongue literacy programme has been influenced by different understandings of literacy. I will next examine the perspective of literacy as skills.

2.4.3 Literacy as Skills

Over several decades, the notion of literacy as skills has been viewed by several researchers from varying perspectives and in a variety of contexts. For example, some have considered literacy as a form of communication that uses written language (Kern, 2015). Common parlance has

considered the term literacy to mean the ability to read and write (Perry, 2012). Most of the early literacy initiatives and programmes have been designed to a greater extent with the perspective of transmitting or acquiring cognitive and psycholinguistic skills (Perry, 2012; Muth & Perry, 2010; Pearson & Hiebert, 2010). This approach to literacy pays more attention to peculiar skills such as the identification of phonemes, fluency in reading, and comprehension.

However, the concept has systematically evolved and has been perceived according to diverse philosophical underpinnings that have been championed by several significant scholars. The development of the concept of basic literacy has led to various debates that have brought about the versatile views of literacy that have emerged. In the context of this study, Literacy as skills can be referred to as “traditional literacy” (Van Deursen, & Van Dijk, 2016). This perspective of literacy considers literacy to be the acquired ability which allows an individual to command the reading and writing process of any language (Kucer, 2014). It has been stated that basic literacy is “the acquisition of technical skills involving the decoding of written texts and the writing of simple statements within the context of everyday life” (Rassool, 1999 p. 7). Such ability permits an individual to easily navigate the specific context of assessing and disseminating knowledge. In other words, literacy as skills can be understood as the ability to read, write, spell, listen, speak and understand a given language (Bawden, 2001, Berninger et al., 2006). According to this definition, emphasis is laid on literacy instructions that provide learners with the necessary platform, materials and social support that enable them to read write and use literacy for basic life needs and subsequent conventional needs (Brown, 2014; Fillmore & Snow, 2018). The premise of the skills perspective is that people can be classified according to their ability to identify, evaluate and use written and spoken language in an effective way (Shao & Purpur, 2016). One

problem with this view of literacy is that people may acquire the skills of reading and writing but are unable to apply them to their daily realities. Critiquing the skills perspective and contending for the plurality of literacy, Street (1993) underlines that the concept of literacy can only be understood within its particular social context. This context might refer to a speech community or any environment that is tolerable to literacy. It is hard to consider literacy and language without incorporating social behaviour. According to Labov, (2019), language can only be used by human beings in a particular social context. In other words, people who operate in isolation might not be able to communicate their needs, ideas and emotions to others. The skills perspective of literacy has very little consideration of the social context. Over the years, the skills perspective of literacy has been re-developed into what is known as ‘functional literacy’. Nevertheless, this research is focused on a literacy programme which is socially constructed and which can only be uncovered by taking a closer look at the daily realities of the learners and teachers as they navigate the socio-political context of the mother tongue literacy programme. I will next look at the perspective of literacy and development.

2.4.4 Literacy and Development

For more than six decades, the traditional goal of literacy or the “autonomous approach” (Street, 2006) has focused on helping people to learn how to read and write. This approach to literacy works from the assumption that acquiring the ability to read and write will “autonomously affect other social and cognitive practices” (Street, 2002, p. 7). However, the autonomous approach has been superseded by the paradigm of literacy and development which has a goal to promote reading and writing that is connected to the development of individuals and communities. Despite the several debates relating to literacy and development, this concept is still considered very

important and worthy of more investigation. Scholarly work concerning the relationship between literacy and development has continued for over six decades, and there is a need to examine recent developments. In previous research on the relationship between literacy and development and referring to research on the growth of literacy in Sweden, Johansson (1981) argues that even though a large percentage of people became literate in Sweden in the 18th and 19th centuries; there was no direct relationship between the high literacy rates and the development of Swedish society. Similarly, Graff, writing about the increase of literacy in England, says:

That demand for literacy neither increased during industrialization (at least as signified by rising rates of literacy) nor was maintained among families of literate parents reinforces the impression that the English industrial revolution was not fueled by growing literacy and did not stimulate education in its wake (Graff 1987, p. 321).

Writing about the link between literacy and development, Verhoeven (1994, p. 13) argues that it is rather schooling that is an important resource for development.

In recent research that considers literacy as a tool for development, literacy has been hailed for bringing a whole host of effects on individuals and societies. Interestingly, some views have considered that literacy is responsible for all the good things that have come with modern civilization. From the literacy and development perspective, the benefits of literacy include economic development, technological advances, political modernization, critical thinking, self-awareness, scientific discoveries and other gains that are often considered to be self-evident (Finnegan, 2014). In this view of literacy, it has been argued that ‘literacy is seen to have high economic value and it serves as an indicator for economic and societal development’ (Papen 2005, p.9). According to this view, the *raison d’être* of literacy is to facilitate access to information that

results in reflection, which helps to transform the individual's consideration of himself and his society. Montoya, (2018) argues that: "Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society" (p. 17). Since the emergence of the literacy and development (otherwise called functional literacy) perspective, many agencies have sought to incorporate development components into their literacy programmes because of the perceived correlation that they establish between literacy and development (Jones, 2018; Sharma, Fantin, Prabhu, Guan, & Dattakumar, 2016). In contemporary literacy and development programmes, the goal is to provide literacy and education as a fundamental human right that is required for people's well-being. Such programmes align with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) for education which underlines "the importance of equitable access to quality education for improving people's lives and for the sustainable development of countries" (Snilstveit, et al., 2016). Such programmes address the resurgence of pandemics such as the Ebola Virus, Coronavirus, and other infectious diseases and social challenges that pose a threat to human life and the development of society. The programmes also attempt to sketch a looming prospect of a society that has the potential to provide a significant counterbalance through literacy to health, agriculture, economic and other related challenges that hinder the progress of the society (Castro-Sánchez, Chang, Vila-Candel, Escobedo, & Holmes, 2016). Emphasis is placed on the fact that the learning of literacy skills could lead to economic and technological development. However, there is still insufficient information to show how literacy has contributed to the development of the societies in which such programmes have been implemented.

In the context of the mother tongue literacy programme of CABTAL, the results of my work with adults from various language communities in Cameroon have required me to reconsider how I define literacy and development (functional literacy). The learners' frequent need to deal with issues of human rights, health, agriculture, business, inheritance problems and related social challenges is indicative that literacy involves more than being able to decode words and sentences and control lifeless objects that have no connection with real-life situations (Thomas, et al., 2007). Literacy, therefore, goes beyond the traditional view of reading and writing and seeks to include an understanding of rational thinking and the application of the skills of reading and writing to solve daily problems of health, agriculture, politics, and other social and cultural exigencies that allow for the use of literacy practices within a given social and cultural context. Albeit the difficulty to establish a direct cause-effect relationship between literacy and societal development, it is worth saying that literacy has indeed been a valuable tool to confront some societal challenges like poverty, civil unrest, drought, AIDS, malaria, cholera and other environmental challenges that constrain individuals and communities. Cameroon is a developing country where developmental and socio-political challenges like poverty, hunger conflicts and diseases play a determinant role in society and this has implications for literacy programmes. In addition to learning traditional literacy skills, people desire to use their ability to read and write to accomplish some tasks that are connected to their daily lives. If the learners of the mother tongue literacy programme acquire knowledge that could enable them to survive in the prevailing socio-political environment-prevent malaria, protect their environment and get involved in gainful activities that could help them to come out of poverty and some psychosocial challenges, then the literacy classes could serve as springboards for development. However, applying the literacy and development perspective

requires critical thinking to ensure that the development component does not become a distraction to the desired learning outcomes of the literacy programme. I will next look at the perspective of literacy as a critical reflection.

2.4.5 Literacy and Critical Reflection

Within the last six decades, another view of literacy has developed; namely, literacy as critical reflection. While there is no one singular definition of critical literacy, the scholarship related to this literacy perspective contains themes that contribute to a definition. Critical literacy may refer to a way of thinking which enables the individual to use acquired literacy skills to better interact with society. According to the Brazilian educationist, Paulo Freire, acquiring the skills of reading and writing should enable the individual to ‘read the world’ (Freire and Macedo 1987). Freire radically criticized the societal justification of using the “banking” method of education to oppress Brazilians. He argued for the importance of dialogue through which learners participate to develop themes that serve as learning opportunities. In his critique of the banking method of teaching, Paulo Freire states:

Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits in which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat...the scope of action allowed to the students extends only so far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits. (Freire, 2000, p. 72).

The Corroborating assumption of this view is that a more critical perspective on literacy can lead to people challenging the existing social order, thereby leading to individual and societal transformation. The learner’s contribution to change comes as a result of critical reflection in terms

of justice, injustice, and power. This view of literacy and education was disseminated at a moment when the idea of functional literacy began to lose popularity, due to poor results in literacy programmes that followed the functional literacy model (Papen, 2005, p. 10). The approach of literacy as critical reflection looks at the different “ways that literacy is culturally, historically, and politically situated and assumes reading and writing to be embedded within one’s social world and connected to identity, agency, and power” (Riley & Crawford-Garrett, 2015, p. 61). The Critical literacy perspectives take into cognizance the world views of the learners, their philosophical viewpoint and their various motivational themes. For learners of the mother tongue literacy programme, becoming literate means acquiring the skills to read and write to have the right knowledge that helps to build self-esteem, to face daily challenges patterning to social inequalities, socio-political instabilities due to power struggles, health issues, politics, business and other psychological or social needs.

Despite the enormous contribution that critical literacy has brought to the recent literacy paradigm, it has been criticised for taking an approach that is too radical. However, the mother tongue literacy programme is situated in a context that faces various socio-political and cultural practices that may work negatively against certain groups of learners like women and children. Raising the learners’ awareness about such preconceptions and empowering them to bring about change could be a way of improving the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. However, the critical literacy perspective does not operate in a vacuum. The contribution of the social context cannot be overemphasised. In the next section, I will examine the view of literacy as a social practice.

2.4.6 Literacy as a social practice

Although the various perspectives of literacy have considerable regard for the importance of reading and writing, there is, however, no unanimity on the ‘most beneficial approach’ of rendering literacy provisions. The process of reading and writing is described differently by proponents of the different views of literacy and this is the point from which a major dividing line arises. However, whether literacy is considered as a set of skills or a means for critical reflection or as a social practice, a consideration of the different epistemological perspectives will help to build a holistic view in any literacy provision. In this section, I examine the idea of literacy as a social practice, as this view of literacy also informs my research.

Literacy as a social practice has a key role, especially in the lives of learners of the mother tongue literacy programme, where social interactions are key to knowledge achievement. In the last 40 years, several pieces of research to investigate the positive contribution of the social practice perspective to the evolving literacy paradigm have been conducted. However, in recent years, theoretical discussions about literacy have shifted from focusing on individual skills to giving increasing attention to the social contexts of individuals, thereby presenting a new paradigm. The social practice model emerged as a challenge to the “Great Divide” or “autonomous” models of literacy which conjectures that there is a significant difference between ‘educated’ (literate) and ‘traditional’ (illiterate) societies and consequently a need to advocate for the ‘modernization and education of these traditional or oral societies (Street & Street, 1984). The great divide perspective also accommodates the view that there is a cognitive dichotomy between literate and nonliterate societies and individuals (Finnegan, 1988; Scribner & Cole, 1981). Recent research on literacy has focused on the importance of the social context in assessing literacy skills. This perspective

has developed into what is known as the New Literacy Studies. The New literacy studies align with the revival that came with the psychological perspective of Vygotsky (1962), who considered that language is influenced and established by social relations. It also goes in line with the work of Vygotsky, Dewey (1966), Piaget and Bruner (1987), who developed the social constructivist theories of learning that suggest that social relationships and interactions help to create 'knowledge' and 'reality'. People learn by observing the behaviour of others who act as models. According to Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of social learning which focuses on situated learning through a community of practice, which is a group of people who share a craft and or a profession, the New Literacy studies focus on examining the way that literacy is used in social contexts and the importance of everyday experiences on human learning. This approach to literacy emphasizes the importance of the socio-cultural context of the learners and the incorporation of their day-to-day practices into their learning. The fundamental argument of the New Literacy Studies was based upon the assumption that understanding context is primordial to understanding literacy and that there is no clear dichotomy between literate and nonliterate societies.

Learners of the mother tongue literacy programme practice literacy throughout different communities of practice and this research investigated the impact of the socio-political context on the understanding and performance of learners of the mother tongue literacy programme in various communities. In the context of the mother tongue literacy programme, most of the knowledge and skills that are being transmitted are done so orally and learned through interactions and imitation. Although most adults of the mother tongue literacy programme have become conscious of the importance of schooling as a formal and organised institution for knowledge transmission, different non-academic, important knowledge is still passed on in informal learning settings. For

example, to acquire the skills of managing a business or how to repair a car, a younger adult has to spend several months or years observing an older person, who is considered to be the patron. The learner is expected to watch their patron very closely, to learn the skills that the patron learned from another person in the same manner. Adults also learn from each other as they share experiences. In most cases, very few theoretical explanations are made concerning the skills that are being passed on. The idea of considering the role of society in the learning process makes the social practice perspective quite relevant to the development of this research because the destabilization caused by the socio-political environment has affected social interactions and this may have an influence on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme.

The social context of literacy incorporates “practices and events that can be observed and recorded” (Theodotou, 2017, p. 144). The social practice perspective seeks to merge the context of literacy and orality into what Heath (1983) called a literacy event. A literacy event is a discrete, observable and social action that integrates a piece of writing to examine the way participants interact and interpret reality. On the other hand, literacy practices refer to abstract, enduring, regulated, recurrent and patterned things that people do with literacy. This concept of literacy as a social practice helps to present literacy mainly as a tool for social participation and as a form of socialization. (Barton & Ivanic, 1991; Street, 1995; Street, 2014). Literacy as a social practice also highlights the understanding and use of literacy in a specific community or environment. These literacy practices and events can be found in homes, literacy classes or the general community environment (Barton, 2007; Burnett, Merchant, Pahl, & Rowsell, 2014; Maybin, 2007; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2014). The social practice view examines the role context plays in determining people’s understandings and uses of literacy. According to the New Literacy Studies perspective,

literacy practices simply cannot be understood without a proper understanding of the local context in which the literacy practices take place and the different experiences that learners bring along to learning events. People use literacy differently depending on their specific social context. In the case of this research among the Babanki, Nkwen, Mankon and Weh communities, I look at the different ways in which the socio-political changes have affected how people use literacy in the literacy classes, church groups, homes, schools, local development groups, funerals and in other social gatherings.

Despite the positive contributions made by the social practice perspective to the field of literacy studies, it has been criticized for several weaknesses that have been identified. The social practice view has been accused of ‘relativism’ and of ‘romanticising’ the local context (see Street’s foreword in Collins & Blot, 2003). Brandt and Clinton (2002, p. 337) argue that the social practice view has not sufficiently theorised cardinal aspects of literacy, thereby making it hard to prove its workability in the local contexts. In recent years, it has been argued that greater focus should be laid on the material aspects of literacy (Dezuanni, 2015). The social practice perspective has been accused of exaggerating the power of the local context and it has been suggested that, rather than being the product of the local context, literacy works alongside it as another contributor in the overall process. Identifying a dead-end in current ideas about the New Literacy Studies, the approach has been criticised for paying more attention to describing local literacies while giving less consideration to how local literacy events blend into the global approach of literacy in society (Tyner, 2014; Collins & Blot, 2003). Criticising the perspective for failing to develop a practical pedagogy for literacy, it has been stated that:

Understandably, those working within this ethnographic framework seem to prefer description and analysis to prescription...Teachers may be convinced by the insights of NLS, but they must work within the increasingly narrow constraints of the school system...while sociolinguists argue that varieties of literacy are structurally equal and practice theorists decry the arbitrary dominance of one form of literacy over another, practitioners must decide whether and how to teach dominant literacies without becoming complicit in the reproduction of power (Kim, 2003, p. 118-121).

Responding to critiques, proponents of the social practice perspective argue that the view of literacy as a social practice provides ample theoretical support for literacy research through the concepts of literacy events and literacy practices and that understanding literacy practices can help to engage participants in deep conversations about the realities of a given social context (Bennett, Gunn, Gayle-Evans, Barrera, & Leung, 2018; Boughton, 2016; Street, 2003).

On a personal note, I argue that to open new discussions for literacy research, more attention should be paid to the socio-humanistic dimensions of literacy. I seek to suggest a set of constructs that treat literacy not solely as a social practice, but also as a tool for humanistic social construction in a specific context. A socio-humanistic perspective of literacy seeks to understand the contribution of literacy in human action and on the other hand the contribution that human action is bringing to the literacy paradigm. I consider that the social context is not static but is influenced by the activities of those practising different forms of literacy. Having insights into people's social and cultural realities could help researchers and literacy practitioners to develop new and improved literacy programmes which take into cognizance the needs of the learners as they operate within a specific social context. This accounts for why I chose to view literacy from

a humanistic and socio-cultural perspective. In the next section, I will examine the contribution of mother tongue literacy to language preservation and Community development.

2.5 MT literacy as a tool for language preservation and community development

Literacy and its impact on language preservation and community development constitute a composite, interrelated field of study. Literacy and language research encompasses a wide array of social and cognitive sciences including sociology, linguistics, anthropology, archaeology, economics, media studies, psychology, and history. The use of various forms of language - spoken language, written language, and printed language and its contribution to social behaviour forms part of the discourse on the interconnection between language use and the social organization of society (Fishman, 2019). Language preservation and Community development especially in the context of ethnolinguistic minority languages is a subject worthy of utmost consideration in decision-making associated with the sustainable development goals (Cf, 2015; Hák, Janoušková, & Moldan, 2016; Sachs, 2012;). This section aims to elaborate on the importance of literacy in language preservation and community development, especially in minority ethnolinguistic contexts. In this section, I will examine the linguistic diversity in Cameroon, the endangerment of several minority languages and the contribution of mother-tongue literacy to language preservation and community development.

In the context of minority ethnolinguistic communities, literacy is viewed to have an enabling role in language preservation and community development (Nyika, 2015; Traxler, 2017). Although Mother tongue literacy has been viewed by some political authorities and policymakers with a degree of scepticism, and at times from an antagonistic perspective, literacy in a multilingual

context is still a tool for social mobility (Street, 2014). However, in the context of most countries that have suffered the effects of colonization, some political elites who benefit from the colonial system demonstrate an antipathetic approach towards mother-tongue literacy because of ethnocentrism and hegemonies (Dudgeon & Walker, 2015; Murray, 2016). According to their perspective, the promotion of mother-tongue literacy in a multilingual context will deprive them of the privilege of social mobility seemingly ascribed to members of their tribal affiliation or social class at the expense of vulnerable groups that are disfavored by existing language policies (Hutchinson, 2012; Tamim, 2014; Tupas, 2015). Contending against such forms of gross marginalization, it has been stated that:

For linguistic minority individuals, ongoing multilingualism is seen as delimiting the possibilities of their integration into the national society and the successful acquisition of the dominant (national) language(s). For linguistic minority groups, the maintenance/support of minority languages is viewed as a willful form of communal ghettoization, while any accommodation of public multilingualism—via, for example, bilingual education—is concurrently constructed as both an obstacle to effective communication for these groups in the wider society and a threat to their social mobility (May, 2014, p. 371).

In recent times, with the unavoidable dimensions of globalization, there is an increasing need for consideration and inclusion of unprecedented diversity and heterogeneity in various contexts around the world. With ongoing support for multilingualism and the need for wider inclusion and increased social mobility for minority language communities in a progressively globalized world, there is a need for the application of relevant literature that examines the role of

literacy in language preservation and community development in this recent linguistic dispensation. This new development of multilingualism provides greater opportunities for linguistic justice, effective communication, language preservation and community development (May, 2014; Ortega, 2020). Although Mother tongue literacy is dependent on several factors such as age, intelligence, teaching methods, and learning situations (Dörnyei, 2014), in seeking to examine ongoing opposition to mother tongue literacy and multilingualism and the recent accounts of the strides that have been made in the area of community development and the preservation of minority languages in Cameroon, it has been proven that gaining literacy skills in one's mother tongue in addition to other languages of wider communication will unambiguously increase the overall linguistic development among learners (Desai, 2012). One of the goals of the Mother tongue literacy programme is to provide opportunities for underprivileged people groups to get access to information that can contribute to their development and the development of their community. In that regard, literacy is viewed from an enabling perspective, and its fundamental roles in language development, identity maintenance and development in the context of ethnolinguistic communities.

Additionally, efforts in mother tongue literacy are aimed at helping various stakeholders to have access to available research related to the development of minority languages and various ethnic, cultural and linguistic groups that are represented in a specific social context. However, the awareness of these efforts and the availability of research data to different stakeholders will vary in various regions and countries because the realities of each context will be particular (Koltay, 2017).

In the next section, I will examine the linguistic diversity of Cameroon and some of the challenges related to language development and mother tongue literacy.

2.5.1 The Language Situation in Cameroon

In section 2.4.2, I have presented the history of the mother tongue literacy programme which forms part of the context for my research. In this section, I shall further elaborate on the language situation in Cameroon. I will examine the geographical location of the country while reviewing the number of languages existing, the language environment and the impact it has on language development and literacy. I will also look at some enablers of language development and literacy before presenting some challenges to language development and community development.

The geographical location of Cameroon

The Republic of Cameroon, formerly French Cameroun and British Cameroon, is located on the west coast of Central Africa. Cameroon has boundaries with Nigeria to the northwest, Chad to the northeast, the Central African Republic (C.A.R.) to the east, and the Republic of the Congo, Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea to the south. The topography of Cameroon is varied, ranging from tropical rain forests in the south to mountainous highlands in some western central regions and semi-arid savannahs in the Far North. Cameroon has ten Regions, formerly called Provinces, and two official languages: English and French. English is predominantly used in the North West and South West Regions while French is predominantly used in the other eight regions. The North-West Region constitutes part of the territory of former British Cameroon. It is located in the western highlands and its population is composed of many ethnic groups including a significant proportion of immigrants from other Regions and from foreign countries, particularly Nigeria, with whom the Region shares boundaries. The Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen and Weh languages are part of several

languages listed for Cameroon. Ethnologue lists 284 languages in Cameroon of which, 275 are living and 9 are extinct. Of the living languages, 271 are indigenous and 4 are non-indigenous. Additionally, 12 languages are institutional, 102 are developing, 67 are vigorous, 77 are in trouble, and 17 are dying (Ethnologue, 2021).

Demographic situation

Cameroon is ranked as the 54th country in the world in terms of land surface area. The country covers an area of 475,400 square kilometres. The population of Cameroon is estimated at 26.55 million by worldpopulationreview.com in April 2021. The United Nations Population fund projections (Internet article 2021), estimated the population of Cameroon at 27,224,265 million. Cameroon has a high fertility rate with an average of 4.60 births per woman. The birth rate is 34.71 births per 1,000 people and the death rate is 9.028 deaths per 1,000 people. The annual population growth rate was also estimated at 2.59 %. Since 1951, the average population growth rate of Cameroon has been above 2%. The current growth rate of the country is above the growth rate of the world's population which was estimated at 1.05% per year in 2020. Cameroon has a majority young population with an average age of 18.7 years and 41.25% of the population being between zero to 14 years old. With high birth rates expected to continue, the population is also expected to remain relatively young in the future. It is worth noting that the average age of the population is quite instrumental in determining the preservation of minority languages in Cameroon.

There are several migrants from Nigeria who live in the area. The use of Nigerian songs and movies is on a tremendous increase in the North West Region and this has an enormous toll on the use of minority languages. The North West Region is structured into Seven administrative divisions which include: Boyo Division, Bui Division, Donga Mantung Division, Menchum Division,

Mezam Division, Momo Division, Ngoktunjia Division. The more than 50 languages that are spoken across the North West region are situated in the different administrative divisions. The Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen and Weh Languages are part of the languages spoken across the North West Region of Cameroon.

Migration, Urbanisation and Multilingualism

Cameroon is home of refuge for several people who have been displaced by ongoing unrest in parts of Nigeria, Central Africa Republic and Tchad. However, with the socio-political changes of the North West and South-West Regions, most migrants seeking refuge in Cameroon will prefer to move to the other regions where there is relative calm. Similarly, with the unrest in the North West and South-West Regions, other towns have continued to receive an influx of internally displaced people from the two affected regions. Such migration is underpinned by the human and psychological needs created by the escalation of the socio-political changes in the area.

Furthermore, apart from the socio-political changes, several young people in the North West Region nurse aspirations to travel abroad because they are motivated by the experiences and achievements of migrant family members and friends (Pelican, 2013) and the unpromising socio-economic situation of the country. The several anti-migration efforts by Cameroonian authorities have seemingly not slowed down the migration aspirations of young Cameroonians who are motivated by the prior success of their peers (Alpes, 2014). There is a direct correlation between the migration rate and the economic development of the country (Bell et al, 2015; Bove & Elia, 2017). In most developing countries, the majority of governments are initiating policies aimed at curbing or inverting the migrants' flow from rural to urban areas and out of the country. However, the majority of countries continue to experience substantial numbers of people either moving in or

out of their territory (Czaika & De Haas, 2014). A number of these migrants are in search of a better life where they can afford the required intake of calories per day for themselves and their families. Elaborating on the propensity of such struggle, it has been stated that: “The harsh reality is great inequality. While in Western Europe and North America average supplies exceed 3,500 calories a day, they are less than two-thirds this amount in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia” (Conway, 2019, p. 1).

Heightening globalization in the 21st century and the increase in migration from rural to urban areas, have greatly contributed to determining the dynamics of urbanization (Zhang, 2016). This migration from rural to urban areas has contributed to increasing urbanization and multilingualism in urban areas. Such urbanization and multilingualism serve as a platform where the concept of community has experienced a shift to mean more than a geographical location. People from language communities who migrate build houses in the urban areas but continue to expand the territory of their language community by promoting the preservation of their language, culture and identity. Writing about the expansions that ensue from urbanization, it has been stated that:

The expansion of urban boundaries and the formation of new urban centres (mostly the reclassification of what were previously villages as they grow or develop to meet national urban criteria) also contribute to urbanisation, but it should be kept in mind that migration is also an important driver behind the formation of new urban centres and the spatial expansion of old ones. (McGranahan & Satterthwaite, 2014, p. 8)

With the recent Socio-political changes of the Northwest and South-West regions and other upheavals in the East and Northern regions of Cameroon, there is an alarming increase in rural-urban migration and even international migration. It has been observed that countries with a larger share of their population made up of young adults, among whom mobility is high, will record higher migration propensities than those with older populations (Bernard, Bell, & Charles-Edwards, 2014).

This search for a better life may account for why in recent years, the rural-urban migration and international migration rates have increased in Cameroon (Carling & Schewel, 2018; De Brauw, Mueller, & Lee, 2014). The massive exodus of people from rural to urban areas and out of the country can also be blamed on the socio-political changes of the country and several development challenges that the country has faced over the past several years. Due to the socio-political changes of the North West and South-West Regions, rural-urban migration has contributed to the overcrowding of urban towns such as Yaounde and Douala. Such influx of people into the urban areas has also resulted in the transfer of excess labour force from the rural areas to the urban areas. The labour force available for the few industries situated in the urban areas has greatly exceeded the capacity of the urban-based industries to employ all those seeking employment (Mberu & Pongou, 2016). However, the high level of migration has increased ethnolinguistic fractionalization, which is the likelihood that two individuals randomly selected from the population of the urban area belong to different ethnic groups (Steele & Abdelaaty, 2019; Robinson, 2020). Despite their belonging to various ethnolinguistic communities, several adults in urban areas can boast of having 2 or more languages in their linguistic repertoire and the distinct languages serve diverse purposes at any given time and in specific social contexts (Hoff, 2006;

Rymes, 2014). The linguistic diversity of the urban areas notwithstanding has fostered the creation of affinity groups that seek to promote the preservation of the languages, cultures and identities of people of the same ethnic groups who have migrated to urban areas for employment and other purposes. Such initiatives in urban areas, continue to promote language preservation and community development. However, migration, urbanization and multilingualism are not the only concepts that influence language preservation and community development. A key concept worthy of consideration that also influences language preservation is localization. I will next look at the concept of localization and its contribution to the discourse of language preservation and community development.

Localisation in a global context

As we celebrate linguistic diversity and face the realities of urbanization and multilingualism in a global world we are also mindful of the need to incorporate the leadership role and contributions of local speakers of minority languages into the language preservation campaign. Localization is a relevant concept to be considered in both language development, translation practice and community development (Bernal-Merino, 2014). In the context of language development, localization will define the process of accepting the full participation and contribution of the local speakers of the language in the language development process. In a global context where language development agencies seem to have more authority to decide about the standardization of local languages because of their academic prowess, resource control and technological expertise, more authority needs to be given to the local speakers of the language to also participate fully and bring their contribution because of their ownership rights about their language. Localisation of language development efforts may include: (1) Allowing local language

speakers to fully bring their contribution to adopting the symbols and writing rules of their language. These rules should represent how the locals would want their language to be written. (2) Encouraging native speakers of the language to take responsibility to give leadership to the standardization process of their language (3) Ensuring that academic or other publications in the language are subject to adaptation for critical analysis and understanding by the local speakers of the language.

Localization seeks to enable the local speakers of the language to have the responsibility to act as custodians of their language and culture irrespective of the challenges of migration and language evolution (Mead, 2017).

In the age of technology where digital devices and software are used to promote language development, such fantastic innovations do not completely replace the role of the local populations who play a pivotal function in maintaining the originality of the language (Collins & Halverson, 2018; Gelb & Krishnan, 2018).

With migration and urbanization, speakers of a language get in contact with speakers of other languages. Migrants tend to learn the economic, social and political vocabulary of other groups, especially in a multilingual context. Contact with other ethnolinguistic migrants will induce language change. Migration, therefore, affects the migrants, the language of their identity and the language of their new destination (Amit & Bar-Lev, 2015; Isphording & Otten, 2014). The consequences of migration will be several folds including sociolinguistic, economic and demographic. Although those who migrate to urban areas may end up constituting an ethnolinguistic community in their receiving location, in most cases their community remains a minority with regard to other groups or the speakers of the host ethnolinguistic community.

However, despite the size of the migrated community, they can influence the host language as the host language and culture influence them.

Furthermore, as language technologies become predominantly used in the 21st century, researchers must continue to envision the impact of this digitalization on languages that originally do not have software programs that have been conceived to meet the requirements of the users of these languages at the grassroots or local level (Lindgren, 2017; Makridakis, 2017). It is worth noting that with globalization, speakers of various languages are beginning to develop software applications that can enable them to consolidate efforts to preserve their language and to pursue those efforts both at local, national and international levels. This calls for harmonization of the international, national and local initiatives of language preservation. In other words, as the scholars of the language group develop software and applications from the diaspora, they also depend on the local community that has upheld the strategies of preserving the language and transferring it from one generation to another. Localization enables various stakeholders to adjust the language development process to consider linguistic, cultural, and technological content to meet up with the local realities of the language area.

In the context of Cameroon, most people living in urban areas are multilingual at varied levels. The majority of these urban areas are increasingly experiencing linguistic diversity because of the emergence of multiple languages while most local areas continue to experience the invasion of non-native speakers of the language in search of farmland and the exploitation of some natural resources available in the area and this may lead to the endangerment of the minority language. In the next section, I will look at the endangerment of Several Cameroonian languages.

2.5.2 The Endangerment of Cameroonian Languages

In recent years, with the influence of globalization and multilingualism, the language preservation discourse has had some conspicuous concepts such as language vitality, language endangerment, language change, language survival, language death and language documentation (Dorian, 2016; Fitzgerald, 2017; Grant, 2014; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2016). Despite the humongous effort to document and maintain the vitality of many of the world's languages, the present era is plagued by the endangerment and death of many of these languages, especially ethnolinguistic minority languages. Prognostications of language endangerment and language death indicate varied percentages within the next century. Some alarming predictions depict the demise of ninety-five per cent of all the world's languages within the next 100 years (Krauss, 2008). Some less precarious estimations signal the death of one language every three months (Campbell, Lee, Okura, Simpson, & Ueki, 2013). Regardless of the accuracy of these approximations, language endangerment remains a key concept in the language preservation discourse. In the context of Cameroon, the endangerment of local languages will imply the risk of losing the beauty and the benefits of linguistic diversity, the esteem of ethnic identity and the treasure of culturally constructed knowledge for people of these language communities. These jewels embedded in various languages motivate researchers and scholars to continue to put in gigantic efforts to preserve and valorize the minority languages of the world. Several parameters contribute to language endangerment.

The vitality of languages that are spoken around urban areas is negatively affected by urbanisation and migration (Coulmas, 2018; Kerswill, 2006). In such instances, speakers of these languages are in regular contact with speakers of other languages. The movement of people from

remote areas to the city in search of employment, exchange of goods and services, and other reasons for mobility may render the language environment quite cosmopolitan. Such a move could be a great threat to the vitality of those languages that are situated closer to or in urban areas. However, the intentional and extensive efforts of speakers of these languages may ensure the maintenance of the languages that are on the verge of extinction (Bradley & Bradley, 2013).

There is also a relationship between language endangerment and socio-political conflicts. In communities where minority languages are spoken, socio-political conflicts may contribute to the disruption of normal community life thereby jeopardizing the vitality of the already endangered language (Nevins, 2013). In the context of the socio-political changes of the North West and South-West regions of Cameroon, speakers of various minority languages have been forced to migrate from their language area not as a homogenous community but in dispersed ranks as they seek refuge in other areas. Other factors that may contribute to language endangerment which have been elaborated on in other relevant sections include language attitudes, domains of language use, the influence of foreign or colonial languages and regional lingua franca. However, despite the numerous factors that may contribute to the endangerment of especially ethnolinguistic minority languages, considerable effort is being made to promote mother-tongue literacy as a means of language preservation. In the next section, I will look at the contribution of mother-tongue literacy efforts to language preservation and Community Development in Cameroon.

2.5.3 Mother Tongue Literacy, and Community Development in Cameroon

Mother tongue-based literacy programmes have been implemented in various Cameroonian languages for more than 4 decades.

Efforts to teach indigenous Cameroonian languages in the educational system started during the colonial period (1920 and 1957) and were further pursued during the post-colonial period of the country (Anchimbe, 2006). After the independence of Cameroon, attempts to valorize the various ethnic identities encountered some severe resistance from certain government officials who considered the teaching of these languages as a threat to national unity. In some extreme cases, such resistance was demonstrated through a violent seizure of literacy books, typewriters, and other material from mother-tongue literacy teachers. Such a gruesome experience which happened in Dschang in the West Region of Cameroon was qualified as “an act of vandalism in a period when the government did not take account of cultural treasure” (Momo, 1997, p. 13). Such an action was a proof of naivety and the lack of understanding of the wealth of knowledge embedded in various ethnolinguistic and cultural contexts. During the same decade when such misconception was demonstrated through aggressive action in the Cameroonian context, research in Thailand with over 80 languages rather showed that linguistic diversity was a source of national unity. According to Smalley, (1994, p. 1), “In surrounding countries, diversity of that scope is divisive, the matrix of revolution, but in Thailand, it is hardly noticed.”

However, despite the negative attitudes demonstrated by some Cameroonian authorities, there has been considerable progress due to extensive advocacy and encompassing efforts towards mother-tongue literacy and language preservation. These campaigns were employed after the constitution of an amalgamated alphabet for Cameroonian languages in 1979. Since the establishment of the General Alphabet for Cameroonian languages (Tadadjeu & Sadembouo, 1984), there has been a considerable increase in the number of mother tongue publications available in different Cameroonian languages. For more than 3 decades, the National Association of Cameroonian

Language Communities (NACALCO), the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), and other stakeholders have contributed to the preservation and standardization of Cameroonian mother tongues. These initial efforts were patronized through the Operational Research Program for Language Teaching in Cameroon (PROPELCA) which propagated the teaching of Cameroonian indigenous languages to adults and children. The goal of the PROPLCA programme was to “develop a complete educational structure for the teaching and maintenance of [minority] languages in the school system and to ensure that this system is completely state and/or community-supported in structures and funding.” (Tadadjeu, 1997, p. 20). Although the efforts continue to yield progress to a certain degree albeit challenges, there is a need for increased advocacy and linguistic research at individual and collective levels towards language documentation and language learning which will contribute to critical autonomy, language maintenance and community development (Grant, 2014; Ledwith, 2020).

Increased advocacy and linguistic research by CABTAL

As many stakeholders get on board to facilitate language maintenance and community development through the promotion of reading and writing of various mother tongues in Cameroon, the contribution of CABTAL (Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy) cannot be undermined. For more than 30 years, CABTAL has joined other stakeholders like NACALCO and SIL to bring a contribution to the discourse on language maintenance and Community development in the Cameroonian context. CABTAL has been involved in linguistic research, literacy, translation and language-based community development efforts in more than 86 language communities in Cameroon. One such effort is the mother tongue literacy programme operating in the Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen and Weh Communities of the North West Region of

Cameroon. Informal mother-tongue literacy instruction has been facilitated in these language communities to help the owners of these languages gain an understanding of the linguistic structures of their language, to access information that can contribute to their economic, social, educational, political and spiritual development (Bang, & Vossoughi, 2016; Huckle, & Wals, 2015). This can be experienced through the promotion of social justice and the enhancement of the dignity of speakers of these minority languages (Hocking, 2017; Kam, 2014; Lerner, 2015). The mother tongue literacy programme covers topics such as Sound and word building for those who are not literate in any other language, rules for writing the mother tongue, the grammar of the language, tone awareness, health, hygiene, business, human rights, agriculture and other relevant topics depending on the realities of a particular context. The variety of topics covered seeks to make the mother-tongue literacy experience more than simply learning a code for written expression of the language but “rather an attitude of creation and re-creation, a self-transformation producing a stance of intervention in one's context.” (Freire, 2001, p. 86). Such an approach to literacy aligns partly with what critical theorists have applied in various sociocultural contexts (Perry, 2012). Before literacy began, these languages were properly investigated by CABTAL and or SIL linguists. In some cases, preliminary research was done by university students or professors who are either speakers or non-speakers of the language.

The Mother tongue literacy programme in the Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen and Weh communities has been operating for the past 17 years. Mother tongue literacy in these languages is taught informally in schools and through Church-based and community-based adult literacy classes. The work is supervised by community organisations set by the community stakeholders. The mother tongue literacy programme is designed to serve non-literate (those who have not attended school),

semi-literate (those who have been to school and are familiar with English reading and writing) and those who are literate in English but not literate in the mother tongue. The literacy programme is divided into basic literacy level one, Basic literacy level two, functional literacy level one and functional literacy level two and this can last between 2 to 4 years depending on the context of the learners. Those who are literate in English can go through the basic literacy level one and level two in 36 hours before transitioning into the functional literacy part of the programme. Various literacy materials have been published in these communities. The materials range from orthography statements, alphabet charts, alphabet booklets, primers, transition primers, diaries, dictionaries, Bible portions, health books and other development-related materials that have been published in the mother tongue. These communities will have varied literacy rates in the mother tongue depending on the duration of the programme in that community or the commitment of the community stakeholders. The varied literacy rates could be because of the duration of the literacy efforts and the number of literacy materials that have been produced in each language community. Table 1 below shows the different materials already published in these language communities.

Table 1

Literacy Materials Published in Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen and Weh Languages

Type of publication	Babanki	Mankon	Nkwen	Weh
Start Year of the literacy programme	2004	2012	2019	2011
Primers	2	2		2
Transition primers	1	1	1	1
Bible portions	2	3		2
Diaries	1	1	1	1
Functional literacy materials (HIV, Agriculture, business, Human rights, etc)	6	3	1	1
Story books	1			
Dictionary	1			
Alphabet chat & Alphabet booklet	2	2	1	1
Total Publications per language	16	12	4	8

Language preservation, mother tongue literacy and community development

In the language communities under study, the process of learning to read and write the mother tongue has had multiple effects on the preservation of the languages and the development of those communities. The endangerment of languages can be caused by social, economic and political factors (Davis, 2017; Hornberger, 2002; Romaine, 2002). However, the endangerment of any language is never caused by a single factor but by a set of composite agents that are interconnected (Matras, 2020). In the context of the mother tongue literacy programme, cultural and linguistic identity issues, socio-political conflicts, mixed school systems and migration can constitute potential sources of the endangerment of these languages. In the same vein, several interrelated factors can contribute to language preservation. Elaborating on the enablers of language preservation, it has been stated that: “most prominently official state support, the economic power of the speakers, large numbers of speakers of all ages (and without noticeable reduction over time), and language loyalty” (Thomason, 2015, p. 18), constitute some of the facilitators of language preservation. However, it takes a concerted effort from several stakeholders to foster language preservation. In research on the consequences of the successful promotion of Thainesse for nation-building, and the serious damaging effect on minority languages resulting in the endangerment of 15 of Thailand’s languages, it has been stated that “There are concerted efforts by grassroots communities to reverse the situation, with the technical support of academics, to revitalize and maintain their language and culture in various ways, including education.” (Premsrirat, 2014, p. 54). Such cooperative efforts can be observed in the context of the mother tongue literacy programme as government agencies, community stakeholders, and civil society organisations like CABTAL come together to promote mother tongue literacy partly for

language preservation and other perceived outcomes. For the Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen and Weh learners, literacy in the mother tongue is motivated by the perceived benefits of learning to read and write their language. Some of the assumed benefits include improved linguistic competence of their language, improved self-esteem, preservation of their ethnolinguistic identity and improved welfare through functional literacy lessons. All these perceived benefits promote the preservation of these languages and also provide a platform for language-based community development. Nevertheless, successful language development and mother tongue literacy efforts will require the employment of appropriate strategies. In the next section, I will look at various strategies for mother tongue literacy.

2.6 Strategies of Mother Tongue Literacy

Despite strong efforts towards the maintenance of ethnolinguistic minority languages, the hegemonic role of some languages of wider communication (colonial languages in several cases) has contributed to the marginalization of these mother tongues forcing them to struggle for survival. In most cases, stakeholders have adopted a “self-defensive anti-predatory strategy” (Mohanty, 2006, p. 266) to increase the chances of survival of these minority languages. Mother tongue literacy especially in a multilingual context is therefore approached from a variety of perspectives that take into cognizance the realities of the context. The mother tongue literacy programme of CABTAL requires the employment of strategies that are adjusted to accommodate the different social, educational, political and cultural realities of those desiring to learn how to read and write their languages. This section presents contemporary strategies employed in the mother tongue literacy programme and examines the major attention and effort that are needed for

the given strategies to be successful in achieving the learning outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. The role of technology in the mother tongue literacy programme is examined with a particular focus on how this relates to the realities of the socio-political environment of the mother tongue literacy programme.

Although the context of Cameroon is multilingual with varied levels of linguistic diversity in specific contexts (Chiatoh, 2014; Di Carlo, & Good, 2014), there is a higher propensity to use English and French because of their ‘official’ status and their preponderant usage in the context of governance, education, technology, politics, socio-economic control and development (Bui, & Nguyen, 2016; Fishman, 2017).

Several studies have already disclosed that teaching and learning using the mother tongue increases performance (Moeller, & Catalano, 2015; Levis, Sonsaat, Link, & Barriuso, 2016; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2003 as cited by Rai et al., 2011; UNESCO, 2003). However, despite this reality, several mother-tongue literacy programmes have barely survived because of a lack of appropriate strategies that can enable the mother-tongue literacy programme to live up to the standards of literacy programmes in languages of wider communication.

In most cases especially in Africa, mother tongues have been transmitted or acquired orally with a greater focus on speaking and listening skills. Therefore, moving to the level of reading and writing while maintaining good speech and listening habits will require the usage of strategies that bring about better outcomes. These strategies could vary from one context to the other because of some realities. A context where the mother tongues enjoy a majority status may require less extensive efforts to surmount challenges like language attitude, lack of community participation, lack of literacy publications, lack of qualified people to serve as literacy teachers and inadequate

vocabulary in the language. In the context of Cameroon where there is a multiplicity of minority languages, strategies for mother-tongue literacy will need to take into consideration aspects of language policies, and the type of literacy programme needed by the population.

2.6.1 Types of Literacy Programmes and Corresponding Literacy Strategies

The several discourses on literacy depict the diversity of ideologies about the concept of literacy (Horner, 2013; Steyn, 2014). In a context where globalization is emphasized, most adopted definitions of literacy and the analysis of literacy rates and expected outcomes might not specify the languages used in literacy (Bartlett, 2008; Fulcher, 2012; Perry, 2012; Thorne & Black, 2007). However, irrespective of the conceptualization of literacy, specific literacy programmes are required for particular social contexts and those literacy programmes will require the use of certain strategies for better outcomes. In this section, I examine four types of literacy programmes and their implications for the mother tongue literacy programme.

Religious-based mother tongue literacy programme and literacy strategies.

In the context of this research, a religious literacy programme will depict a literacy programme that promotes reading, writing, understanding and application of texts and narratives that foster the attainment of religious goals. Such literacy programmes encourage the “cultivation of religiously literate professionals throughout various sectors of society.” (Walker, Chan, & McEver, 2021, p. 2). Such literacy programmes depend on religious organisations to mobilise the resources, the learners, teachers and the location for the literacy classes to promote reading and writing and religious engagement (Marshall, 2018). In the context of CABTAL, it is called Church-Based Mother Tongue Literacy. The final goals of such a programme would be to promote the production and use of available religious literature, to establish the ownership of the programme

by the religious body, to attract members to the religious body through literacy classes and to facilitate the expansion of the religious organisation and the betterment of the society where the programme is being implemented (Iyer, 2016). In the case of CABTAL, such a programme further seeks to help mother-tongue speakers to get access to portions or complete translations of the Bible and other relevant literature that can promote their religious and spiritual engagement. Contrary to contemporary religious education which relativises truth and gives learners the latitude to believe whatever regardless of its epistemic relativism, the religious literacy programme of CABTAL encourages critical ontological questioning of truth and truthful living. The programme also encourages a mature and warranted epistemic verification which discards the ideology of equality of all beliefs and which promotes religious literacy among learners so that they can distinguish themselves by giving clarifications to circular sceptics and agnostics (Wright, 2013, p. 1-2).

Although religious literacy is a contested domain (Dinham, & Francis, 2015), its contribution to the field of literacy cannot be undermined. Religious literacy seeks to influence attitudes concerning knowledge and social actions of individuals and groups. One key tool is the use of readable text that help individuals and groups to look at social, cultural and religious issues from a perspective that brings about positive change and mobility (Segal, 2015). One Key strategy used for religious literacy which could be employed in other domains of literacy is the translation of materials into the target language. In most languages where the translation is being done, it helps teachers to know how to deal with problems of understanding concepts. Translation brings several advantages to both the learners and teachers. One key contribution of translation is its ability to help the learners by clarifying meaning and domesticating foreign concepts (Bahreman, 2015; Wang, 2014). This could bring about positive learning outcomes.

Other strategies used in the religious literacy component of CABTAL include (a) mobilising and equipping church leaders to take ownership and responsibility for the Mother Tongue literacy programme (b) participating in planning and the identification and selection of potential literacy teachers and other volunteers to serve in the programme (c) training church leaders to read and write to use available religious materials, and to test other materials that are produced or translated. (d) mobilising and planning for teachers' training and the production of various materials needed. (e) organising reading groups to encourage people to practice public reading.

Mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTBMLE) programme and strategies.

As the world becomes more globalized, multilingualism has become an easily recognised term. Multilingual/Bilingual education has been defined in diverse ways. The term means to use two or more languages as media of instruction. It might also be considered as the learning of two languages as subjects. In most cases, it will mean using the mother tongue (L1) plus a second language (L2) as media of instruction. (Ouane & Glanz, 2011, p. 10). Furthermore, Mother Tongue-based Multilingual education would refer to "A language learning situation involving two or more languages, the first and more fundamental of which is the mother tongue." (Chumbow, 2013, p. 37). Research has shown that people achieve better learning outcomes when the initial instructions are given in their mother tongue before later transitioning to other languages (Ball, 2010). Increasingly, ethnolinguistic communities are gaining consciousness of the need to preserve their linguistic and cultural heritage and transmit it from one generation to another. Previously monolingual contexts are changing due to the effects of social mobility and migration (Lam & Warriner, 2012; Lopez-Class, Castro, & Ramirez, 2011). In the last few decades, the international

community has increased its support for mother tongue-based multi-lingual education programmes (South & Lall, 2016; Tupas, 2015). This support has motivated the mobilization of various resources and the development of several tools and strategies to promote learning in such programmes. However, there are still tensions about multilingualism, and monolingualism (Jessner, 2017; Ortega, 2019). Despite the tension that exists between some scholars about monolingualism, bilingualism and multilingualism, this tension can be negotiated (Cenoz & Gorter, 2015), especially in a context of a mother tongue-based multilingual education programme

Mother tongue-based multilingual education (MT-Based MLE) programmes would require the use of the mother tongue as the primary medium of instruction in a formal education system. The main goals of an MT-Based MLE programme are: (a) to build on the language skills and aptitudes that learners have already developed at home to provide them with more effective formal education, (b) to maintain the minority language and culture, (c) to improve on the efficiency and learning outcomes of the education programme, (d) reduce school dropout rates. In research in Africa, Makalela, (2015), posits a ‘translanguaging’ strategy for teaching in an MT-based MLE programme. Writing about the results of research in the Philippines, it has been stated that “Strategies such as translation of target language to mother tongue, utilization of multilingual teaching, utilization of lingua-franca, improvisation of instructional materials written in the mother tongue, remediation of instruction, and utilization of literary piece written in the mother tongue” (Lartec et al., 2014, p. 1) were employed as strategies in the programme. It follows from the above, that strategies of MT-based MLE programmes are diverse and may depend on the cultural context and the specific learning objectives of the particular programme. In the context of Cameroon, the majority of strategies used by teachers would be the translation of target language strategy where

most of the information is translated from the official language into the mother tongue and the improvisation of teaching materials which capture the cultural realities of the learners (van Ginkel, 2017; Walter, 2014).

In most of the contexts where such a programme has been implemented in Cameroon, two languages have been used with the first and more central being the mother tongue and the second being the official language. Key strategies include (a) materials development which encompasses the development of primers and the translation of other relevant materials for the programme, (b) curriculum development which includes defining the expected outcomes of the programme and the required knowledge, skills and attitudes, (c) teacher training to equip teachers with the adequate skills to facilitate teaching in the classes, (d) Getting input from experts to improve the quality of materials and learning outcomes and (e) Monitoring and evaluation of the programme as it unfolds.

Although there is some ambiguity regarding the concept of multilingualism and bilingualism, its proper application will depend on using the right strategies that are aligned with the realities of the context of the learners (Baker, 2007).

Mother tongue- promotion literacy programme and strategies.

Over the past four decades, several research findings have brought increasing illumination to the importance of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in formal and informal educational settings (Nieto, 2015; Stranger-Johannessen & Norton, 2017). When learners gain knowledge in a language that speaks to their hearts, it galvanises their dreams and aspirations. Mother tongue literacy promotion programmes seek to encourage the documentation and valorisation of the mother tongue by using it as a medium of instruction in literacy classes in various settings in the community. Such an effort contributes to increasing the efficacy, status and

visibility of the mother tongue profile. However, research also suggests that these mother tongue promotion programmes have met numerous obstacles, partly due to the misconception of some stakeholders who consider the promotion of these mother tongues as a threat to national unity (Drake, 2019). Furthermore, the setbacks have been attributed to the lack of proper discernment of the context in which the policies on mother tongue literacy are being implemented (Lang-ay, & Sannadan, 2021). In the context of Cameroon, many parents assume that implementing the mother tongue policies is political and will rather deprive their children of accessing the information and opportunities related to scientific and technical concepts that are mostly available in the languages of wider communication (Rodney, 2018). Prioritising such a perspective and ignoring the linguistic realities of minority language communities will damage any potential language-related gains for speakers of these minority languages (Seals, & Peyton, 2017).

The goals of a mother tongue promotion literacy programme will include: (a) to raise the status of the mother tongue concerning the language(s) of wider communication (b) to increase motivation for use of literacy in the mother tongue (3) to demonstrate the value of the mother tongue for literacy and accessing information that brings about individual and community development (Rodríguez, Carrasquillo, & Lee, 2014; Taylor & von Fintel, 2016). Possible strategies for a mother tongue promotion literacy programme will include: (a) Mobilising key stakeholders to give their support and value for the mother tongue and the mother tongue promotion literacy programme (b) Producing lots of genre of materials in the mother tongue and give adequate exposure to these materials in various formats, (c) Organising events to motivate people who show proof of successfully becoming literate in the mother tongue, (d) Using key motivational themes which respond to specific felt needs of individuals and communities to

develop mother tongue literacy materials to attract several mother tongue speakers to the literacy classes, (e) organising several advocacy programmes for the mother tongue promotion literacy programme (Cohen, 2014; Snow & Matthews, 2016). However, since there are still many questions to resolve regarding strategies to be used for various literacy programmes, there is a need to use a larger number and range of strategies to enable all categories of language learners to pull out the utmost benefits from participating in the literacy programme. Nevertheless, using several strategies have implications for the outcome of the programme (Brevik, 2019; Al-Khresheh & Al-Ruwaili, 2020).

Mother tongue- based literacy and development programme and strategies

Over the past 4 decades, scholars have linked literacy programmes to some development initiatives (Carnoy & Samoff, 2014; Hanemann, 2015; Street, 2014; Van Campenhout, 2015). The key area of debate is whether literacy can make people live healthier and wiser lives and whether literacy can help individuals to improve their welfare and to better participate in moving society forward. These questions and several other concerns have dominated debates on the contribution of literacy to improving the lives of individuals and communities. A development literacy programme will serve as an entry point to other development-related initiatives, such as human rights, health, hygiene, agriculture, family planning, business and child nutrition programmes (Campano, Ghiso, & Welch, 2016; Grohmann, Klühs & Menkhoff, 2018; World Health Organization, 2018). However, there is a need for more evidence of how literacy contributes to development. Alluding to such perspective and referring to a literacy and development programme for women, it has been stated that “The high drop-out rates from such programmes suggest however that the assumed link between women’s literacy and development can be disputed.”

(Robinson-Pant, 2004). Potential goals of a literacy and development programme include (a) developing an adequate level of literacy to support the goals of the development programme (b) improving the welfare of people by addressing problems of illiteracy in the context of the literacy and development programme, (c) providing a core of literate people who can eventually provide long-term leadership to the literacy and development programme (Airey, Lauridsen, Räsänen, Salö, & Schwach, 2017; Bamgbose, 2014; van den Bergh, Ros & Beijgaard, 2015). The importance of continuing reflection on the goals of development-based literacy programmes for designers and implementers of such programmes to improve or change their approach is widely acknowledged. Such reflection would have implications for the strategies used in the literacy programmes. Some of the key strategies of literacy and development programmes include (a) organising literacy classes as a required first step to participation in the development programme and (b) developing post-literacy/ functional literacy materials which support the development activities. (c) using literacy classes to address development issues or to provide some of the information needed for the development programme to function (d) asking participants in the development component to organise and run literacy classes as an exercise in self-development and management (Grizzle et al., 2014). In the next section, I present the role of technology in contemporary mother tongue literacy programmes.

2.6.2 The Role of Technology in Mother Tongue Literacy Programmes

Current global realities necessitate the use of new learning spaces that meet the needs of the beneficiaries of the learning programmes (Elmqaddem, 2019; Fowler, 2015; Luna Scott, 2015). To design and implement language learning programmes that are realistic and sustainable in the 21st century, the role of technology cannot be overemphasized. There is an urgent need to

reconsider learning spaces that incorporate both traditional onsite classes and digital learning environments. Current realities in the world demand that literacy learners and teachers are endowed with the right skills and competencies to operate within their specific social context and the broader sociocultural and political contexts (Kontovourki et al., 2017). With the increasing influence of technology, it is mandatory that the “digital dimension should act as a foundation for proposing new learning spaces” (Marta, 2019, p. 1351). The progressive evolution from a predominantly physical learning environment to a growing digital approach to learning has greatly affected the way literacy programmes are implemented in the 21st century (Paniagua & Istance, 2018).

Nowadays, a lot of reading and writing is happening via various digital platforms. The use of digital tools such as computers, mobile phones and tablets for communication and literacy has become more than face-to-face communication. The development of software and language technologies has become part of people’s lives in the 21st century. These digital tools and technologies continue to influence language use, literacy and the performance of learners in a variety of ways (Baron, 2015; Keeley & Little, 2017; Kern, 2015; Mohammadyari & Singh, 2015; Van Deursen & Van Dijk, 2014). The unprecedented Covid 19 pandemic came with several challenges for literacy programmes that required the gathering of people in particular locations. The restrictions of movements and gatherings have deprived several people in remote localities of maximising existing opportunities to learn to read and write their language through village-based literacy classes. In the last two decades, there has been an increasing push for the use of ‘digital opportunities’ to carry out literacy. There has been a significant and dramatic shift from physical gathering in literacy classes to virtual learning platforms. In the North West and South-West

Regions, where there has been a regression in the attendance rate in the face-to-face literacy classes, such a regression could be blamed on covid 19 and the sociopolitical changes. However, it could be argued that more factors could contribute to a drop in literacy class attendance (Cemalcilar & Gökşen, 2014; Havik, Bru, & Ertesvåg, 2015). Despite the drop in the number of onsite literacy class participants, new opportunities have also emerged for mother-tongue literacy programmes in a digital era.

In Cameroon, the ‘traditional approaches’ to implementing mother tongue literacy programmes are learning to make use of new opportunities for teaching and learning several Cameroonian languages via digital platforms. Literacy classes for most communities have continued to happen on various social media platforms like WhatsApp and zoom. Nevertheless, the use of digital platforms for literacy came with the challenge for learners and teachers of the literacy programme to improve their skills in using information and communication technologies (Shopova, 2014). Some of the learners and teachers are learning to better use their mobile phones irrespective of internet challenges to improve their literacy skills. A major highlight of the digital literacy effort has been the production of talking books in more than 65 Cameroonian languages. These materials were distributed on various social media platforms and this has increased the link between the urban and rural populations of the same community. The concept of community has therefore gone beyond a geographical location to a group of people who share a common interest in developing and using their mother tongue for sustainable development (Ferguson & Lovell, 2014; Lumpkin, Bacq, & Pidduck, 2018; Ojha et al, 2016).

Mother tongue speakers of the various language communities located in different parts of the world are now actively involved in the business of developing their language. The recent

paradigms will however need to integrate monitoring at various levels to closely follow up on the progress of digital initiatives of the literacy programme (Botta, De Donato, Persico, & Pescapé, 2016).

Although a primary advantage of the digital age is the possibility of identifying, accessing, circulating and archiving information, a major challenge that remains in most parts of Africa is slow or unavailable internet facilities. Faced with such a great challenge, literacy teachers find it hard to be more responsible for their teaching, and learners find it hard to take full responsibility for their learning. With an increasing rural-urban migration due to socio-political instabilities, CABTAL reinforced literacy classes on virtual platforms and this has increased awareness of the importance of reading and writing using technological opportunities. The Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen and Weh communities have had the involvement of several intellectuals who are in the process of standardizing their language beyond the aspirations of CABTAL

It is obvious that Covid 19 and the sociopolitical changes have been quite disruptive of the status quo in the literacy programme of CABTAL, but it is also worth noting that it has provided new opportunities for digital literacy initiatives.

2.7 Summary

In this chapter, I have presented an overview of the literature regarding the context of language development and mother tongue literacy and the setting of the scenes in which this research takes place.

I have also presented the theoretical underpinnings that support the situating of this study by examining a possible application of a humanistic approach to the social constructivist theory to the context of the mother tongue literacy programme. With a focus on literacy as a humanistic

social construction, my research participants are chosen based on their experience in the socio-political context. I do not include as research participants people who have not had at least one year of experience in the socio-political context of the mother tongue literacy programme. In doing so, I have explored recurring issues such as the sociopolitical changes of the North West Region of Cameroon and its implication on teaching and learning in the mother tongue literacy programme. While drawing allusion to trends of literacy in the world, I also explained the perspective of literacy which has informed my research as I investigated the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. This is important because this perspective of literacy has given direction to my investigation and also made me sensitive to the kind of data collection tools and the responses of learners, teachers, and literacy programme facilitators. I discuss further the data collection tools in chapter 3 and elaborate on the responses of the participants in chapter 4. I have also examined some determinants of learning outcomes of literacy programmes and have attempted to explore various literacy paradigms in a multilingual and sociocultural context.

I have traced the history of mother-tongue literacy in Cameroon while presenting a synopsis of the endangerment of Cameroonian languages and the efforts that are being made toward language preservation, mother-tongue literacy, and community development. I have examined strategies of mother tongue literacy while explaining various types of literacy programmes and have depicted the role of technology in mother tongue literacy programmes. In the next chapter, I describe the research method and the data collection tools used in this research.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the rationale for using a given research paradigm as the methodology for this research. The choice of a qualitative Action Research Case Study is due to the nature and purpose of the study. A Case study is a qualitative approach that allows the researcher to “explore a real-life, contemporary, specific bounded system through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information.” (Creswell & Poth, 2016, p. 97). In this chapter, I begin by re-stating my research problem and purpose statements. I also present various aspects of my research that will help to inform the conclusions presented later in this dissertation. These aspects include the methodological approach used and a defence of that choice; a description of where and when the research took place and a presentation of my research tools. I then proceed to present relevant procedures and ethical considerations of this research and conclude the chapter by discussing the processes of data collection and analysis.

3.1 Research Problem Statement

3.1.1 Research Problem Statement

The recent changes in the socio-political changes of the North West and South West regions of Cameroon have greatly influenced the mother tongue-based literacy programme of the Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy (CABTAL). In an effective and functional mother tongue literacy programme, learners, teachers, literacy programme facilitators, and other stakeholders collaborate to achieve phonemic awareness in the language concerned, basic reading and writing, an improvement in the vocabulary of the learners, fluency in reading, comprehension, and an application of reading and writing skills to solve some problems at an individual or community level (Benson, 2022; Olshtain & Sayag, 2022). However, the socio-

political nature of the learning environment (Lingard, Sellar, & Baroutsis, 2015) have resulted in several challenges and unresolved expectations from various stakeholders (Jamila, 2012). CABTAL facilitates a mother tongue-based literacy programme among eighty-five (85) language communities in Cameroon and a number of these languages are found in the North West and South West Regions which have been affected by the ongoing socio-political changes. The persistence of the socio-political changes in these regions has generated challenges related to the enrollment, teaching and learning outcomes and the commitment of various stakeholders of the mother tongue literacy programme in the area. With sudden changes, it is worth noting that the implementation of the literacy programme may require more extensive efforts, to face the challenges that these changes may bring (Badugela, 2012).

The persistence of the socio-political changes coupled with existing negative language attitudes (Chiatoh, 2014; Chiatoh & Akumbu, 2014, Mforteh, 2008) has reduced the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme by a constant failure to meet up with planned literacy activities and the non-attainment of some components of the literacy programme. Failure to understand the impact of the socio-political changes on the mother tongue literacy programme may result in a mismatch between projected and achieved outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme and this may even lead to a stop of the literacy programme. If nothing is done, the mother tongues concerned may eventually die.

However, there are great opportunities for the mother tongue-based literacy programme to survive in these contexts (Richards, 2015).

For the literacy programme to continue to thrive, the programme designers and implementers need to intentionally incorporate some modifications in teaching methods and

desired learning outcomes to reflect the realities of the evolving socio-political context (Swain & Lapkin, 2005). Learners and facilitators will need to learn to think in creative ways to survive the crisis while managing the effects of the sociopolitical changes (Shrivastava & Statler, 2012).

3.1.2 Research Aims and Goals

The anticipated outcome of this research is to examine the impact of the socio-political changes of the North West and South-West regions of Cameroon on the mother tongue-based literacy programme of the Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy (CABTAL). As a reflective practitioner, responsible for designing and facilitating the implementation of mother-tongue literacy programmes, especially in ethnolinguistic communities in Cameroon, I wanted to examine the extent to which the several challenges brought about by the socio-political changes of the North West and South West Regions have affected the learning outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. My research study aims to show how the socio-political changes have affected the mother tongue literacy programme. This study will look at the impact of the sociopolitical changes on the teachers, learners and on CABTAL, by examining the objectives that were set for the mother tongue literacy programme before the sociopolitical changes and the degree of attainment of those objectives.

The overarching focus of this research is to understand how the situation has forced the literacy programme to change and how an understanding and management of the change could be instrumental to the modification of learning outcomes of ongoing literacy initiatives to accommodate current realities. This research also aims to examine the various opportunities available for the mother tongue-based literacy programme to survive in the context of the persistent socio-political changes. The quest for literacy programmes that are relevant to learners facing

different physical and emotional instabilities is a major source of motivation for this research and the hope is that the insights drawn from the findings of this research would be applied when redesigning literacy programmes for the affected communities and other communities that may have similar realities. The focus of this research will not be on all the communities in which CABTAL is carrying out mother-tongue literacy programmes. An assessment of the entire literacy programmes of CABTAL will be an area of interest for further research. The efforts here will be focused exclusively on examining the impact of the sociopolitical changes on mother-tongue literacy programmes that are located in the Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen and Weh communities of the Northwest West Regions of Cameroon

This research study will help literacy programme organisers to maximise the effectiveness of literacy programmes amid diverse challenges. It will also help the CABTAL administration to modify the objectives, teaching methods and desired outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. Literacy programme facilitators will be able to emphasize specific aspects of the literacy curriculum that can enable learners and facilitators to achieve key learning and teaching objectives. This research study will also improve my professional knowledge about the extensive efforts that may be required when designing and implementing literacy programmes in such a specific social context.

3.2 Research Approach and Design

Educational research can be predominantly approached from a positivist or interpretivist perspective. These two perspectives are distinguished by their ontological, epistemological, methodological, and axiological stances (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020).

The Ontological perspective is concerned with determining the reality of the existence of the phenomenon that is being investigated (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Ontology helps the researcher to examine his/her personal beliefs and assumptions about the existence of a phenomenon. The ontological perspective of the researcher helps to shape the belief system of the researcher regarding what can be uncovered about reality (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). The assumptions of the researcher about the nature of reality are quite instrumental in enabling the researcher to understand the significance of the data that is being collected during the research (Aliyu, Singhry, Adamu, & Abubakar, 2015). The ontological perspective of the research helps to orientate the researcher's perception of the research problem that requires an investigation, its implication, and the orientation that is needed to find answers to questions that contribute to resolving the problem statement (Levitt et al., 2017). In the context of this research, an ontological perspective will enable the researcher to investigate the reality of the socio-political context. This reality could be investigated objectively or subjectively (Davis & Bellocchi, 2018). In this research, the researcher seeks to get the perspectives of individuals regarding their understanding of the socio-political changes and its implication on the mother tongue literacy programme.

Even though there are diverse views on the description of 'truth', the epistemological stance of research helps the researcher to describe the processes followed to know or discover truth or knowledge (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Yazan, 2015). Generally, research has been conducted using positivist, objectivist, constructionist, and/or subjectivist epistemology perspectives. In every research, the epistemological perspective is fundamental in determining the patterns and how knowledge (experiential, skills, and knowledge claims) is gained, and how it is transmitted to others (Bolisani & Bratianu, 2018). Determining the epistemological perspective of research will

be quite useful in helping the researcher to ask the right questions to elicit data that will contribute to knowledge (Mason, 2017). The epistemological perspective in this research will help the researcher to ensure the trustworthiness of the data collected (Rose & Johnson, 2020).

Axiology denotes the ground rules and various ethical considerations that need to be made when preparing to embark on research (Palaiologou, 2016). Axiology helps the researcher to be conscious of how ethical issues evolve inseparably with the research efforts, and also considers the ‘relationships’ and ‘dialogs’ established between the researcher and the research participants (van Zyl & Sabiescu, 2020). The axiological perspective of research includes determining, assessing, and interpreting what is right and improper behaviour regarding the research. Axiology helps the researcher to look at measures touching on “what value we shall attribute to the different aspects of our research, the participants, the data, and the audience to which we shall report the results of our research (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p. 28). The axiology of every research is important in helping the researcher deal with questions touching on regard for the values and dignity of all human beings who will be participating in the research. This defines what values will guide the research throughout the research process. It also helps the researcher to determine what he/she will do to respect the rights of the research participants (Bang & Vossoughi, 2016). It also outlines various moral, and cultural issues that will be considered during the research and also helps the researcher to consider risk factors and how those will be minimized during the research (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Hammersley, 2015).

In research, methodology refers to “a way to systematically solve the research problem. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically” (Patel & Patel, 2019, p. 48). The term methodology is used to refer to different steps that are employed by a

researcher in studying a particular phenomenon in a given context. The research methodology deals with various ‘aspects of research such as the design, approaches, and procedures used in an investigation that is well planned to find out something’ (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p. 28). A well-defined research methodology will help the researcher in the process of designing the tools of data collection, determining the participants of the research, and how the collected data will be analyzed to gain knowledge and draw inferences (Opoku, Ahmed, & Akotia, 2016). In the framework of this research, the methodology defines the techniques that will be used to collect data and to answer the research questions regarding the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme.

In selecting a particular research paradigm, the researcher consents that his/her research will be guided by the assumptions, beliefs, norms and values of the chosen paradigm. However, the purpose of each research will determine the research paradigm that can be applied. (Kivunja, & Kuyini, 2017). Every research should necessitate an explicit, specified, systematic approach to investigate and document the most suitable results (Mohajan, 2018).

Epistemologically, research can be separated into quantitative and qualitative: Quantitative research aims at the collection of data so that information can be quantified and subjected to statistical treatment to support or refute alternative knowledge claims (Apuke, 2017, Andrew, Pedersen, & McEvoy, 2019). Contrastingly, qualitative research uses an inductive approach to investigate a phenomenon and this permits the researcher to delve into significances and insights in a given situation (Levitt et al., 2017). This approach to research makes use of a range of data collection and data analysis tools that could include purposive sampling and semi-structured interviews (Gopaldas, 2016). Quantitative research also looks at the intensity of relationships

between variables and is founded on experiments or statistical methods for establishing the rigour and dependability of research findings. On the other hand, qualitative research seeks to explore or observe a phenomenon in its natural setting. This is achieved through designing and incorporating methodological strategies to ensure the reliability of the findings (Noble & Smith, 2015).

Table 1 below summarizes the differences between quantitative and qualitative research.

Table 2

Differences Between Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches

(adapted from Antwi, & Hamza, 2015, p 222)

Quantitative Research Approach	Qualitative research approach
<p>Worldview</p> <p>Is guided by positivist assumptions about the world</p>	<p>Worldview</p> <p>Is guided by interpretivist assumptions about the world. Study behaviour naturalistically and holistically</p>
<p>Purpose</p> <p>Follows a numerical or scientific method by focusing on hypothesis testing and theory testing.</p>	<p>Purpose</p> <p>Follows the exploratory scientific method to describe what is seen locally and sometimes to come up with or generate new hypotheses and theories. It is commonly used to understand people's experiences and to express their perspectives</p>

<p>Epistemology</p> <p>Uses objectivist theory of knowledge</p>	<p>Epistemology</p> <p>Uses subjectivist theory of knowledge</p>
<p>Methodology</p> <p>Uses experimental/ manipulative methodology</p>	<p>Methodology</p> <p>Uses hermeneutical/manipulative methodology</p>
<p>View of human behaviour</p> <p>Assumes that cognition and behaviour are highly predictable and explainable. There is a cause-and-effect relationship between events and human behaviour.</p>	<p>View of human behaviour</p> <p>Assumes that human behaviour is fluid, dynamic, and changing over time and place.</p>
<p>View of reality</p> <p>Researchers attempt to operate under the assumption of objectivity. They assume that there is a reality to be observed and that rational observers who look at the same phenomenon will agree on its existence and its characteristics.</p>	<p>View of reality</p> <p>Researchers generally contend that “reality is socially constructed” Guba and Lincoln, 1989). Social behaviour follows socially constructed norms.</p>
<p>Data collection</p> <p>Identifies statistical/numerical data and seeks to establish the relationships among variables.</p>	<p>Data collection</p> <p>Uses descriptive data, search for patterns, themes and holistic features and appreciates variations</p>
<p>Results</p>	<p>Results</p>

Seeks explanations for events and behaviours. Describes causes of events and behaviours. Results of findings are generalizable	Seeks to understand events and behaviours. Results of findings are specific to a context
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The field of qualitative research is constantly spreading out and growing. Qualitative research is characterised by a large number of perspectives and ‘voices’ (Henry, 2015). Qualitative research attaches a lot of importance to investigations that are interpretive, naturalistic, and holistic in nature (Anderson, 2017). The underlying assumption in qualitative research is the belief in the existence of multiple nonphysical realities that are located in a specific context and could be uncovered through the lived experiences of the research participants). Qualitative research is inductive in nature, and the researcher generally delves into the meaning of a phenomenon by drawing insights that are particularly situated in a given context (Antwi & Hamza, 2015; Henry, 2015, Levitt et al., 2017). Some main approaches to qualitative research include grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 2017; Walker & Myrick, 2006), case studies (Stake, 2008; George, 2019), conversation analysis (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990; Hoey & Kendrick, 2017), ethnography (Brewer, 2000; Denshire, 2014), and life history and narrative approaches (Sandelowski, 1991; Shacklock & Thorp, 2005).

This research will make use of an action research case study. Over the past five decades, there has been a lot of evolution regarding the methodological approach of the case study. Such a development has contributed to the design and implementation of a research approach that is more flexible, and practical, and can help researchers to carry out in-depth investigations on a variety of

issues across several disciplines (Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills, 2017). In the world of research, different scholars have approached case studies from varied perspectives and this has resulted in a variety of explanations and designs that have contributed to the theory. (Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills, 2017; Ridder, 2017; Yazan, 2015). A qualitative case study is an in-depth analysis of a specific or defined number of units (Stake, 2005). A qualitative case study can be a very useful tool for responding to complex, real-life questions (Tetnowski, 2015). The development of a case study approach to research has been influenced by several philosophical perspectives. In this research, we seek to use a qualitative case study to explore the evolving impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. At the end of this case study research, we intend to provide some guidelines to other researchers who are wanting to use case study in their research.

The researcher will seek to explore the experiences of learners, teachers, and the CABTAL literacy programme facilitators of the mother tongue literacy programme as they operate in the socio-political context (Skovdal and Cornish, 2015). The choice of the qualitative approach is motivated by its ability to allow the researcher to explore the situation from “a variety of lenses which makes it possible for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 244).

The choice of a qualitative approach aligns with the interpretivist paradigm, which is founded on the belief that individuals interpret truth differently and act based on the interpretation they give (Gaus, 2017). According to the interpretivists paradigm, a phenomenon may have several interpretations (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). This is opposed to the deductive approach which determines truth by collecting data and analyzing using measurements

to determine the presence of empirical evidence (Rahi, 2017). Approaching research from a qualitative perspective, allows the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and its specificities in a particular context which might not be the same if the phenomenon is examined in a bigger context (Mohajan, 2018). Since the interpretivist perspective emphasizes several interpretations of a phenomenon, employing it permits the researcher to capture diverse views about the same phenomenon in a particular context. One advantage of this research approach is that it allows the researcher to have a thick description of the phenomenon by capturing various views of participants regarding the phenomenon (Geertz, 2008).

In the context of this research, the use of a qualitative research method will allow the researcher to have an in-depth understanding of how the sociopolitical changes have affected the performance of learners, teachers and CABTAL literacy programme facilitators. Furthermore, as this research focuses on exploring the impact of the socio-political changes in a specific context, the need for a qualitative research methodology quickly surfaced. A qualitative approach will allow the researcher to get involved in the daily routines of learners and teachers to investigate the situation. Additionally, qualitative research allows the researcher to explore complex human experiences which may not easily be concluded as a simple cause-and-effect process for uncovering predictable outcomes (Cheffy, 2008).

Before selecting a qualitative methodology, I also considered the option of using a quantitative methodology. However, regarding the use of an experimental approach to explore the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcome of the mother tongue literacy programme, several considerations caused me to conclude that a quantitative methodology would not be appropriate for my research. One of the greatest challenges in using an experimental approach in

such a context is the complication of controlling external variables such as the learning environment, student learning styles, age, gender, motivation, the personality of learners and teachers, the size of the literacy class, the teaching method, the role of technology, and so on (Almalki, 2016; Anderson, Sweeney, Williams, Camm, & Cochran, 2018). Furthermore, an experimental approach might be easily distorted by participant effects for example using a quantitative research method would cause several people to fill in questionnaires and other documents to please the researcher, which would not necessarily provide accurate data.

Thirdly, the researcher would want to capture the experiences of learners and teachers of the mother tongue literacy programme as they face the challenges of the socio-political changes and seek to accomplish the learning outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. Such an investigation could have been difficult to follow through with a quantitative methodology. Finally, as an insider to the context, the aim is to have a culturally meaningful representation of both the context and the topic under investigation (Papen 2005, Young, 2011).

3.2.1 Action Research Case Study as a Choice

Every research process defines why the research is being carried out, the means of achieving the research aims and a description of the importance of what has been discovered. This research uses action research as the means of eliciting data regarding the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. Action research is a systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday lives (Lewin, 1946; Stringer, 2014, p. 1). In traditional positivist research studies, the action is generally to carry on an experiment in which variables are

manipulated to check the possibility of establishing a cause-and-effect relationship. In action research, ‘the action is usually to begin a process of improvement in learning, intending to influence thinking and behaviours’ (McNiff, 2016, p. 11-12). Action research is widely considered a herculean methodology that can help to improve the educative process (Clark, Porath, Thiele, & Jobe, 2020; Rowell, Bruce, Shosh, & Riel, 2017). In the context of this research, action research will be concerned with the changes experienced by the learners, teachers and programme implementers and the changes in the socio-political environment that can result in changes in learning outcomes. Action research will therefore be an on-the-spot process intended to deal with a concrete problem situated in a specific social context (Ripamonti, Galuppo, Gorli, Scaratti, & Cunliffe, 2016). The main goal of action research is to improve individual practice and institutional effectiveness (Mitchell, Pardino, Yermakova-Aguiar & Meshkov, 2015). In an attempt to differentiate action research from traditional research, McNiff (2016, p. 17), outlines the following as the main characteristics of action research:

- Action research is practice-based, and practice is understood as action and research;
- It is about improving practice (both action and research), creating knowledge, and generating living theories of practice;
- It focuses on improving learning, not on improving behaviours;
- It emphasises the values base of practice; •
- It is about research and knowledge creation, and is more than just professional practice;
- It is collaborative, and focuses on the co-creation of knowledge of practices;
- It involves interrogation, deconstruction and decentring;
- It demands higher-order questioning;

- It is intentionally political;
- It requires people to hold themselves accountable for what they are doing and accept responsibility for their actions;
- It can contribute to social and cultural transformation.

In this study, the hope is to improve my practice regarding implementing mother-tongue literacy programmes in a socio-political environment and to improve on the effectiveness of CABTAL regarding achieving the outcomes of mother-tongue literacy programmes in such a socio-political context.

In an attempt to reflect on how the socio-political changes has affected the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme and make suggestions for improvement in the current environment, the choice for action research emerged.

3.2.2 Action Research as a Reflective Practice

As a literacy consultant, I have been involved in a reflective practice of questioning my efforts to improve my professional/intellectual knowledge (Di Stefano, Gino, Pisano, & Staats, 2015). As a reflective practitioner, my role has not been restricted to literacy teaching as a transmitter or facilitator of learning but also as a transformative intellectual in the domain of mother-tongue literacy (Edwards, 2017). From a social constructivist approach, the social context is very instrumental for learners to construct knowledge through their daily experiences (Slavin, 2019). In the framework of this research, experiential learning is in the context of the socio-political changes. I looked at my practice of literacy facilitation and gained new insights from continuous feedback and debriefing on implementing the mother tongue literacy programme in the context of socio-political challenges. In seeking to promote teacher/facilitator reflection in the

implementation of language learning programmes, action research is required to understand the learners and their learning environment (Farrell, 2014). This led me to regard action research as a suited methodology for my research.

3.2.3 Action Research as a Case Study

In recent years, case study as a research design has gained recognition and acceptance (Dumez, 2015; Thomas, 2021). The reason for the popularity of a case study as a research approach is its ability to concentrate on a unique situation (Ridder, 2017).

A case study focuses on an in-depth enquiry of a real-life phenomenon within a specific context. A case can either refer to a specific event or phenomenon, an individual, a group or an organization that is of interest to the researcher (Burawoy 2009; Stake 2005; Yin 2014). In a case study, primary data gathering is interviews, participant observation and archives (Baskarada, 2014; Flick 2009). The advantage of a case study is its ability to ensure a detailed description and analysis of the situation under study to gain a deep understanding of “how” and “why” things happen and to identify patterns relationships and constructs within a particular setting. (Simons, 2014). The unique focus of the case study ‘therefore becomes a positive advantage for action researchers’ (Mitchell, 2016, p. 59). Considering the uniqueness of the context of the mother tongue literacy programme, an action research case study came forth as the most appropriate for my research.’ An action research case study will include the researcher using his participant status to explore the situation under study. In my situation, I need to explore the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme.

3.2.4 Limitations of Action Research

Action research has been criticized for having certain limitations. Firstly, its suitability to a specific context may cause participants to be biased and this may cause research findings to lack rigour and transferability (Burns, 2010). The biases of learners may result from their awareness of the realities of the context which breeds suspicion of everyone around trying to ask questions. This awareness might cause them to not provide authentic experiences for fear of certain realities which might include fear of being prosecuted by the military or the separatist fighters who seem to be present in every event. Responding to critics and contending for the ecological validity of action research, Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), argue that human activity is positioned and dependent on a real-life context. The findings of this research could enable researchers in similar contexts to explore the impact of human activity on learning outcomes. Action research has also been criticized for providing subjective knowledge (Coghlan, 2019; Wallace, 2006). This study is concerned with exploring the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. Learners, literacy teachers and literacy programme facilitators are going to be producers of individual knowledge through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. As an insider to the context of this research, the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions will be carried out in a context where the participants will share their thoughts without prejudice or fear because of a trust relationship that has been built between the researcher and the participants. The bias of participants will be most likely in the case of a researcher who is an outsider to the context.

However, qualitative research (with action research included) has been criticised for lack of objectivity and the fact that researchers sometimes use personal opinions rather than evidence

to support their arguments (Grix, 2018; Ormston, Spencer, Barnard, & Snape, 2014). I agree that my values and beliefs as a researcher cannot be excluded from the research process no matter how well-grounded the findings of the research may be, there is still some level of partiality because different researchers interact differently with the research. In the case of this research, every effort has been made to maintain objectivity and I desire that the findings presented will greatly contribute to bringing about a better understanding of the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. I committed myself to improving the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme in the context of the socio-political changes. I also tried to use an inclusive approach to interaction with participants to strengthen the trustworthiness of my research. In the next section, I present the data collection tools for this research.

3.3 Data Collection Tools

Initially, there was a consideration to use both qualitative and quantitative tools for data collection in this research, but after further thoughtfulness of the realities of the

context, the researcher understood that using quantitative research tools would cause several people to fill in questionnaires and other documents to please the researcher, and this would not help provide accurate data (Earl, 2010). Secondly, the researcher desired to capture the perspectives of the learners, teachers and programme facilitators as they struggle to solve other social problems alongside their involvement in the literacy programme. This would be challenging to follow through with quantitative tools which might not consider some details about the context (Earl, 2010). Furthermore, as this research focuses on exploring the perspectives of the learners

and facilitators concerning the impact of the socio-political changes on the literacy programme, the need to use qualitative data collection tools quickly turned up. This approach would allow the researcher to easily get into the given social context to explore different perspectives and describe the situation in some detail (Flick, 2013).

This research, therefore, made use of an inductive approach to data collection, which is particularly useful in situations like the one being explored to discover the changes in the literacy programmes as a result of the socio-political changes.

Furthermore, using an Action Research methodology ensured the choice of the interpretivist paradigm of data collection tools (Mohajan, 2018). To generate exploratory descriptive knowledge, I used qualitative data-gathering tools such as semi-structured interviews, participant observation and focus group discussions. At the beginning of data collection, I also used a questionnaire with several closed questions which were given to respondents before the study. These tools allowed the researcher to obtain first-hand information and to attain a holistic picture of the subject of study, as he examined the perspectives of learners and facilitators concerning the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme.

As an insider, I was conscious of the need to relate to all my participants in an ethical and professional way and to maintain some level of confidentiality. I constantly made sure that I took time to introduce myself, even to those who knew me, and to explain the focus of and reason for my research. As most people in the four communities were already aware of CABTAL, it was sufficient for me to introduce myself as a member of that organisation. Following introductions, some participants were willing to be interviewed and others agreed to an interview but were not

willing for their voices to be recorded. I respected the participants' opinions, especially in areas such as recording or taking pictures. If anyone did not want their voice to be recorded, then I simply took notes. I also informed participants about using codes that will ensure that I don't use their real names in the dissertation and all my participants who agreed to be interviewed had no objection to this proposal. In addition, the participants were assured that the information they provided will be considered confidential and would not be included in any document without their consent. With these concessions and explanations, the informants felt respected and shared their perspectives about the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme with confidence. Most participants were also prepared for me to contact them again for follow-up discussions if we wanted to ask clarifying questions later. The majority of those who participated in this research were happy for me to have visited their community in the midst of the socio-political changes. In the past five years, I had not visited these communities. I had only met a number of people in Bamenda during literacy teachers' training courses. Visiting them during such challenging times although in the context of research, served as an opportunity to build more trust.

From the outset, my focus was to investigate how the socio-political changes have impacted the mother tongue literacy programme in the Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen, and Weh communities but, as the research unfolded, I gained other insights with respect to the culture and way of life of the people, and the history of Cameroon, which I had formerly taken for granted. These insights enabled me to better understand the context of the mother tongue literacy programme.

3.3.1 Questionnaires

In every research, the researcher seeks to get empirical evidence about the existence of a phenomenon (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). To arrive at a conclusive report about such evidence, there is a need for the collection of data regarding facts, activities, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour of participants (Dichev & Dicheva, 2017). A questionnaire is a tool that can be used in such a study to find answers to the research problem. A questionnaire can be a very suitable tool to carry out specific tasks in a given research environment (Krosnick, 2018). A questionnaire can be a useful tool for assembling firsthand information about people, their conduct, experiences, social interactions, attitudes, and impressions regarding a phenomenon (McGuirk & O'Neill, 2016). To collect data using a questionnaire, the researcher can design questions that can address various domains. In their discussion of the key ideas regarding the design and administration of questionnaires, McGuirk and O'Neill (2016), outline four possible domains of questions that could be included in a questionnaire:

Attribute questions: These are questions that are aimed at bringing out the characteristics of the participants such as age, marital status, location, occupation, residence, and income.

Behaviour questions: Behaviour questions in research intend to find out what people do for example practices, customs, patterns, routines, or habits.

Questions about attitudes: This domain of questions attempts to discover various viewpoints or what people consider as suitable or unsuitable. For example, what do the participants consider acceptable or unacceptable?

Questions about beliefs: project the aspiration to show what people believe to be true or false or preferred. For example, participants' beliefs on the impact of the socio-political changes, and beliefs on how equity and justice are to be carried in a given social context.

These different domains of questions could be asked to participants through oral face-to-face interviews or telephone calls or by self-administered questionnaires or using a combination of a face-to-face questionnaire or a questionnaire administered from a distance via telephone, zoom, or other digital platforms (Newcomer & Triplett, 2015).

Although a questionnaire is not the only tool that can help to capture the reality that has been constructed in a research environment, it could contribute to bringing out a part of the multiple renderings of a phenomenon. In the case of qualitative research which focuses on investigating the reality of everyday life for participants (for example learners, teachers, and literacy programme facilitators of the mother tongue literacy programme) in a specific social context (for example the context of the socio-political changes), a questionnaire might be instrumental in bringing out the quantifiable aspects of social reality that other data gathering tools may not be relevant to present those aspects (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). These other aspects of reality can only be captured by probing into lived experiences of the participants as they navigate the social environment under study. Since questionnaires are more structured, they help to get useful information about the sample population of a given research (Siraj-Blatchford, 2020). Questionnaires are very useful in that they can furnish insights into some particular course of action, changes in the social environment, beliefs, attitudes, and some mental representation of meaning. Questionnaires can also be more pragmatic to use to collect information over a research population that is dispersed in a large geographical area because it will not require a lot of costs. In the context of this research,

it was easy to reach participants by phone to confirm their language group, their gender, their age, and the number of years that they have been involved in the mother tongue literacy programme (McGuirk & O'Neill, 2016; Patten, 2016). Additionally, questionnaires are very flexible and can be combined with tools for collecting qualitative data such as interviews, focus groups, and participant observation and this will help provide a more elaborate perspective of the phenomenon that is being investigated (Turhan et al., 2017). In the context of this research, a questionnaire at the beginning of the open-ended interview questions helped to provide some vital information about the participants, and this was quite instrumental during the data analysis phase as we look at the percentages of participants from different language areas and the range of their ages. It also helped to paint a picture of the rate of participation in terms of gender.

Considering that this research is qualitative in nature, it was necessary to give careful thought and preparation to design the closed-ended questions at the beginning of the interview questions to avoid possible nuances regarding the nature of this research. We made sure that the closed-ended questions were quite relevant in seeking answers to the broader research question than in providing answers to the research problem. The purpose of the closed-ended questions in the interview questions was to solicit some personal information from the participants. The aspects of personal information covered by the questions in the context of this research included: their gender, their mother tongue, and their longevity in the mother tongue literacy programme. The aspect of longevity in the mother tongue literacy programme was particularly useful because I wanted to get the perspectives of participants who have been involved in the mother tongue literacy programme for a considerable amount of time and could share their thoughts based on some practical experiences that they have had through their involvement in the literacy programme. One other

question was intended to capture how long the participants had lived in the context of the socio-political changes. I intended to interview people who had spent at least a year in the context of the socio-political changes because I wanted to draw out practical lived experiences from people and not just some imaginations of people who have never lived in the socio-political environment.

In designing the questions, I was also mindful of the fact that in the socio-political environment, people are very careful with what they share concerning personal information. So having several questions about personal information would have been very scary to the participants. Even with the limited number of questions, the participants were very cautious about the information they were ready to provide because of the unpredictable nature of the socio-political environment. Although the closed-ended questions are included, the researcher also judged the environment and would not oblige participants to fill their age if they had a reservation. One way of going about that was to ask another person in the community to get a range of his/her age. This aspect was taken seriously because I intended that the participants in this research should be of a certain age range. These questions were quite instrumental in helping to present a picture in the form of pie charts or bar charts during the data presentation stage (See chapter 4). In the next section, I will elaborate on the semi-structured interviews.

3.3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

In research, interviews are considered as a flexible tool used by the researcher to understand a phenomenon from the subject's perspective and to unfold the significance of peoples' experiences, before scientific explanations (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013; Sewell, 2008). Interviews can be classified as structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Despite the limited historical evidence, qualitative interviews have made significant progress over

the last century. In research and particularly in the social sciences, interviews have been very useful in eliciting data for various research purposes. The initial uses of interviews go back more than a century and are embedded in the fields of sociology and anthropology. The conceptualisation and implementation of interviews have experienced considerable evolution for more than a century (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). Interviews are generally considered more appropriate when seeking to collect qualitative data (Queirós, Faria, & Almeida, 2017). As such, using interviews as a data collection tool in research provides research participants with the opportunity to respond to oral questions (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2017).

Interviews are generally categorized into two main domains depending on the nature of their implementation (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Interviews can either be classified as formal or informal. Informal interviews are part of daily living as people experience it. While they can be used for qualitative studies, their application is limited based on the intensity of most topics under study, and information gained is used primarily for anecdotal purposes. On the other hand, formal interviews are more structured, held to higher standards, and used more prominently in the professional world (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017, p. 3).

In qualitative research, interviews can be classified into 3 main types namely: semi-structured, structured, and unstructured interviews (Edwards & Holland, 2013; Eppich, Gormley, & Teunissen, 2019; Roulston & Choi, 2018; Mann, 2016; Minhat, 2015). A semi-structured interview uses a combination of closed and open-ended questions, which are most times accompanied by follow-up questions and is generally carried out with one participant at a time (Newcomer, Hatry, & Wholey, 2015). The time spent for each semi-structured interview normally takes into consideration the practical realities of the context and the time spent for each interview

is reasonable to allow good interaction between the researcher and the participants while avoiding excesses that may cause fatigue on either the researcher or the participant. A Structured interview is a data-gathering tool that employs the use of a set of questions that are asked in a defined order. Structured interviews are more standardized and follow a particular pattern (Rogers, 2008). An unstructured interview is a data collection tool that was designed to capture people's social reality (Sorsa, Kiiikkala, Åstedt-Kurki, 2015). An unstructured interview helps to develop a social interaction between the researcher and the participant and with an unstructured interview, neither the questions nor the answer could be known in advance.

In research, semi-structured interviews are particularly suitable for considering people's perceptions and opinions or other complex sensitive issues which touch on their emotions and feelings. Semi-structured interviews will help the researcher to concentrate on the issues that are meaningful for the participant, allowing them to express their thoughts (Cridland, Jones, Caputi, & Magee, 2015). Considering the context of this research, Semi-structured in-depth interviews are particularly suited because they will give the researcher the possibility of getting more details about the perspectives of the learners, teachers and facilitators of the mother tongue literacy programme. Semi-structured interviews will also enable the respondents to be quite flexible and relaxed to share their thoughts without being afraid of issues of confidentiality that might arise in a larger group situation (Bond, Garside, & Hyde, 2015). The semi-structured interview was a practicable tool to solicit answers to the research questions underpinning this research. (Yeong, Ismail, Ismail, & Hamzah, 2018). Semi-structured interviews were also quite useful during focus group discussions because they allowed me to assume the outsider's position before introducing a topic for discussion and this allowed respondents to express freely their views, opinions, feelings

and experiences regarding the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. However, before the interviews, the respondents were asked to answer a set of closed questions that enabled me to elicit some particular data. For instance, I assembled background information about the age, gender, and mother tongue learning experiences of the participants. The Semi-structured interviews also allowed me to gather reasonable data that enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. In moments when the respondents were unclear about certain questions, I asked clarifying questions or reworded certain questions to allow respondents time to open up about sensitive issues and to provide relevant information.

Despite the usefulness of Semi-structured in-depth interviews, it has been criticized for lacking the potential for results to be generalized and having the possibility to promote some bias. Furthermore, there could potentially be data loss when the interview is not conducted face-to-face, for example, using online platforms like zoom, skype and similar settings (Kakilla, 2021; Hofisi, Hofisi, & Mago, 2014). Also, there could be some hindrances to the interview caused by language barriers. Although the prevailing situation of the unprecedented coronavirus pandemic has affected physical gatherings, the researcher will not rely entirely on the use of technology during the interviews. Besides some of the literacy classes are located in areas where there is limited internet access so the only option left was the face-to-face meetings. This will prevent data loss and facilitate the capturing of undiluted data. On the other hand, the language barrier issue will be sorted by the very fact that the researcher is an insider and will either use the mother tongue (in the case of Babanki) or the Pidgin English Language (a lingua franca used throughout the area). There will therefore not be a need to employ translators which could pose a risk of dilution of the meaning of the answers provided by the respondents. Additionally, to handle the time and the cost

aspects which are generally associated with in-depth interviews, there is an advantage of the researcher being an insider of the research area (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019; Hayfield & Huxley, 2015).

3.3.3 Focus Group

Over the past four decades, the use of focus group discussions as a practical tool for assembling qualitative data has gained considerable popularity among a wide range of researchers and particularly those of the social sciences. Focus groups have been employed independently and in combination with other tools like interviews and participant observation to draw out data in various social contexts. With the development of standardized tools for data analysis, focus group discussions continue to emerge as a data-gathering tool that can usually yield better qualitative and quantitative data. In most cases, focus group discussion “is frequently used as a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of social issues” (O. Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick, & Mukherjee, 2018).

Kitzinger (1995, p. 299) articulates that a focus group is a fast and convenient way of data collection that “Capitalises on communication between research participants. The uncertainty of not always having people in a group setting due to the socio-political changes is a key consideration by the researcher who would want to make use of any opportunity when it presents, to collect information from several persons at the same time. Focus group will, therefore, be quite instrumental in speeding up the data collection process. The focus group discussions helped the researcher to get access to more robust data and greater perspectives of the respondents than could have been attained through questionnaires (Burns, 2010). Focus groups are regularly used in the social sciences because of several perceived benefits. Firstly, the use of focus groups helps

researchers to bring forth data at various levels. Focus groups enable the researcher to collect data at the individual, the group, and the interaction levels (Cyr, 2016, p. 231). Also, focus groups help to build stronger interactions between the researcher and the research participants and this facilitates the process of triangulation of data gotten from the three categories of participants (individuals, groups, and interactions) (Wilkinson, 2015). Focus groups also offer the possibility for a researcher to follow a step-by-step process to arrive at the goal of the research (Newcomer, Hatry, & Wholey, 2015). Finally, focus groups help the researcher to remain steadfast on the main purpose of the research, it also helps the researcher to confirm information that could have been gotten during individual discussions and it also helps the researcher to collect a large amount of data that could be analysed using the appropriate data analysis tool.

Although one setback of a focus group is the possibility of some participants overshadowing the discussion and propagating some of their ideas (Davis, 2016; Smithson, 2000), nevertheless, considering the ability of the researcher to be a good ‘moderator’ (Krueger 1994, Vaughn, Schumm, & Sinagub, 1996), such tendencies from group participants will be minimised.

It has been alleged that focus group discussions may not always draw out true feelings and may rather reflect participants’ biases where the respondent may give opinions that are different from what they experience in real life (Anderson, 2010; Freeman, 2006). Such situations may become more acute if not handled with tact by the researcher and digression from the research goal may arise from the discussion of sensitive topics that may amplify unnecessary aspects of the discussion (Sim, & Waterfield, 2019). The researcher made every effort to ensure that a balance was struck between avoiding potentially over amplified discussions and capturing the voices of certain participants who made very important contributions to answering the research questions.

For example, in the context of this research, some participants during the focus group discussions decided to say many things about the socio-political changes which are not relevant to this study but I chose to disregard the information. Also, some participants were either silent or not able to communicate because of the verbose participants. However, in such cases, I asked probing open-ended questions to refocus, verbose speakers or to allow introverted participants to give their opinion. In this research, we conducted focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, and participant observations with learners of the mother tongue literacy programme. The data that was collected was verified with some of the information that had been gotten through the semi-structured interviews. Participants for the focus groups were invited by the literacy programme facilitators who have built very strong reputations in the community through their involvement in the mother tongue literacy programme. We organised four focus group sessions with learners, one in each of the language communities. The participants of the focus groups were first interviewed at an individual level. During the focus group discussions, we wanted to verify or confirm the information that the participants had shared during the individual interview sessions. Although Guest, et al., (2017) recommend a maximum of 10 persons as ideal for a focus group discussion, however, based on the nature of the socio-political environment, we wanted to use the opportunity once we were already in the community to collect sufficient data. So some of the focus groups went above the recommended group size as prescribed by Guest, et al., (2017). We contend that the reality of the social context has a role to play in the number of people who can participate in a focus group discussion. In the context of Babanki, the literacy programme facilitator invited about 15 people to take part in the focus group discussion. He assumed that based on the reality of the context, if you want to get about 10 people for such a discussion, then invite at least 15. His

assumptions were not completely unfounded because out of the 15 people invited, 12 people showed up for the focus group discussions. One difficult point that we contented with was whether to send back two of those who had come. We were advised to let them participate because sending them away could spread the wrong image about the research that we were conducting. We however made every effort to keep the group focused and made an intentional effort in each case not to have an overcrowded group. Each time we were in the focus groups, we set group rules to ensure that there was some degree of order in the group. Data collection was done following the sequence of questions outlined in the questions for focus group discussions. However, whenever a question was not understood, some clarifying questions were asked. Despite the usefulness of the focus group discussions, I needed to use semi-structured interviews to solicit data that is different from the respondent's perspective.

3.3.4 Participant Observation

As an insider to the research area, the researcher had time to interact with the learners, teachers and literacy programme facilitators. This approach is quite befitting for the research because the researcher has been part of the phenomenon that is being observed. (Laurier, 2010). The insider aspect is a major advantage to be explored since the researcher will have the opportunity to do an in-depth exploration of the perspectives of the learners, teachers and facilitators of the mother tongue literacy programme without rendering them uneasy. Another advantage of being a known member of the research area is that the participants will not be too conscious of the presence of a researcher and this will allow for the uncovering of details that might not be possible with other methods. Although an observation might be challenging to a researcher who is already an insider to the research area (Lopez-Dicastillo, & Belintxon, 2014;

Watts, 2011), it is commendable for this research because it will allow participants to share their thoughts freely and with some precision that might not come with other tools like focus groups and in-depth interviews.

Although participant observation is an applauded tool for collecting qualitative data, there are some possible weaknesses of this tool that researchers should be conscious of. Firstly, a major challenge faced by participant observers is the need to maintain a balance between participation in the activities of the research participants and keeping a professional distance that allows for unbiased observation and recording of data (Takyi, 2015). In the context of the research, I maintain the position of the observer-as-participant which allowed participants to be more open in sharing their thoughts with me because they considered me as one who has experienced what they were going through. Secondly, participants can be influenced by the Hawthorne effect. The Hawthorne effect can be described as “a change in behaviour of the research participants in experimental or observational studies” (Sedgwick & Greenwood, 2015, p. 2). Participants can adjust their behaviour to suit the environment and the expectations of the researcher when the data is being collected. As an insider to the environment where the data was collected, research participants considered the researcher as a member of their community and gave responses with some degree of objectivity. Being conscious of the Hawthorne effect, the researcher was also mindful not to bring along his personal biases as he interacted with participants. In the next section, I present the data analysis technique adopted for this research.

3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

Analysing data is an important aspect of research. To Analyse qualitative data is to seek to have a deeper understanding of the information that is associated with the ideas, opinions, values, and behaviours of the individuals or groups that are being observed in a particular social context. In the context of this research, the data was elicited through semi-structured interviews, participant observations and focused group discussions. The most suited approach for analysing qualitative data is a subjective approach which consists of seeking an understanding of rich and in-depth information that has been communicated mostly through the words and behaviours of research participants (Burnard et al., 2008). Two main approaches stand out for analyzing qualitative data; these are grounded theory and thematic analysis.

3.4.1 Grounded Theory

Before the data collection phase of this research, I considered the grounded theory approach which is one of the potential approaches for analyzing qualitative data. The Grounded Theory approach for analyzing qualitative data enables the researcher to develop a theory which offers an explanation of the main phenomenon of the population under study and how that phenomenon is resolved or processed. Grounded Theory analysis is inductive and allows for a theory to emerge from the data through a process of exhaustive and structured analysis. Grounded theory is an approach to theory development that is rooted or grounded in the data rather than empirical testing of the theory (Charmaz, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Through the grounded theory approach, data are collected and analyzed, and then a theory is developed which is grounded in the data. In other words, grounded theory is simply the generation of theories from data (Walsh et al., 2015). Grounded theory is used to discover emerging patterns in data that have been

collected. A researcher who uses a grounded theory approach to analyse data attempts to establish by deduction a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the perspectives of participants in a given study (Creswell, 2009; Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Priya, 2016). Although the grounded theory approach has gained considerable acknowledgement as a tool for analyzing qualitative data, there have been several debates concerning its merits and demerits (Bryant, 2002, Goldkuhl & Cronholm, 2010).

3.4.1.1 Strengths and Weaknesses of Grounded Theory

One of the strengths of grounded theory is its provision of a systematic procedure of data analysis (Chong & Yeo, 2015). Using grounded theory allows researchers to be open-minded and to order their data such that there is traceability between the data and the categories that have been created (Birks & Mills, 2015; Flick, 2018). Another strength of Grounded Theory is its ability to automatically build theory from data (Birks & Mills, 2015; Charmaz & Belgrave, 2019). Proponents of Grounded Theory have also praised the method for the strength in the theoretical sampling process that allows for new data to be collected that will help improve the quality of the developing theory (Tracy, 2019).

One other strength of Grounded Theory is its ability to integrate distinct perceptions during the research process (Urquhart & Fernández, 2016). Grounded Theory is also praised for its potential to align with an action-oriented perspective of research (Reyes et al., 2015; Strauss & Corbin, 1998, Kelle, 2005). Despite the strengths of Grounded Theory, some critics of this methodology argue that the potential to align with the action-oriented research perspective distorts the theorizing process and may constitute a diversion from undiluted Grounded Theory. Grounded Theory has also been criticized for not providing a guarantee that collected data will not be taken

for granted. In response to this criticism, Goldkuhl, & Cronholm, (2010) have argued that it is incumbent upon researchers to always be critical toward information and to do further investigation to verify the data that has been collected or find alternative sources of data to confirm the information that has already been collected. Furthermore, the Grounded Theory methodology of data analysis may have the risk of allowing for the collection of very unfocused data which might result in frustration because of the unavailability of hints on where to start the categorization of data. To combat this weakness, there is a need to define very explicit research questions that will guide the data collection phase. This gives room for researchers to find possibilities for refining the formulations of the research question as the study unfolds.

From the outset, considering the significant recognition of the grounded theory approach as suitable for analyzing qualitative data, it seemed appropriate for analysing the data collected in this research but considering that some theories were examined at the beginning of this research, the choice of a grounded theory approach for analyzing data was ruled out.

3.4.2 Thematic Analysis

Thematic Analysis is a method for systematically identifying, organising, analysing, and interpreting (offering insight) patterns of meaning (‘themes’) across a set of qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Clarke & Braun, 2014). Thematic Analysis enables the researcher to minimally organize and describe the collected data in detail. Sometimes, thematic analysis goes further to interpret various aspects of the research topic. Thematic Analysis allows the researcher to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences. There are two main approaches to thematic analysis that can be used to analyze qualitative data. It can either be inductive or deductive (Alhojailan, 2012; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Joffe & Yardley, 2004; Maguire & Delahunt,

2017; Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). At the outset of the research, I did not set hypotheses to test a particular theory. Therefore, approaching the research from an inductive perspective enabled me to dig into data without anterior expectations regarding the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. The choice of an inductive approach was also motivated by its suitability for coding and analyzing qualitative data (Bree & Gallagher, 2016; Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). The unit of analysis in this approach could be a paragraph, a sentence, a word, or a theme that expressed an idea of how the socio-political changes had caused the mother tongue literacy programme to change. The data collection phase was directly followed by the data analysis phase and further reflection on the implications of the findings and considerations of areas for further research. A great amount of data was elicited through focus group discussions and interviews. However, the data analysis was limited to the relevant themes that emerged in alignment with the research questions that this research sought to answer and previous relevant literature that guided the research (Rowley, 2012; Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe, & Young, 2018). The data was thematically analysed using the exact words of the transcribed recordings or notes from interviews or focus group discussions. A 45-minutes interview could easily take 3–4 hours to transcribe in full. This process resulted in fifty to sixty pages of transcripts of interviews and focus group discussions (Doody, Slevin, & Taggart, 2013; Rabiee, 2004). The brief description below exemplifies the stages adopted to thematically analyze data using an inductive approach.

Stage1. I generated rich data by skillfully facilitating the interviews and focus group discussions and complementing them with observational notes and typing the recorded information into my laptop.

Stage 2. I familiarized myself with the interview and focus group discussion data by listening to recordings, reading the transcripts in their entirety several times and reading the observational notes taken during interviews and summary notes written immediately after the interview. This enabled me to capture ideas, perspectives and intuitions at all stages of the data.

Stage 3. I generated initial codes from interesting aspects of the data. This was done systematically throughout the entire data while comparing data relevant to each code. This happened by writing memos in my notebook and on the interview responses in the form of short sentences, ideas or concepts arising from the texts and grouping them according to emerging categories.

Stage 4. I looked for themes and gave labels to the main thoughts. I also reexamined themes and went over the data several times. This was achieved through categorizing and filtering the data, highlighting and sorting out quotes and comparing them with other quotes. The stage led to the production of a thematic map.

Stage 5. I defined and identified themes for them to be easily sorted and retrieved.

Stage 6. I considered alternative explanations by looking for differences in the responses that I recorded during the data collection stage. I looked for inconsistencies and contradictions by examining individual answers to the interview questions. In the end, I produced a report to display the conclusions (Braun, & Clarke, 2012; Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017).

Despite the growing recognition of thematic analysis as a tool for analysing qualitative data, scholars have also taken time to examine its strengths and weaknesses.

3.4.2.1 Strengths and Weaknesses of Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis has the advantage of being a very flexible method that can be applied in diverse contexts. Thematic analysis is a method rather than a methodology (Clarke & Braun,

2013). This makes it different from many qualitative methodologies in that it is not tied to a particular theoretical perspective. It is a relatively easy and quick method to learn and apply and can be used by researchers who do not have much experience in conducting qualitative research. Another strength of Thematic analysis is its usefulness in working within the participatory research paradigm, with participants as collaborators (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Thomas, 2017). The thematic analysis approach also has the strength of usefully summarizing fundamental aspects of a large amount of data by highlighting similarities and differences across the data set and providing a detailed description of the data. With Thematic analysis, results are generally accessible to many stakeholders and it can also bring out unanticipated perspectives as the data is being interpreted. The Thematic analysis approach can enable researchers to easily develop qualitative analyses that can help to inform policy development or modification.

Although thematic analysis has many strengths, it is not without weaknesses (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). Despite the flexibility of the method that allows for a wide range of options to analyse data, this can be a potential source of confusion for the researcher as they seek to decide on what aspect of their data to focus on (Hancock, Ockleford, & Windridge, 2001; Terry, Hayfield, Clarke, & Braun, 2017). Thematic analysis has also been criticized for being too descriptive and having restricted interpretative ability, especially when it is not used within an existing theoretical framework that anchors the analytic claims that are made (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Critics of thematic analysis have also argued that, unlike other qualitative approaches, the researcher is unable to retain a sense of persistence and critical analysis through any one individual account thereby limiting the further revelations that could emerge from deeper critical analysis of

the data. One other weakness of thematic analysis is its lack of special approval and commendation from scholars.

We argue that if research questions are well formulated, a rigorous thematic analysis can be quite instrumental to answer the research question. Mindful of the advantages and disadvantages of thematic analysis examined in this section and considering that this research makes use of clearly stated research questions and a theoretical foundation that has guided the research process, the choice of a thematic analysis approach surfaced. In the next section, I present the trustworthiness of the research.

3.5 Trustworthiness of the Research

In writing the report of qualitative research, the researcher is confronted with various possibilities. However, one of the approaches used by researchers is a narrative approach which allows the researcher to elaborate on the process of data collection and to provide a “thick description” of the depth of human realities (Geertz, 1973; Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). By thick description, we intend to provide rich and detailed information through the texts of the research report so that readers can have a feel of the event or the object that is being described. We are aware that in seeking to provide a detailed account of the process, the researchers’ values and beliefs cannot be excluded from the research process (Holmes, 2020; Petrova, Dewing, & Camilleri, 2016). Consistently, my beliefs about the influence of the socio-cultural context on teaching and learning shaped my choice of researching the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. Nevertheless, I had a moral obligation towards CABTAL and towards the learners, teachers, and facilitators of the mother tongue literacy programme to provide results that will help the literacy programme to continue to achieve its goals

in the context of the socio-political changes. We, therefore, chose to make our stance explicit to enable readers to take them into account. We also made an effort to include various voices as much as possible to strengthen the trustworthiness of this study. In qualitative research, there are some measures by which the trustworthiness of the data could be guaranteed. Trustworthiness could be achieved by examining the credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the data collected (Anney, 2014; Chowdhury, 2015).

3.5.1 Credibility

To ensure credibility, we sought to establish consistency between the research and reality. Ensuring the consistency of findings in qualitative research is symmetrical to seeking internal validity in quantitative research. In this research, credibility is perceived as a reliable description of the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. A review of the literature reveals several documented approaches to promote credibility. However, these approaches could be summarized into three main categories: Transactional, transformational, and the middle ground approach to ensuring the credibility of a study. (Liao & Hitchcock, 2018; Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The transactional approach to ensuring credibility is a process consisting of methods that help to identify and explain possible misunderstandings in the research. The transformational approach to ensuring credibility encourages researchers to maintain a certain degree of reflexivity as they interact with the research participants (Attia & Edge, 2017). The middle ground approach encourages a certain degree of self-reflectiveness and a degree of use of methods to ensure the credibility of a research. This research makes use of a middle-ground approach which favours the use of many techniques while

maintaining reflectiveness throughout the research. One such technique used is called triangulation.

3.5.2 Triangulation

Many researchers endeavour to provide rich and unbiased data such that the targeted audience can have an agreeable degree of confidence in seeking to understand the results of the findings. One of the ways of increasing the validity and strength of the research is by using methods that involve triangulation. The term triangulation has its origin in trigonometry and geometry and describes the process of discovering a person's location by evaluating the person's angles to two known other places. In the social sciences, the term is used to describe the use of several methodologies to have a deeper understanding of a phenomenon (Joslin, & Müller, 2016). Triangulation is defined as a search for converging evidence from multiple data sources, methods, theories, and investigators, (Hussein, 2009).

According to Denzin, (2017), there are four types of triangulation namely data triangulation, investigator triangulation, methodological triangulation, and theory triangulation. However, Bechara and Van de Ven (2011) identified the fifth type of triangulation which they described as philosophical triangulation.

Data triangulation involves using multiple sources of data during research. In using data triangulation, the researcher could use varied data sources depending on when the data were collected, the location of collection, and the people who collected the data. In this research, data triangulation was obtained by collecting data from literacy learners, literacy teachers, and literacy programme facilitators in Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen, and Weh communities. These various participants were contacted separately in the different communities involved in this research and

data was collected regarding the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme.

Investigator triangulation is where more than one investigator is used in research to engage in participant observations, semi-structured interviews, and the coding, or analysis of responses by the different participants. In collecting data for this research, the researcher was the primary investigator. However, I ensured that member checks and peer debriefings were carried out. I ensured that the data collected was confirmed by other CABTAL colleagues who are involved in the mother tongue literacy programme and other learners and teachers operating in the four language communities under study. This was achieved by regularly going back to the different literacy programme facilitators, literacy teachers, and some learners to confirm or reject the authenticity of data that had been collected from various participants.

Methodological triangulation is the use of more than one method to study the research problem. This qualitative research made use of a ‘Within-method triangulation (Flick, 2018).’ There was use of individual interviews and focus group discussions to collect data regarding the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. Also, the interview questions made use of closed-ended questions which allowed us to elicit data concerning the personal details of participants like age, mother tongue, gender, number of years of involvement with the mother tongue literacy programme, and duration of stay in the area under study.

Theory triangulation encourages the use of several theoretical perspectives to enable the interpretation of a phenomenon under study. Viewing literacy as a humanistic construction enabled

us to examine the various needs that had been created as learners struggled to learn in the context of the socio-political changes.

Philosophical triangulation is executed by using two or more philosophical positions which will provide multiple perspectives on a complex phenomenon. Philosophical triangulation enables the researcher to attain the greatest depth of understanding of a complex research problem.

With triangulation, many researchers seek to provide rich data that are impartial in rendering a proper understanding of the phenomenon under study. This research, therefore, makes use of data triangulation, methodological triangulation, and theory triangulation to minimize undetected errors in the data production, bias, or methodological processes that could have rendered the data analysis incorrect. Another way of ensuring the trustworthiness of a study is through authenticity.

3.5.3 Authenticity

To ensure the authenticity of this research, several ethical considerations were made which implied many responsibilities on the part of the researcher including trust, self-respect, privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity. To ensure that the data collected was authentic, participants received adequate explanations to assure them that their names would not be mentioned in the research because of the sensitivity of the context. Rather, participants' rights were respected and they were given codes to protect their real identities. Furthermore, the research proceeded at the convenience of the participants. For example, during the interview with participant LT9 on the 17th of December, 2021, at some point, a strange person was passing by and the participant indicated that we needed to stop for the moment until the stranger had gone away. The participant wanted to be sure that when the research is published their identity will not be disclosed. Whenever the

participants got the assurance that their opinion was taken into account they shared their thoughts with much conviction and courage. This meant that our research relationships went beyond conventionalized roles of asking questions and expecting participants to answer the questions. We rather sought to gain an understanding of the perspectives of the participants through dialogue (Anderson and Kanuka, 2003; Bohm, Senge, & Nichol, 2004). To ensure the authenticity of this research, we were involved in ethically lengthy discussions with participants to ascertain that rigorous standards of research were maintained even in the context of the socio-political changes. As a researcher, I was sensitive to the socio-political contexts in which the research participants live. At the point where participants wanted confirmation about their safety, affirmation was either given through verbal or non-verbal signals. Furthermore, to ensure the authenticity of the data collected, when participants responded to questions during the interviews, some clarifying questions which were not normally on the list of interview questions were asked. Consequently, some interviews that were planned to last for thirty minutes were eventually extended in most cases to more than one hour. Such elasticity of the interview time enabled participants to give a more thoughtful account of their opinions as they responded to questions.

3.5.4 Transferability

It is quite difficult for a researcher to try to prove the applicability of their research findings because the findings are a description and a rendering of the phenomenon under study. However, such findings must be assessed for their trustworthiness. The transferability of research is established by providing readers with evidence that the findings of the research could apply to other contexts, circumstances, periods, and populations (Bell & Waters, 2018). In this study, we used a strategic selection of the participants by limiting our research only to people who have lived

in the area for at least a year and have been involved with the mother tongue literacy programme. Indeed, this process does not guarantee absolute representativity, but it leads to a reasonable selection of research participants. Furthermore, to ensure transferability in qualitative research which is context-specific requires that careful thought be given to the possibility of transferring research findings to other sociocultural contexts (Willig, 2017). This study makes an effort to present the resonance between the research findings and the literature reviewed in this study. See Chapter 2. It will therefore be left to the reader to assess the transferability by examining the similarity of the context of this research to their context. To help readers understand more about the transferability of this research, the discussions of the findings will elaborate on some theoretical understandings that foreground the application of this research to multiple contexts (Garcia-Garcia et al., 2017; Hyland, 2015). Hence, this research provides a ‘thick description’ of the participants, the context of the socio-political changes, and the impact of the socio-political changes on the mother tongue literacy programme. Such a description will enable the reader to make comparisons with the experiences of other participants who have witnessed the impact of socio-political changes on learning outcomes.

3.5.5 Dependability

With research conducted in a quantitative tradition, there is a demand for proof of consistency by showing that the research has been carried out in a stable and controllable manner. Such a study could be replicated by other researchers, hence satisfying the demand for reliability. Nevertheless, in qualitative research dependability is expressed by how the research adapts to changes in the environment where the research is being conducted. This controverts the stereotypic recommendations of a quantitative research design. Dependability is a standard without

correspondence in other research traditions. In other words, it is impossible to achieve stability in qualitative designs. In a metaphoric style, Herakleitos says “You can never go into the same river twice” (Hamberg, Johansson, Lindgren, & Westman, 1994, p. 179). This perspective enabled us to listen to each participant with keen attention. Before the data collection phase, the research questions and data collection tools were shared with my supervisor for his comments and orientation. When due diligence was done and it was certain that the research questions were clear, we proceeded with the research process. Furthermore, during the data collection, when the responses of participants were not explicit enough, we rephrased the questions to communicate better the expectations for each of the interview questions. Also, despite the number of participants suggested at the onset of this research we continued to interview participants until we reached a certain degree of saturation in the responses that we got. When we felt that some people were very passive in the responses that they gave, we included other participants to follow up with the trend of the research. During the research process, we made memos of our thoughts and observations to ensure that some key thoughts are remembered when analyzing the data.

3.5.6 Confirmability

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) confirmability considers whether the analyses of the data were consistent and whether the interpretations based on that data were reasonable. Confirmability is ensured by a detailed description of the methods and procedures followed in this research. We made an effort to present a comprehensive account of the research process and have included vital information to help the reader to have a better understanding of the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. In the next section, we present findings that focus on the data and the interpretation of the data. The data

presented in this research have been questioned severally by the researcher to ensure that the results are not just a presentation based on personal opinions and biases of the researcher. To ensure confirmability, we chose a method of analysis (thematic analysis) that bridges the divide that exists between a quantitative and qualitative approach to research (Boyatzis, 1998). Confirmability also implies that the research can be critiqued and understood by others. Besides thorough verification by the UNICAF Research Ethics committee, we also tested confirmability by letting other CABTAL colleagues scrutinize the data and the memos we had made during the interviews to ensure that they were not imaginations. The negative feedback we got during the time of scrutiny helped us to have a reasonable interpretation of the data that we had collected.

3.6 Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed the research method and data collection tools used to determine the impact of socio-political changes on the outcomes of a mother tongue literacy programme. In discussing the research approach and design, I paid particular attention to the Action research case study as a choice for this research. I also examined action research as a reflective practice and as a case study with a main focus on the social context as being quite instrumental for the construction of knowledge through their daily experiences and where the researcher can use his participant status to have an in-depth understanding of the situation under study. I also discussed some limitations of Action research and argue that although the values and beliefs of a researcher cannot be excluded from the research process no matter how well-grounded the findings of the research may be, every effort has been made to maintain objectivity and ensure that the findings presented will contribute to bringing about a better understanding of how the

socio-political changes have impacted on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. In this section, I have also presented the data collection tools used in this research. I presented the blend of questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation as the main tools that have been used to solicit data for this research. In this chapter, I also discussed the data analysis technique with an emphasis on Thematic Analysis which allows the researcher to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences. I adopted an inductive perspective which enabled me to dig into data without anterior expectations regarding the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. With this perspective, this research did not start with any theoretical assumptions because I wanted to seek an understanding of the situation without any prior expectations.

I have employed all these tools to examine the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. In the next chapter, I will discuss the findings of this research as per the various research questions that I set out to answer at the onset of this research.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This research set out to examine the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme operating in four language communities of the North West region of Cameroon. We intended to examine the different perceptions of learners, literacy teachers, and literacy programme facilitators on how the socio-political changes have affected learning outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme and the possible modifications regarding teaching methods and desired learning outcomes that could be included to reflect the realities of the evolving sociopolitical context. To achieve the aims of this research, we sought to answer three main questions.

1. What Are Some Results that Have Come About in the Mother Tongue Literacy Programme Because of the Socio-Political Changes?
2. What Modifications Should Be Made in the Mother Tongue Literacy Programme to Accommodate the Current Results?
3. What are the Implications of these Modifications on the Future of the Mother Tongue Literacy Programme?

This chapter presents the results of the qualitative data collected from literacy learners, literacy teachers, and literacy programme facilitators of the four language communities involved in this research. In the following part, we present responses to the different sets of questions which are then reviewed to map out the themes emerging from the data. Each item is then reviewed separately for the identification of overarching themes which are presented at the end of this chapter.

4.1 Presentation of Results of Findings

In this section, I will present the main findings of this research. The findings are organised according to research questions and around themes and subthemes.

I begin by describing the disposition of an interview session, and then review data on how the participants responded to the different interview questions according to their category. There follows an analysis of data on the participants' responses to the individual questions. Eventually, data are examined showing the impact of the socio-political changes on learners, teachers, literacy programme facilitators, and the entire mother tongue literacy programme.

I carried out one hundred semi-structured interviews and three focus group discussions. Each focus group discussion was constituted of learners who had first been interviewed individually. The objective of the focus group discussions was to elicit more data from the learners regarding their perspective on the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme.

New information was gathered during the focus group discussions, and the data collected during the individual interview sessions were also verified. During the focus group discussions, participants dared to share more insights because of the inspiration they got from other learners. I refer to each participant by a code which is an abbreviation of the category. For example, LPF 1 for Literacy programme facilitator 1, LT1 for Literacy teacher 1, and LL1 for Literacy Learner 1. Each focus group discussion is referred to by a given code, a combination of letters representing the initials of the group, their language community, and the date when the interview was conducted. For example, FGDB, 201021 representing focus group discussion in Babanki which

held on the 20th of October 2021. Direct quotes from the interviews are italicised and in a case when some of the words in a quote are left out, I use an ellipsis, i.e. (...) to indicate it.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the findings, an effort was made to ascertain that the results are consistent with the data collected during the data collection phase (Souza, Alexandre, & Guirardello, 2017). The emerging themes from the data were evaluated to be sure that they represent the entire perspectives of the participants shared during the data collection phase (Taherdoost, 2016). To further test the reliability and validity of the findings, I discussed the emerging themes with a CABTAL colleague resident in the North West region of Cameroon to get their appraisal of the emerging themes. This colleague is versed in using thematic analysis in research. His appraisal was quite valuable because his feedback helped in confirming the compatibility of the information in the data collected and the emerging themes. I also sought feedback from another independent researcher who helped to review the process of data collection and the coding of the data (Lester, Cho, & Lochmiller, 2020). His feedback was quite elaborate and enabled me to make some adjustments to improve the quality of my research. Receiving feedback from a colleague and another independent researcher, made me better informed about the quality of the data collected and its compatibility with the emerging themes that had been identified. After looking at the feedback from two persons, I reviewed the emerging themes and established a final list of themes that correspond with the excerpts of the comments made by the participants captured during the interviews. The involvement of two different people in the process of analyzing the data contributed to building a strong process for analytic credibility. The rigorous process helped the findings to be more accurate and reliable while minimizing the influence of personal biases and errors in the data analysis process. There was a degree of coherence between

the feedback of my colleague and that of the outside reviewer. With this consensus, I was more confident to proceed with coding, analysing and presentation of results according to the themes that emerged from the data. In the next section, I present the findings according to descriptive statistics.

4.1.1 Presentation of Findings According to Descriptive Statistics

In qualitative research, the analysis of data aims to provide an in-depth, contextual, and detailed description and interpretation of the phenomenon under investigation (Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, & Snelgrove, 2016). However, the use of statistical data helps to identify trends, patterns, and relationships within the entire data and specific groups of participants of the research (Bihani & Patil, 2014; Johnson & Bhattacharyya, 2019). Descriptive statistics give simple summaries of the sample and the data that has been collected (Kaushik & Mathur, 2014). Descriptive statistics are used to describe the basic features of the data in the study (Champion, 1970; Mishra et al., 2019; Wolcott, 1994). With descriptive statistics, we have described what the data shows. We have used the tabular, graphical, and textual presentation of data for easy interpretation. The percentages of the various participants from different language communities, sex, ages, and specific groups like teachers, learners, and literacy programme facilitators are presented in this section.

Table 3

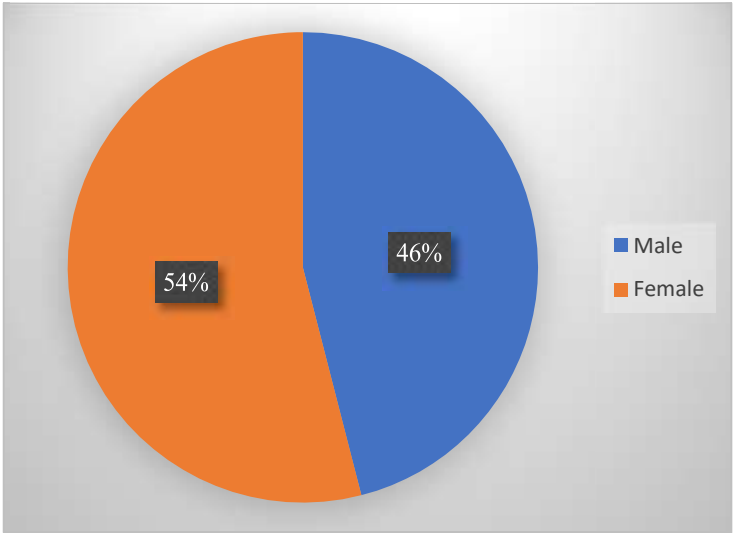
Distribution of Participants According to Sex

ALTERNATE	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE
Male	46	46
Female	54	54
Total	100	100

Source: Fieldwork 2021

Figure 1

Distribution of Participants According to Sex



From table 3 and figure 1 above, 54 out of 100 participants were females giving 54 % of the total sample population and 46 out of 100 participants were males making 46 % of the total sample population. From the distribution, it can be observed that there were more female participants than male respondents.

Table 4

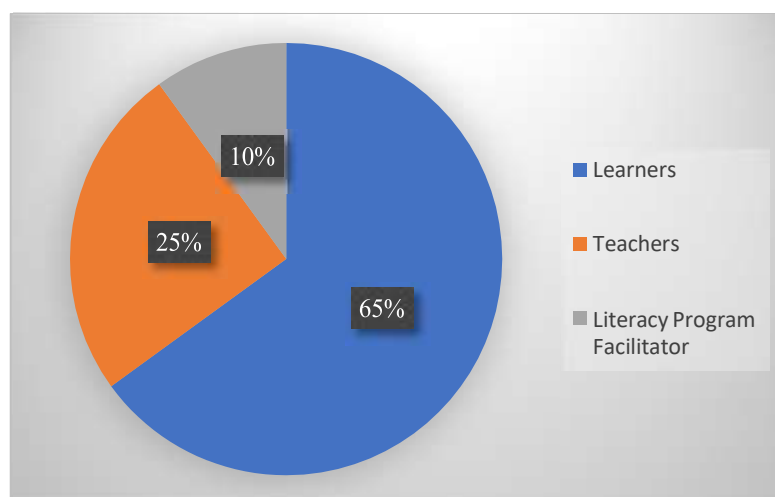
Distribution of Participants According to Their Domain of Involvement

ALTERNATE	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE
Learners	65	65
Teachers	25	25
Literacy Program Facilitator	10	10
Total	100	100

Source: fieldwork 2021

Figure 2

Distribution of Participants According to Their Domain of Involvement



From table 4 and figure 2 above, 10 out of 100 participants were literacy programme facilitators giving 10%; 25 out of 100 participants were literacy teachers giving 25%, and 65 out of 100 participants were literacy learners giving 65%. This shows that a majority of participants were literacy learners.

Table 5

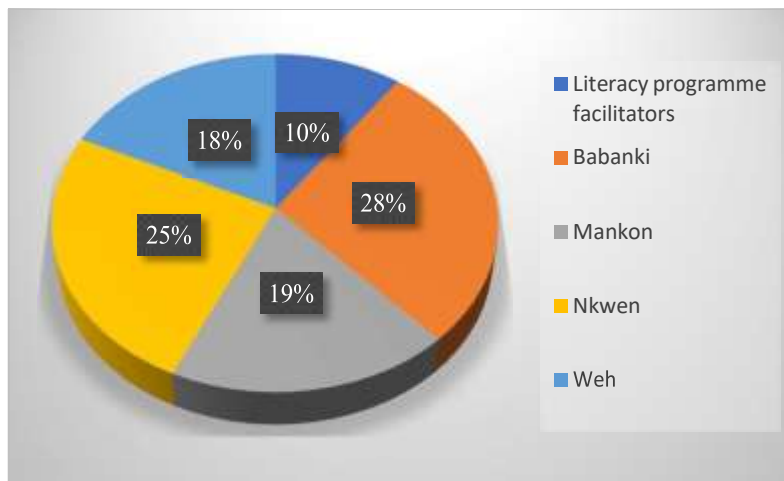
Distribution of Participants by Specific Affiliation to the Programme

ALTERNATIVES	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE
Literacy programme facilitators	10	10
Babanki	28	28
Mankon	19	19
Nkwen	25	25
Weh	18	18
TOTAL	100	100

Source: fieldwork 2021

Figure 3

Distribution of Participants by specific affiliation to the programme



From table 5 and figure 3 above, 10 out of 100 participants were literacy programme facilitators, giving 10 %; 28 out of 100 were from the Babanki community, giving 28%, and 19 out of 100 participants were from the Mankon community giving 19 %, 25 out of 100 were from the Nkwen community, giving 25%, and 18 out of 100 were from the Weh community, giving 18%. There was a slight variation in the percentage of participants per language community compared to initial targets. Reasons for this variation will be presented during discussions of findings. We also observe that only the percentage of literacy programme facilitators was maintained as initially desired.

Table 6

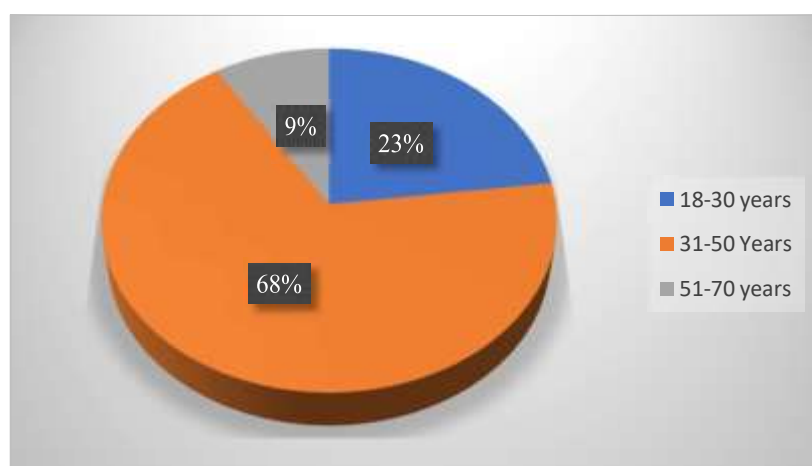
Distribution of Participants according to age range

ALTERNATIVES	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE
18-30 years	23	23
31-50 Years	68	68
51-70 years	9	9
TOTAL	100	100

Source: fieldwork 2021

Figure 4

Distribution of Participants According to Age Range



From table 6 and figure 4 above, 9 out of 100 participants were within the age range 51-70 years, giving 9 %; 68 out of 100 were within the range 31-50 years, giving 68 %, and 23 out of

100 participants were within the age range 18-30 years, giving 23 %. This shows that a majority of participants were within the age range of 31-50 years.

4.1.2 Presentation of Findings According to Research Question 1

What Are Some Results that Have Come About in the Mother Tongue Literacy Programme Because of the Socio-Political Changes?

To thematically analyze the data of this research, I used an inductive approach. This enabled me to explore data without prior hypotheses about the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. This approach allowed themes and sub-themes to emerge as participants responded to the different interview questions. Themes were captured from words, phrases, or descriptions of the meaning of a text segment.

Although a lot was captured during the individual interviews and the focus group discussions, I limited my data analysis to the most relevant themes to my research questions and my research purpose. Thematic analysis was conducted based on the verbatim transcription of the semi-structured interviews and the focus group discussions. The data analysis process followed 6 stages (See section 3.4.2).

To examine research question 1, I looked at the specific interview questions for literacy learners, literacy teachers, and literacy programme facilitators. Excerpts from sample interviews with a literacy learner, a literacy teacher, and a literacy programme facilitator are presented in the appendix section to show the different themes that emerged. The themes from the different sources were triangulated to form the main themes that are presented in this section. Following the data analysis steps presented in section 3.4.2., the figures in the appendix section display the coding of 3 data extracts from three semi-structured interviews i.e (Figure 13), shows extracts from a

Literacy learner (LL1), (Figure 14), shows extracts from a literacy teacher (LT15) and (Figure 15), shows extracts from a literacy programme facilitator (LPF 7). After examining the three transcripts for blueprints, reoccurrence of themes, and regularity or irregularity, I applied the same procedure in analyzing the data extracts from other participants. After examining the data extracts from participants, I triangulated the data extracts to exemplify the issuing themes that contribute to answering research question 1. The description and key comments from the participants regarding research question 1 are presented below according to the emerging themes. I present different perspectives on the results that have come about in the mother tongue literacy programme because of the socio-political changes.

In examining the perspectives of literacy learners, literacy teachers, and literacy programme facilitators regarding the changes that have come about in the mother tongue literacy programme because of the socio-political changes, the data that came forth mainly from the semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and personal observations through my interaction with literacy learners, literacy teachers, and literacy programme facilitators, a strong indication emerged in most of the responses that the socio-political changes have impacted the mother tongue literacy programme both positively and negatively. Six themes emerged from the coding and triangulation of data from various participants. They are:

1. Disruption of the daily life for stakeholders;
2. Decline in onsite literacy class attendance;
3. Drop in the distribution and use of printed literacy material
4. Drop in the motivation of literacy teachers and literacy learners
5. Difficulty to monitor the progress of the Literacy programme

6. Expansion/widening of the scope of the mother tongue literacy programme.

4.1.2.1 Disruption of the Daily Life of Stakeholders. The literacy learners, teachers, and mother tongue literacy programme facilitators talked about how the socio-political changes had impacted the mother tongue literacy programme when they were asked to respond to the specific research questions. After individual interviews, learners were put together for focus group discussions to authenticate some of the responses that had been given during the individualised interviews. Although every learner had an individualised experience of the changes that had come about because of the socio-political changes, they also had some common ideas which were captured during the focus group discussions. This is partly because their experiences were all rooted in the same socio-political context and they were all involved in the same mother tongue literacy programme.

The following interview questions were intended to understand the perspectives of the learners, literacy teachers, and literacy programme facilitators regarding the the changes that had come about in the mother tongue literacy programme because of the socio-political changes.

- What comes to your mind when you think about the ‘Socio-political changes?’
- Did you encounter any problems with the programme because of the socio-political changes?
- How do you feel about discussing things relating to how the socio-political changes have affected your learning in this literacy programme?
- How was the mother tongue literacy programme before the socio-political changes?
- Is what is being taught different from what was taught in the mother-tongue literacy classes you had before the socio-political changes?

- What aspects of the Mother tongue literacy programme have been affected by the socio-political changes?
- What has changed in the curriculum because of the socio-political changes?
- What has changed in terms of teaching methods because of the socio-political changes?
- What challenges have you encountered as a mother tongue literacy teacher because of the socio-political changes?
- What has been your worst experience as a literacy teacher because of the socio-political changes?
- What are some new insights that you have had as a mother tongue literacy teacher because of the socio-political changes?
- How have the socio-political changes affected the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme?
- What are the fluctuations in enrolment because of the socio-political changes?
- What challenges have you encountered as you facilitate the mother tongue literacy programme in the context of socio-political changes?
- What lessons have you learned about implementing literacy in the context of socio-political changes?

In answer to my questions about the changes that have come about in the mother tongue literacy programme because of the socio-political changes and touching on the aspect of disruption of their daily lives, a majority of participants explained that the socio-political changes had caused them to reconsider their involvement in the mother tongue literacy programme because of several disruptions in their daily life and the learning environment. These disruptions brought about new

challenges which required new ways of thinking and acting in the socio-political environment. Recent studies have shown that unprecedented changes in the socio-political environment (civil wars and conflicts), have had strong negative effects on the learning environment and on the educational performances of learners (See chapter 2, section 2.3). Learners and teachers need to be able to brainstorm in a learning environment with new learning realities and spaces in order to be able to surmount some of the challenges that emerge in a new learning environment (Dulac-Arnold et al., 2015). For example, with changes in learning spaces, traditional teaching and learning approaches have required several modifications in order to continue to achieve higher learning outcomes. In such learning environments, learning is influenced not just by the teaching format but also by other factors like the nature of the learning spaces. Learners face diverse experiences as they navigate different learning environments (Nortvig, Petersen, & Balle, 2018). Learning in the context of the socio-political changes has demanded that learners make use of the slightest opportunities to reflect on the creation of new learning spaces. Such reflections have enabled the learners and various stakeholders to stop and think about better ways of learning and surviving in the socio-political context. In order to survive in the socio-political environment, learners and other key stakeholders learned to think differently while maintaining the consciousness of the new patterns and potential new theories that may emerge and influence learning in the socio-political environment (Marouli, 2021; Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021).

Several learners commented on the disruptions that had come about in their entire lives because of the new learning environment created by the socio-political changes. The disruptions are captured in statements like:

The crisis have spoiled many things. (LL1, 17112021)

The crisis have made us confused on what to do. (LL2, 17112021)

The crisis have changed many things. No one is safe. (LL3, 17112021)

We have had many challenges because of the crisis. (LL4, 17112021)

Life has become so hard because of the situation. (LL5, 17112021)

We have experienced untold hardships because of the crisis. (LL6, 17112021)

We faced many difficulties because of the situation. (LL10, 17112021)

A majority of the learners indicated the significance of these disruptions. They talked about challenging problems that have emerged because of the socio-political changes. In several responses, the socio-political changes seemed to have affected the mother tongue literacy programme negatively. When learners referred to the disruptions brought about by the socio-political changes on the mother tongue literacy programme, the most commonly cited ones were related to:

- ☐ Unplanned movements or migration
- ☐ Uncertainty about daily life and welfare
- ☐ Damaged shelter
- ☐ Interruption of the sense of belonging
- ☐ Inconsistency in literacy class attendance

In the context of the socio-political changes where separatist fighters increasingly use civilians as a protective shield against military casualties, people are abducted, tortured, and executed to mount pressure on the government to find urgent solutions to the socio-political changes. Most people in the Northwest and Southwest regions, go through various traumatic experiences like meeting a headless body on the street or experiencing the gruesome murder of a

family member due to unfounded accusations or the settling of scores on issues that are not related to the socio-political changes. The exposure of learners, teachers, and literacy programme facilitators to several traumatic events has ultimately contributed to fear, psychosocial problems, uncertainty, unplanned migrations, and inconsistency in participating in mother tongue literacy classes.

Several learners had either lost loved ones, or property and had themselves been traumatised on various occasions because of the escalating socio-political changes. The socio-political changes seemed to have imprinted several unpleasant memories on the minds of the learners. This was expressed in the statements made by the learners during the individualised interviews. For example, Learner 14 (LL14) stated that:

There were certain days we could not attend classes because people were running and hiding from bullets. Somedays we slept out of our house because there was fear of either military invasion or the invasion of the fighters. We could not try to go out because the memories of our family members and friends who had died because of the socio-political changes were still fresh in our minds. Even teachers could not plan their lessons because anything could happen to interrupt the lessons. We also could not learn when we wanted to learn because either the teacher could not leave his house or we could not get to the literacy classes because of fighting. (Interview with LL14, 17112021)

Several learners were concerned about finding a means of livelihood because their businesses and other income-generating activities had been affected. Learners could not go to their farms any longer because it was unsafe and more so to literacy classes which seemed to attract more danger than their farms. They raised more concerns about their relatives who had died

because of the socio-political changes and those who were facing several challenges because of unplanned movements.

For example, during the interview with Learner 1 (LL1), this reality was captured in the following statement.

The crisis have spoiled many things. It has disturbed us from learning in our mother tongue literacy classes, some family members and friends have migrated to cities and are suffering there, some have been wounded and they are struggling. Others have died. (LL1, 17112021)

In the Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen, and Weh communities, one could easily observe the bullet holes in buildings due to gun battles between the military and the separatist fighters. In some cases, the bullet holes were just a demonstration of power by one of the warring parties. It was also quite glaring to view destroyed buildings that once hosted schools or government institutions. This destruction was motivated by the desire to exert more pressure on the government to find solutions to the ongoing situation. The frightful images of the destroyed property contributed to building negative perspectives about daring to go out to onsite literacy classes. Images of destroyed bridges, burned vehicles and motorbikes drove home the message of fear, uncertainty, bitterness, and other negative effects of the socio-political environment. The destroyed buildings and other properties also served as objects of social media propaganda or manipulations. These manipulations could contribute to the recruitment of more separatist fighters and to increased aggression by the military.

Some literacy classes in schools and other locations had stopped because of the socio-political changes. The learners believed that things are not the same again because of the socio-

political changes. Learners alluded to the negative impact of the socio-political changes on the organisation of literacy classes.

The crisis [socio-political changes] has reduced literacy class attendance because of migration and fear. Literacy classes that were operating in Schools, Churches and in my quarter have all stopped because of the crisis. (LL3, 17112021)

The disruption in the learning environment did not only bring changes in the lives of learners. Even the teachers expressed themselves about the results that ensued because of the disruption in their teaching environment. Teachers are at the forefront in terms of managing social changes that affect the teaching and learning process. The formulation of new policies cannot be properly implemented without the input of teachers. Therefore, understanding the impact of the socio-political changes from the perspectives of the teachers was quite fundamental to understanding the changes that have come about in the mother tongue literacy programme as a result of the changes. In referring to the disruption that had come because of the socio-political changes, most of the teachers mentioned the physical and psychological needs created in their lives and the lives of the learners. More than half of the teachers referred to the several modifications that they needed to make in their teaching methods in order for the mother tongue literacy programme to continue to be relevant amidst the socio-political changes.

Several teachers explained that the socio-political changes had affected the participation of various stakeholders in the mother tongue literacy programme because of the several disruptions in the learning environment which required new patterns of conducting their daily routines.

Several teachers reported that the socio-political changes had caused the closing of educational facilities which hosted literacy classes. In communities like Weh and Babanki, some schools had

been used either by the military or the separatist fighters for several purposes including; a base, fighting ground, or places of detention. The invasion of these educational facilities brought fear and uncertainty to teachers and learners. The use of school buildings and some community halls for military purposes and also by the fighters have posed a threat to the safety of literacy teachers and literacy learners. With such an environment of uncertainty, teachers did not want to go through what they have seen happen to their friends and family members. During the interview with literacy teachers for example LT15,29102021, there was evidence that the teaching environment had become unsafe and this had a negative impact on the mother tongue literacy programme.

Uncertainty echoed in the voices of the teachers as they responded to research question 1.

Uncertainty is captured in statements like:

Because of insecurity, classes cannot be organised in some areas. (LT1,17112021)

Because of fear of the unknown, people can no longer teach the Cameroon national anthem. (LT3, 17112021)

Some vocabularies have changed. We can no longer use words like Soldier, gun and school freely because of fear of the unknown. The literacy materials meant for schools have not been taught for a long time because of irregular attendance and uncertainties. (LT6, 17112021)

Because of insecurity, I cannot go to some areas like Mbelewa and Mubang to organize classes. (LT8, 17112021)

Some terms we used freely can no longer be used. For example, gun and soldier cannot be used freely because of uncertainty. We twist our tongues because of fear of the unknown. (LT9, 17122021)

People are afraid to gather and people are mostly running for their lives.... Schools are not operational. When you gather people, 'the boys' come to catch you. (LT10, 27112021)

I was arrested and brutalised and I stayed in the hospital for 4 days. (LT11, 27112021)

Every time we are in class and people hear the sound of a gun, everybody will run away (LT12, 27112021)

I remember an experience when we produced materials about Covid 19 and we were trying to orientate some facilitators on how to sensitise the population. The fighters brutalised us and every initiative we made ended without the desired results. We were considered as traitors whereas we were trying to sensitise my people about Covid 19. The fright of that experience has left me traumatised and it is hard to think about organising such a gathering again. (LT15, 27112021)

Due to uncertainty, several teachers indicated that the negative impact of the socio-political changes has resulted in some restrictions in the teaching and learning process. Teaching has been limited to essential aspects of reading and writing. The teachers talked about complex problems that have emerged because of the socio-political changes.

Fear of the unknown

Several teachers indicated that they had either been brutalised, threatened, and lost loved ones, or property on various occasions because of the socio-political changes. The socio-political changes seemed to have impressed bitter memories on the minds of the literacy teachers. This was uttered in the responses of the literacy teachers during the individualised interviews. For example, during the interview with Literacy Teacher 9 (LT 9), he expressed that:

At first I was teaching in Churches, quarters and Schools. But now many people have escaped and it is hard to find people who are interested to learn. The Socio-Political changes have affected the teaching-learning process. Some terms we used freely can no longer be used. For example, gun and soldier cannot be used freely because of uncertainty. We twist our tongues because of fear of the unknown. We actually taught the National anthem of 'this country'. You see even in this interview I have said this country because I cannot mention the name of the country because of security reasons. There is fear of the unknown. The National anthem has been translated into Mankon and we were teaching it but with the prevailing sociopolitical changes we can no longer mention it anywhere anymore. Teaching has been limited to the essential aspects of basic reading and writing because of the little time we spend in literacy classes. There are ghost towns (what we normally call 'country Sundays') every Monday and this has affected all classes that held on Mondays. No one has the courage to go out to a literacy class on a ghost town day. We just want learners to be basically literate. (Interview with LT 9, 17122021)

While the interview with literacy teacher 9 was going on, someone was passing by, and I observed the body language of the participant and could infer that something was wrong. Because of the unknown person around, the participant indicated that we stay silent until the unknown person had passed. When the stranger was gone, he indicated that we could continue with the interview. This was an indication of fear and trauma brought about by the sociopolitical changes. As the interview continued, he added:

There are sporadic shootings which make movements difficult especially if you were in a literacy class before the shooting began. Movement is a challenge. It has become

very expensive because of several frictions/roadblocks/ checkpoints. Transportation cost has skyrocketed as a result of so many checkpoints. Where you used to pay 1000 FCFA you now pay 1500, 2000, 3000, 3500 F. Motivation for teachers has dropped because people's means of livelihood have been greatly affected. Materials that have been produced cannot be bought because the economic power of the learners has also been greatly affected. The general Morals of people have fallen. Many people have lost interest. For example, at CBC Musang, where I used to have classes, the number of learners has drastically dropped and this affects my motivation as a teacher. Because of the inconsistency of learners, (a new set this week and another set next week), it is a challenge to track progress. Many institutions like schools have been forced to relocate and the available safe places have numerous activities because everyone is looking for a safe place. (Interview with LT9, 17122021)

Like the learners, several literacy teachers were concerned about finding a means of livelihood because their business and other income-generating activities had been affected. Literacy teachers could not go about their normal businesses because of the disruptions brought about by the socio-political changes. For example, during the interview with Literacy teacher 15 (LL15), this aspect was evidenced by the following statement:

I had a computer school where I was teaching basic computers and the mother tongue. I graduated the first batch of 27 learners but after that, the crisis came and everything is shut down. I lost the opportunity to impact people's lives and I have also lost a means of raising income. (Interview with LT15, 27112021)

The socio-political changes have also brought physical and psychological discomfort to the teachers and they believe that this has affected their involvement in the mother tongue literacy programme. Literacy teachers referred to this negative impact of the socio-political changes by mentioning the following challenging situations:

My bike was seized at one point and I was traumatized and hindered from my means of movement which hampered my supervision of literacy classes. (interview with LT16, 14012022)

Using Mobile phones to teach online classes has been a challenge because of instability on the internet... Seeing people being killed like chickens, and dead bodies mean nothing to children. There are regular invasions by the military and fighters. I missed being abducted at one point and I was so traumatized by the experience. The news of the killing of my friend and family member has been a very bad experience for me. (Interview with LT 8, 17112021)

My bike was stolen in the context of the crisis and I cannot cover long distances to follow up on the classes. (Interview with LT 10, 29102021)

The literacy programme facilitators are those who follow up on the implementation and progress of the mother tongue literacy programme. The facilitators also experienced the changes that had come on the mother tongue literacy programme because of the socio-political changes. All the literacy programme facilitators acknowledged that the socio-political changes have caused the mother tongue literacy programme to change in varied dimensions. However, from the data, most of the literacy programme facilitators felt that there was a change in their lives and the literacy

programme because of the effects of psychological and physical pain caused by the socio-political changes.

Alluding to the disruption of their daily life, one of the literacy programme facilitators recounted that because of the socio-political changes, his life has become a shadow.

We face all kinds of threats. I have been abducted twice and the second time I narrowly survived after being shot on my leg. I cannot imagine myself running like a baby from my own house. This is the way life has become for most learners, literacy teachers and literacy programme facilitators like me. I had learned as a literacy programme facilitator how to run income-generating activities. Because of the socio-political situation, I can no longer raise extra income from those activities because unidentified people have taken my livestock away. I am now renting somewhere else when I have a compound. This is quite hard for me. I am learning how to rent after living in my own house for many years. With this, I cannot even concentrate on my work. When I was abducted, I met several people there who had been there for several weeks. This unfortunate situation has happened to some learners, literacy teachers and other friends. When people survive such horrible scenes they run away and survival for them becomes more pressing than learning the mother tongue. (Interview with LPF2, 02112021)

In the next section, I present the second theme which is the decline in onsite literacy classes.

4.1.2.2 Decline in Onsite Literacy Class Attendance. Most of the participants particularly the literacy teachers and literacy programme facilitators attested that the socio-political changes have brought about a drop in the onsite literacy class attendance. In a situation of socio-political instabilities, there can be significant disruptions in the lives of learners, and learning environments, and people can manufacture and spread rumours that can scare people from going to learning environments (Flores, 1999; Saltzman, Layne, Steinberg, Arslanagic, & Pynoos, 2003)

In the context of this research, literacy programme facilitators and literacy teachers mentioned a decline in onsite literacy class attendance because of uncertainties. Referring to the decline in attendance of learners in onsite literacy classes, one of the literacy programme facilitators affirmed that:

...they are also hindered from attending face-to-face literacy classes because of the uncertainties in the environment created by sporadic gun battles and arbitrary harassment. (Interview with LPF4-1102021)

One literacy programme facilitator referred to gun battles, lockdowns and other restrictions to movements as possible reasons for the decline.

In most cases, physical gathering in classes is not possible because of gun battles, sporadic lockdowns and several restrictions on movements (Interview with LF5-29102021)

One of the literacy programme facilitators (LPF4) presented some literacy statistics to illustrate the decline in literacy class attendance from 2018 to 2021.

Table 7

Extract Literacy Statistics for Babanki, Weh, Mankon and Nkwen for 4 Years.

	Babanki				Weh					Mankon					Nkwen		
YEAR	No of classes	Number of learners			No of classes	Number of learners			No of classes	No of classes	Number of learners			No of classes	Number of learners		
		Onsite	Online	Total		Onsite	Online	Total			Onsite	Online	Total		Onsite	Online	Total
2018	3	124	0	124	4	117	0	117	10	348	348	0	348	0	0	0	0
2019	3	85	0	85	3	111	136	247	10	173	173	200	373	0	0	0	0
2020	2	15	45	60	3	34	140	174	5	160	160	250	410	2	30	40	70
2021	1	0	65	65	3	22	136	158	4	143	143	256	399	5	100	160	260

Source: Fieldwork 2021

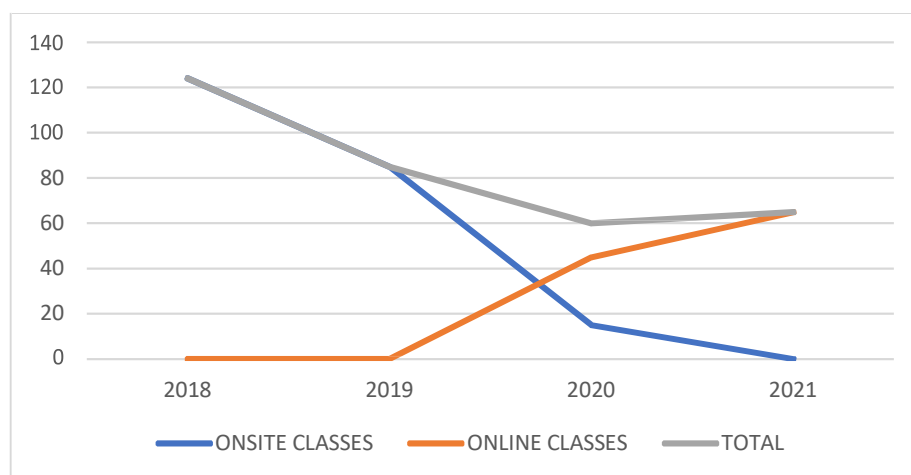
The data shows some variation in the literacy statistics for the different languages.

Figure 5 below shows the variations between onsite and online literacy class attendance for Babanki, for 4 consecutive years. The variation the statistics of onsite literacy classes is indicated by the blue line while the variation in the statistics of online literacy class attendance is shown by the red line. The literacy statistics indicate that there was a steady decrease in onsite literacy class attendance (indicated by the blue line) from 2018 to 2021. On the other hand, there was a steady rise in online literacy class attendance for Babanki from the year 2018 to 2021.

The data also showed a decline in the total number of learners in Babanki.

Figure 5

Variation of Onsite and Online Literacy Attendance in Babanki

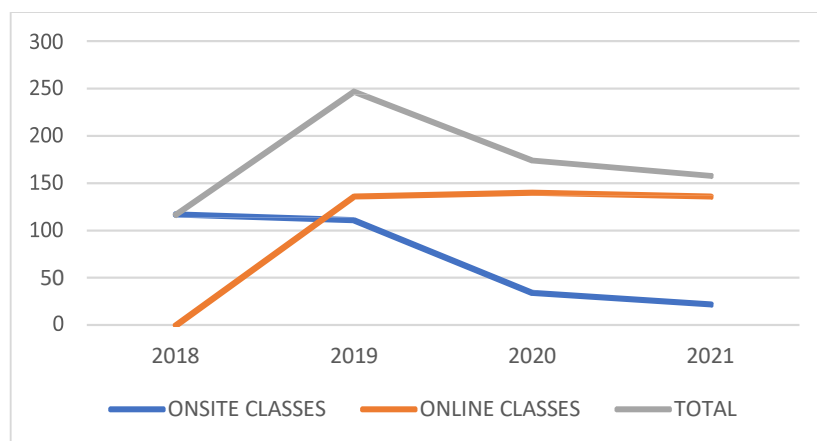


Source Fieldwork 2021

The data also showed that there was a decline in onsite literacy class attendance in Weh from 2018 to 2021 while there was an increase in online literacy class attendance from 2018 to 2021. The data also showed an undulation and a final decline in the total number of learners in Weh.

Figure 6

Variation of Onsite and Online Literacy Attendance in Weh

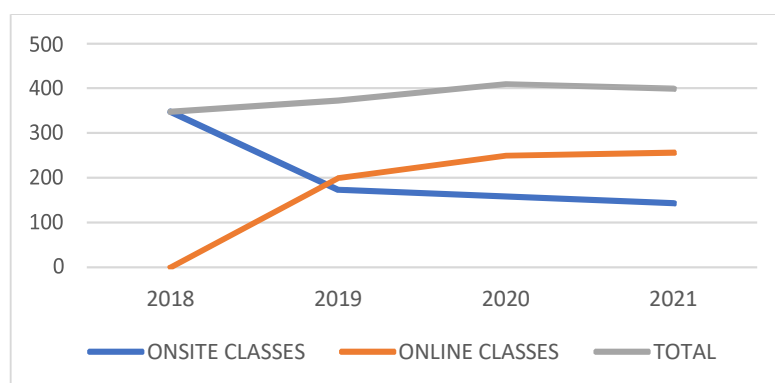


Source Fieldwork 2021

The data also showed that there was a decline in onsite literacy class attendance in Mankon from 2018 to 2021 while there was an increase in online literacy class attendance from 2018 to 2021. A certain balance was maintained for the total number of learners in Mankon with a slight increase in the total number of learners in 2020.

Figure 7

Variation of Onsite and Online Literacy Attendance in Mankon

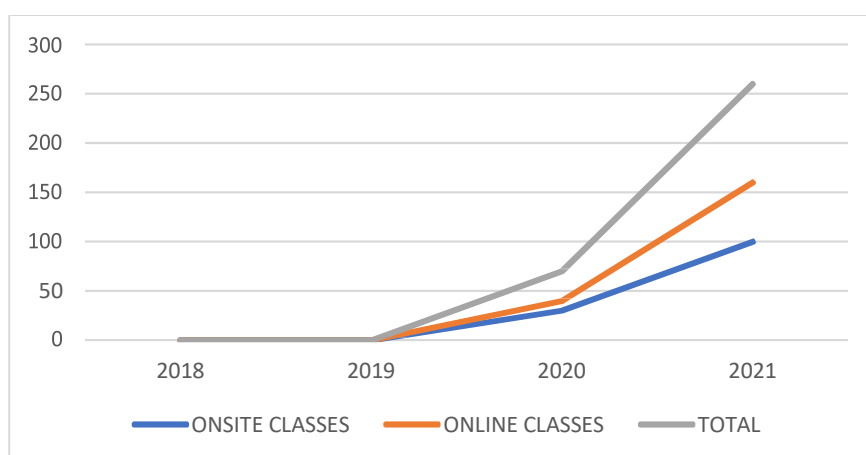


Source: Fieldwork 2021

The Nkwen literacy programme started in 2019. The data showed that there was a steady increase in onsite literacy class attendance in Nkwen from 2020 to 2021. Furthermore, there was a steady increase in online literacy class attendance from 2019 to 2021. The data also showed a steady increase in the total number of literacy learners in Mankon.

Figure 8

Variation of Onsite and Online Literacy Attendance in Nkwen



Source: Fieldwork 2021

In talking about the drop in onsite literacy classes, many teachers referred to possible causes such as:

- ☐ Fear of the unknown
- ☐ Restricted and Increased cost of movement
- ☐ Unplanned movements or migration
- ☐ Uncertainty about daily life and welfare

- Relocation of literacy classes
- Damaged shelter

Touching on the aspect of fear, one of the literacy teachers testified that:

People are afraid to send children to classes because of the volatile nature of the socio-political context. (Interview with LT6, 29/10/2021)

This point is further elaborated by literacy teacher 8:

We have developed more online-based content because onsite classes have not been very consistent. (Interview with LT8, 29/10/2021)

Because people did not know what to expect as they go out of their homes, several preferred to stay indoors in order to stay out of trouble. The death of literacy teachers or learners because of stray bullets in the socio-political environment was discouraging enough to cause several learners and teachers to stay away from onsite literacy classes.

4.1.2.3 A Drop in the Distribution and Use of Printed Literacy Materials. During the interview with the learners, literacy teachers, and literacy programme facilitators, a majority of the participants testified that the socio-political changes have brought about a drop in the distribution and use of printed literacy materials. They acknowledged that due to the destruction of shelter and their means of livelihood, many learners were forced to make unplanned movements. The learners that are left in the community are focused on getting basic life needs and do not prioritise the acquisition of printed literacy materials.

Ghost towns and little movements divert people's attention when they have the opportunity to move. Because of the unplanned movements in the communities, people have very little access to printed literacy materials. The few learners that are left are more concerned

about affording basic life needs than printed literacy materials. (Interview with LPF3, 11022021)

Another facilitator alluded to learners focusing on more pressing issues than buying printed literacy materials.

The Socio-political changes have caused many people to migrate from the rural areas to the urban areas in search of jobs and shelter...they are also hindered from attending face-to-face literacy classes because of the uncertainties in the environment created by sporadic gun battles and arbitrary harassment. Buying printed literacy materials is not a priority for many learners because there are more pressing issues at hand. (Interview with LPF4, 11022021)

When asked to elaborate on the drop in the distribution of printed literacy materials, Literacy programme facilitator 9 (LPF 9) blamed it on the fact that displaced literacy learners preferred to prioritise accommodation and some basic needs as they migrated. He blamed the situation on the disruption of routine life that has made learners focus on survival strategies rather than spending the little finances they had to buy literacy books. Besides, with technological advancement, learners did not prioritise printed literacy materials amidst the socio-political changes.

Most of the work that used to happen in the community is now happening out of the community and this has meant providing accommodation and some related expenses to learners and teachers who were previously lodged in their own homes in the community. Learners are focused on survival strategies as they face the challenges of sudden

movements into strange environments. These challenges make learners find it hard to buy available printed literacy materials and other publications in their mother tongue.

(Interview with LPF9, 02112021)

Alluding to the untold hardship which affects the purchase of printed literacy material, other literacy programme facilitators lamented the physical and psychological pain that has been inflicted on them because of the socio-political changes.

There has also been physical killing of family members of learners and teachers and they have not recovered from the experience. I have experienced what I have not seen for the past forty years. It is difficult to see a headless body or bodiless head and still be the same. These are the kind of things that have traumatized me, learners and teachers. Getting electricity, water and some basic provisions from the market has become another thing. With all these, learners and teachers cannot focus not to talk of buying printed books.

(Interview with LPF10, 02112021)

This point was reinforced by another literacy teacher. He regretted that some people, including learners, were unable to harvest their produce from the farms. This indirectly limited their purchasing power because it has been a routine way of raising income for most people.

Materials that have been produced cannot be bought because the economic power of the learners has also been greatly affected. People who can barely afford their daily bread will prefer to spend the little they have to buy food which is not easy to afford. The socio-political situation has brought about untold hardship on the people. People manage to work their farms and they cannot harvest because either it is stolen or they can barely access the farms. (Interview with LT 9, 17122021)

From my experience of working with literacy learners, literacy teachers, and literacy programme facilitators in the same context before the socio-political changes, there were several indications that life had become quite difficult for most of the participants because of the socio-political changes. There was a drastic reduction in the sources of income for most of the literacy learners, literacy teachers, and literacy programme facilitators. Most of the learners looked desperate and could withdraw at any time from the mother tongue literacy programme to concentrate on some extra activities to raise an income for themselves and other dependent family members. Others were inspired by the stories of some friends who are able to afford their basic needs because they migrated out of the area.

In discussing informally with the literacy teachers and literacy programme facilitators, it was evident that buying printed literacy materials was no longer a priority for the learners. I could see a huge stock of books that had been printed in the last 3 years. The situation seemed better before the socio-political changes.

4.1.2.4 A Drop in Motivation for Mother Tongue Literacy. Overall, all the interviewees agreed that the socio-political changes had affected their motivation for the mother tongue literacy programme. Several of the participants cited examples of traumatic experiences that they or family members had gone through because of the socio-political changes. In a context where schooling suddenly became a taboo, even literacy learners, literacy teachers, and literacy programme facilitators were targeted as the ones seeking to “betray the revolution.”

Most of the literacy programme facilitators, literacy teachers, and literacy learners felt that there was a change in their attitudes towards the mother tongue literacy programme because of the traumatic experiences of the socio-political environment. As I spoke to the participants during the

interviews and during focus group discussions they used various expressions to indicate their drop in motivation because of the socio-political changes. I could sense this drop in motivation through statements that indicated:

- ☐ A feeling of non-achievement
- ☐ A feeling of emotional stress
- ☐ A feeling of discouragement because of frustrating remarks

Listening to the literacy programme facilitator (LPF4) I could sense a feeling of pain and disappointment about the exacerbating effects of the socio-political changes on the mother tongue literacy programme:

Most roads have been destroyed and movement has become difficult. Lots of people have migrated and there are very few trained teachers and resource people who have stayed in the community. Support from the elite has drastically dropped because people have lost businesses and cannot cultivate their crops freely as they did before. We are suspected as traitors because all those who 'teach' have become an endangered species. The attention of several people has been diverted. Literacy materials are not easily developed in the communities because most resource people have escaped for their lives. Getting printed materials into the communities has become cumbersome because of suspicion about all forms of books. (Interview with LPF4, 02112021)

A majority of the participants were aware that the socio-political changes have brought about fear and psychological trauma. They believed that the worsening situation had hindered the progress of several learners who were regaining their self-esteem as they progressed in their reading and writing skills through the mother tongue literacy programme before the socio-political

changes stroke. They considered that fear and psychological trauma had resulted in depression and emotional stress for learners and literacy teachers. In sharing their perspectives regarding a drop in motivation a majority of the interviewees deplored the depression and emotional stress brought about by the socio-political changes.

Support or motivation from the elite has greatly reduced because people's means of livelihood have been destroyed and most people in the community can barely survive. There are challenges in communication because people run to areas where there is no network... Consequently, it is difficult to reach teachers or learners. Phones are seldom charged for online literacy. There are psychosocial challenges because of the pain caused by the socio-political changes. Several basic needs have been created. (Interview with LPF9, 02112021)

During my interview with literacy teacher 9, he felt dejected by the drop in literacy class attendance. He also lamented some negative outcomes from previous attempts to organise literacy classes during holidays amidst the socio-political changes. He further decried the condescending remarks that came from other stakeholders.

Class attendance has really dropped and that is very discouraging. We are so disappointed to organize holiday classes. The last time we organised, things happened and everybody ran away and all that we were promised, we got nothing. My friend and I have worked somewhere and we have not been paid because of the crisis. We have had frustrating remarks from some stakeholders because of the crisis. Many feel that we are still involved in the mother tongue literacy programme because we are benefiting a lot of money. Can

you imagine what people think when our very lives are at risk? (Interview with LT9, 29102021)

Literacy Teacher 9 (LT9) went further to explain the fallen motivation of learners indicated by the inconsistency in attending literacy classes.

The general Morals of people have fallen. Many people have lost interest. For example, in CBC Musang, where I used to have classes, the number of learners has drastically dropped and this affects my motivation as a teacher. Because of the inconsistency of learners, (a new set this week and another set next week), it is a challenge to track progress. (Interview with LT9, 29102021)

During my visit to interview literacy teachers and literacy learners in Babanki, I could observe that the seating arrangements of learners were not quite motivating for learning. Based on the effects of the destruction or abandonment of several learning environments, a number of these learners clustered on benches in a small church building. It was getting dark but the class was not illuminated because of no electricity. These recurrent power cuts had almost become the norm. The crowded class was not properly ventilated

4.1.2.5 Difficulty in Monitoring the Progress of the Literacy Programme. Concerning difficulty to monitor the progress of the literacy programme, a significant amount of the data originated from the participant observation of the researcher. Access to several locations in the Babanki and Weh communities was restricted. There were checkpoints every few kilometres to scrutinise everyone who went through the road. Some locations of the Mankon and Nkwen communities, which were considered the stronghold of the separatist fighters, had limited access as well. It could be observed that the separatist fighters had mounted several roadblocks and damaged some strategic bridges to limit access by the military. All of these constituted a major challenge to the literacy programme facilitators because they could not regularly visit literacy classes as they did before.

The idea of restrictions on movements and gatherings was voiced by all the literacy programme facilitators as an impediment to the monitoring of the literacy programme. Literacy programme facilitators and some literacy teachers could not move freely into or within the communities as before to supervise literacy classes and organise training and refresher courses for teachers. All the teachers expressed their frustration of not being able to access communities easily to bring their support to the capacity building, monitoring, and evaluation of the mother tongue literacy programme. The effect of restricted movements and gatherings was captured in the assertions of a literacy programme facilitator who blamed the sociopolitical changes for causing a drastic rise in transportation costs.

The movement to and from the communities has become very difficult and also quite expensive. This has affected the way literacy classes are supervised. Before the sociopolitical changes, literacy classes were visited by literacy programme facilitators

every month but because of the challenges of the sociopolitical changes and the drastic rise in transportation costs, literacy classes are visited on a quarterly basis. (Interview with LPF1, 11022021)

One literacy programme facilitator mentioned the numerous harassments that have made travelling to and from the community quite cumbersome.

Travelling is a nightmare. Most roads have been destroyed and movement has become difficult. Each time I travel to the communities; I face lots of harassment. (Interview with LPF2, 11022021)

In the socio-political environment, there are polyphonic voices of authority. Somedays, the separatist fighters seem to want to demonstrate higher command of authority by insisting on the strict respect of ghost town days and other restrictions on movements which sometimes start as rumours on social media and are eventually reinforced by the fighters. Further restrictions are made regarding the matriculation of vehicles and motorbikes. This power tussle about who is in charge contributes to building an atmosphere of uncertainty and ambiguity.

The restrictions in movements brought about several difficulties in achieving the planned goals of the literacy programme. Alluding to such difficulties because of the restrictions in movements, one of the literacy programme facilitators stated:

Some planned events like teachers' training, literacy classes and literacy teachers' meetings don't hold because of difficulties in movement brought about by numerous ghost towns and unprecedented happenings that make people very uncertain about their going out. (Interview with LPF4, 11022021)

Referring to increased migration and higher operations expenses as reasons for the difficulty in monitoring the programme, LPF 1 testified that:

The movement to and from the communities has become very difficult and also quite expensive. This has affected the way literacy classes are supervised. Before the sociopolitical changes, literacy classes were visited by literacy programme facilitators every month but because of the challenges of the sociopolitical changes and the drastic rise in transportation costs, literacy classes are visited on a quarterly basis. (Interview with LPF1, 11022021)

Commenting on the difficulty in communication and challenges in internet connectivity and electricity as potential causes of the difficulty to monitor progress, another literacy programme facilitator attested that:

Travelling is a nightmare. Most roads have been destroyed and movement has become difficult. “Each time I travel to the communities; I face lots of harassment. Regular suspensions of mobile telephone networks by the providers make communication difficult and this affects the monitoring of the literacy programme. In some cases, Communication has been affected because of the destruction of mobile communication network antenna and it is difficult to reach teachers or learners. (Interview with LPF1, 11022021)

4.1.2.6 Widened Scope of the Literacy Programme. Despite the negative psychological and physical impact of the socio-political changes on the learners, it seemed that the socio-political changes also had some positive impact on the mother tongue literacy programme. The socio-political changes have helped the learners and teachers to discover innovative ways of learning their language which goes beyond the stereotype of a regular onsite literacy class. In response to the questions during focus group discussions and individualized interviews about the advantages of the mother tongue literacy programme in the context of the socio-political changes, a majority of learners, teachers, and literacy programme facilitators believed that the socio-political changes have had some positive impact on the mother tongue literacy programme. A number of learners stated that the socio-political changes have helped them to use different digital platforms to learn their language.

One new thing we have learned during this crisis is how to protect ourselves from Corona Virus and how to seek help if we are infected with the Corona virus. We have also learned how to use the mobile phone to learn our language. (LL1, 17112021)

Although conscious of the challenges of technology, learners also saw the socio-political changes as an opportunity to improve and correct the past mistakes of considering their digital devices (especially mobile phones), just as tools for answering phone calls. The learners stated that the socio-political changes helped them to innovate and make use of opportunities that they usually took for granted. Touching on the aspect of innovation brought about by the socio-political changes, a learner alluded that:

Increase digital literacy because at first, I thought only English could be written with a mobile phone but now we can use the Mobile phone to learn our language. We are in a

situation of crisis and I feel that if the mother tongue was being used to communicate the message of peace and through social media, it will help us to here better than what is being said in the official languages. (LL2, 17112021)

Some learners suggested that the use of technology in the context of the socio-political changes facilitated continuous learning of the mother tongue. With the ongoing socio-political changes and the outbreak of Corona Virus, learners felt that the socio-political changes have helped them to understand that in a world where several factors cause a man to move up and down, there is a possibility to keep learning the mother tongue thanks to technology. This perspective was captured during an interview with learner 3 (LL3) who attested that:

Using my Mobile phone to learn my mother tongue has been quite new. We used recorded materials and shared them with people who are running and hiding. I received information about Covid 19 when I was running and hiding from bullets. This was quite useful to me as I faced the unknown with the socio-political changes and in the context of a health challenge. (LL3, 17112021)

Seven learners commented on the aspect of improved communication as a benefit of the socio-political changes. At first, important information regarding health and the safety of the population was communicated in English and French but several people in the communities do not have the mastery of these languages. During the interview with literacy learner 17, she stated:

One benefit we have had as a result of the socio-political changes is that we have had more focus on our mother tongues. At first, when there were important health challenges like Cholera, the information was spread in English and French. However, because of the socio-political changes, in an attempt not to aggravate the situation, lots of efforts have

been made to spread information in the Mother tongue as well. For example, several organisations are making an effort now to send information about Cholera and Corona Virus in our mother tongue. At first, this information could only be available in French. We were even involved in the translation of the information on Covid 19 in our mother tongue and with the response that we got from many people in the diaspora, we are so proud of what is happening in our language even in the midst of the socio-political changes. (LL17, 18112022):

More than half of the literacy programme facilitators acknowledged that the socio-political changes have contributed to widening the scope of the mother tongue literacy programme. One of the ways they mentioned was the fact that the socio-political changes have caused more stakeholders to be involved.

Online literacy has helped many people in the cities and a few people in the village. There is more participation through available digital platforms since language speakers everywhere in the world now have gotten interested in learning. They can now provide resources for the literacy programme because they have understood the importance of mother tongue literacy. (Interview with LPF1, 11022021)

Another literacy programme facilitator mentioned the introduction of online literacy and innovation as tools that have facilitated the enrolment of several stakeholders from the diaspora.

There is innovation as we have reinforced our online literacy strategy. The Online literacy strategy has involved many stakeholders in the urban areas and the diaspora. More awareness has been raised about the literacy programme and some resources have been provided for the literacy programme. (Interview with LPF4, 11022021)

Before the socio-political changes, several digital platforms were not used because of little awareness of the importance of mother tongue literacy. With restricted movements during the socio-political changes and especially during ghost towns, many stakeholders from the community have sought to maintain contact with family members and friends who have migrated because of the socio-political changes. Although social media has become a tool for propaganda in the context of the socio-political changes, it has also become a very important tool for advocacy for the mother tongue literacy programme. This tool helped many stakeholders to build relationships with friends from different parts of the world who eventually got involved in the mother tongue literacy programme.

Within the socio-political changes, many classes are still being held especially with online options and safe zones that have been identified. Some classes go in in the community even on lock down days...People in the diaspora can connect to the literacy programme and also bring their own contributions via digital platforms. (Interview with LPF7, 11022021)

Literacy programme facilitator 7 (LPF7) also believes that the socio-political changes have been an opportunity to challenge stereotyping of the literacy programme, especially regarding endless literacy classes and the view of the community.

We have broken free from the cycle of endless classes. Literacy lessons are now tailored according to need. Lessons are now prepared based on the needs of the learners. The concept of community has been broadened. (Interview with LPF7, 11022021)

In answering my clarification question “Would you describe the socio-political changes as a blessing to the mother tongue literacy programme?” Literacy programme facilitator 9 (LPF 9) drawing on his personal experience admitted:

Yes! Within the socio-political changes, we have learned how to implement online literacy. We didn't see this opportunity until the socio-political changes came and forced us to think outside of the box. I am on some of the platforms for the communities involved with this research and the discussions on those platforms are amazing. People with busy schedules make an effort to connect because they don't need to move to a physical class. People everywhere around the world are getting involved in the literacy programme. (Interview with LPF9, 11022021)

A majority of the literacy teachers affirmed that due to the socio-political changes which brought about restrictions in movement, several literacy teachers from the various language communities have resorted to innovative approaches to teaching reading and writing in their mother tongues. The stereotype approach has been through onsite literacy classes but with restrictions in gatherings and movements, teachers thought out of the box to find ways to continue to promote the reading and writing of their mother tongues. Several literacy teachers articulated that the socio-political changes had resulted in innovation and an increase in cloud collaboration through the use of different digital platforms for the teaching and learning of their language.

“Digital literacy has been an eye opener.” (LT1, 17112021)

“I have learned how to use technology to teach my language.” (LT8, 17112021)

“The crisis has pushed us into more research to see how digital literacy can go. have been able to find applications that can compress videos for us to teach online. It has pushed us to become more creative.” (LT9, 17112021)

“We are able to use WhatsApp to do digital literacy.

We can now use our android devices to teach literacy to people who are abroad

There is more involvement of people in the diaspora because we can now use technology to help them benefit from the literacy programme” (LT14, 27112021)

Albeit the challenges of technology which include unstable or limited internet facilities, literacy teachers believe that the socio-political changes have increased their platform for teaching the language. The concept of community has become broader than it was before the socio-political changes. Many people in the diaspora have benefited from the mother tongue literacy programme thanks to the use of technology. The teachers have also been challenged to see beyond the geographical location of their community and to connect with other stakeholders who are all over the world. When asked to comment on some new things that have happened because of the socio-political changes, a teacher mentioned that their perspective of community has been broadened thanks to the use of technology.

“...Teaching the Language using digital platforms. I have also learned that teaching the mother tongue is not only limited to the geographical location of my community. We now have more people involved in the urban areas and even abroad than in the community. This has been a huge discovery for me.” (LT 15, 17112021)

Some literacy teachers suggested that the use of technology in the context of the socio-political changes facilitated the spread of vital information during the rapid spread of the unprecedented Covid 19 pandemic. With the ongoing socio-political changes and the outbreak of the Corona Virus, several literacy teachers felt that they had the opportunity to help their people to access information in their mother tongue on how to protect themselves from being infected by the virus.

“In the course of the socio-political changes and with the coming of Covid 19, I was able to open a WhatsApp group which enabled me to continue to teach and initiate discussions about the continuous teaching of the Weh Language. We also produced an audiovisual document which communicated information on how to protect ourselves from being infected by corona Virus and my people were so excited to receive this information on their mobile phones through WhatsApp.” (Interview with LT16, 14012022)

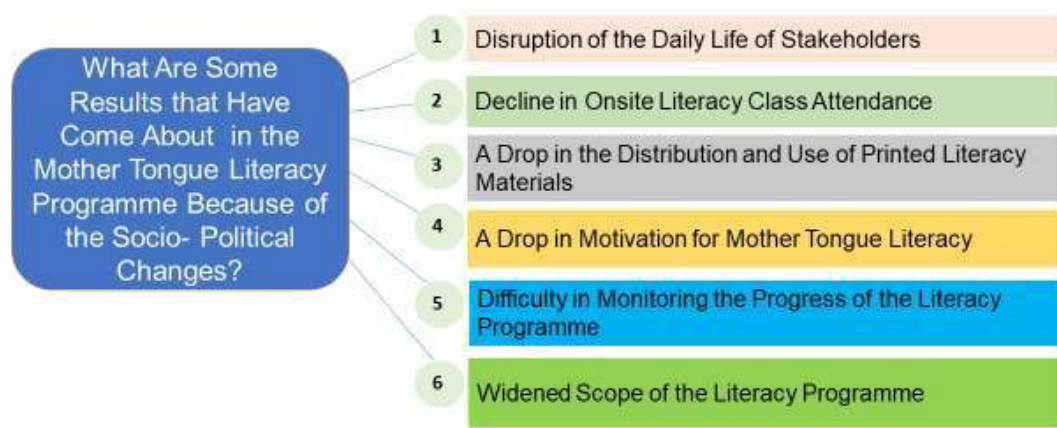
This perspective was further reinforced by literacy teacher 13 during the individualized interview with him.

We have improved on urban literacy. And have continued to expand on our digital literacy strategy through WhatsApp. We now use our android devices to teach literacy and to spread some vital information to our people in the mother tongue. During the time of Covid, we translated some very important information concerning Covid and we recorded it on bloom reader and were able to share it with many Babanki people at home and abroad. (Interview with LT13, 27112021)

Figure 9

Summary Findings Accordng to Research Question 1

Summary of Findings According to Research Question 1



4.1.2.7 Summary. In expressing their experience regarding the results that have come about in the mother tongue literacy programme because of the socio-political changes, several learners, literacy teachers and literacy programme facilitators alluded to the fact that restricting the teaching of the mother tongue in the context of the socio-political changes will be making the same mistakes that brought about the worsening socio-political changes.

The perspectives shared by the learners, literacy teachers and literacy programme facilitators have highlighted the changes that have come about in the mother tongue literacy programme because of the socio-political changes and have also depicted some new perceptions on how to redefine the expected outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme and integrate innovations that can help the mother tongue literacy programme to continue to produce sustainable results albeit the socio-political changes. More about these suggestions will be presented in chapter 5.

4.1.3 Presentation of Findings According to Research Question 2

In the preceding section, I presented findings of the results that have come about on the mother tongue literacy programme because of the socio-political changes. This section reports the main findings with regard to the second research question.

What modifications should be made in the mother tongue literacy programme to accommodate the current results?

In examining the experiences of the learners, literacy teachers, and literacy programme facilitators regarding the modifications to be made in the mother tongue literacy programme to accommodate current results, different expectations were captured. These expectations demand some level of preparation and commitment by the stakeholders for proper implementation of the modifications. The suggested modifications consider various aspects of life and the learning environment. The modifications could be categorised into physical adjustments, social-emotional adjustments, and adjustments in the curriculum and the learning environment.

As I examined the perspectives of literacy learners, literacy teachers, and literacy programme facilitators regarding modifications to be made in the mother tongue literacy programme, five themes emerged from the coding and triangulation of their responses. They are:

1. Prudent spread of digital learning opportunities;
2. Expansion of urban literacy strategies;
3. Step-up mobilization amongst stakeholders;
4. Increase safe learning spaces, and
5. Modify curriculum to reflect current needs.

The data emerged mainly from the semi-structured interviews and personal observations from my interaction with learners, literacy teachers, and literacy programme facilitators during the field visits.

4.1.3.1 Prudent Spread of Digital Learning Opportunities

4.1.3.1.1 Provide Digital Learning Facilities. The data reveals that several participants recommended the provision of digital devices to facilitate learning in the socio- political environment. These digital devices will expand learning opportunities through various digital platforms. Such a recommendation was motivated by the experience they had as they experimented with the idea of mobile learning in the mother tongue literacy programme when the socio-political changes escalated. This was a critical point for the participants because it led to an increase in literacy programme participants and also broadened the scope of the mother tongue literacy programme. After experiencing the benefit of such an approach as an opportunity to spread the literacy programme, the Literacy programme facilitator (LPF1) stated that:

I believe we need to be intentional at this time to provide digital devices that will allow literacy teachers to continue to teach and for learners to continue to learn how to read and write in spite of the sociopolitical changes. For us Literacy programme facilitators, we will be able to monitor what is going on in the online literacy classes if we have mobile devices that are connected to the online literacy classes. (Interview with LPF1, 11022021)

This point of digital learning facilities was also expressed in confidence by the literacy Programme facilitator LPF 3 who felt that the provision of solar facilities was a way of helping to spread the mother tongue literacy programme:

I believe that if we implement digital literacy it will be very useful in the context of the socio-political changes. It is true that we have electricity problems and sometimes phones are not charged. But if we Provide solar systems that can help in the charging of phones, this will greatly enhance the expansion of the literacy programme through digital literacy.

(Interview with LPF3, 11022021)

On his part, the literacy teacher (LT9) observed that there was already an initiative that was started by them through digital learning facilities. However, like several literacy teachers, he felt that more research and support from partners will help expand digital learning opportunities.

The crisis has pushed us into more research to see how digital literacy can be expanded. We have been able to find applications that can compress videos for us to teach online. If our partners can help us to expand on the research on these digital apps and other digital opportunities that can help us to expand on the mother tongue literacy programme it will be quite useful and very much appreciated (Interview with LT9, 17122021)

While expanding on the provision of digital learning facilities and alluding to the aspect of training on digital learning, LT 9 expressed that:

We will need the input of experts in the domain of digital learning and learning in the context of a crisis. We are also aware of the health challenges and other challenges that have come as a result of this crisis and we will need resources on how to handle these challenges (Interview with LT9, 17122021)

Literacy teacher 10 (LT10) felt that the expansion of digital literacy facilities is the way to go for the mother tongue literacy programme.

We should increase efforts toward digital literacy. This will mean using platforms like WhatsApp and others to continue to teach the mother tongue in the context of the crisis (Interview with LT10, 29/10/2021)

Such brainstorming and suggestions by literacy programme facilitators and literacy teachers are instrumental to discovering new opportunities and uncovering possible blind spots that have been with a completely analogue mother tongue literacy programme in a digital era.

4.1.3.1.2 Production of More Audiovisual Material. Most of the literacy teachers and some literacy programme facilitators had attended training on how to use technology to teach the mother tongue. Most notably, the training on using bloom library which held in early 2021 and culminated in the production of talking books about covid 19. Talking books were initially designed as audiovisual aid for people with some form of visual impairment who had some learning difficulties through “conventional approaches” to teaching reading and writing. In the context of the mother tongue literacy programme, the talking books which are a combination of texts, images, and sound are audiovisual learning tools that could be shared on various platforms. This model was in the minds of most of the literacy teachers and the literacy programme facilitators who were interviewed. A majority of the teachers and literacy programme facilitators explained that their experience with the bloom library allowed them to explore the use of written text which was input into bloom (a text-to-voice technology) and which allowed speakers of the language to listen to what was being read and also to see the underlined text which corresponded with the voice recording. The recommendation for the production of more audiovisual material was echoed by the Literacy programme facilitator (LPF4). He elucidated that the production and sharing of more talking books was a relevant step towards facilitating continuous learning and teaching without necessarily having to physically gather in onsite literacy classes.

For me, let us implement digital mother tongue literacy. Talking books permit people to continue to learn via their mobile phones. For example, the material on Covid that was produced in bloom has enabled many people to have a talking book on their android phones which enables them to get the information without necessarily going to the literacy class. We plan to do this for many other literacy materials as the socio-political changes

continue to persist. The production of more talking books will just be ideal in the socio-political context. (Interview with LPF3, 11022021)

Literacy teacher (LT13) also recounted his experience associated with experimenting with the use of bloom during the socio-political changes to continue to teach and share some vital information with his people in the mother tongue:

We have improved on urban literacy. And have continued to expand on our digital literacy strategy through WhatsApp. We now use our android devices to teach literacy and to spread some vital information to our people in the mother tongue. During the time of Covid, we translated some very important information concerning covid and recorded it on bloom reader and were able to share it with many Babanki people at home and abroad. We need to increase our efforts in digital literacy especially by producing more materials using bloom. (Interview with LT10, 29102021)

The idea of producing more audiovisual material for online learning was also held by a majority of literacy learners. A number of them had benefitted from the audiovisual material that was produced about Covid in their mother tongue. According to the learners, an expansion of such an initiative was going to be quite laudable.

Remobilise and start more physical and online literacy classes. Motivate people to take part in online literacy classes. It will be good if they produce more talking books like the one we received about the coronavirus. This will help people to continue to learn the mother tongue using their mobile phones and other digital tools. (Interview with LL4, 17112021)

The use of technology through the production of more audiovisual materials is considered a tool for the improvement of the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme in the context

of the socio-political changes. The leadership of CABTAL may be instrumental in encouraging further reflections regarding urging literacy programme facilitators to organize regular training and refresher courses that will help to instil confidence in the teachers during their efforts to expand digital learning opportunities in the mother tongue literacy programme. This suggestion for change via the production of more audiovisual materials will be expatiated further in the next chapter when I discuss the findings of this research.

4.1.3.2 Expansion of Urban Literacy Strategies. The mother tongue literacy programme was initially designed to reach out to homogenous populations that depended on the mother tongue for most of their oral communications. These homogenous populations spoke the mother tongue with little or no influence from other languages. However, with the socio-political changes, several stakeholders have migrated to urban areas in search of a means of livelihood. Urban literacy constitutes an organization of the mother tongue literacy programme to reach out to mother-tongue speakers who have migrated to other areas, yet, are very much motivated to continue to learn how to read and write their mother tongue. The oral and recorded narratives of several participants serve as a hint to the need for expansion of urban literacy initiatives.

Most of the literacy programme facilitators suggested an expansion of the urban literacy initiatives of the mother tongue literacy programme. The philosophy of the Urban literacy initiative is to reach out to mother-tongue speakers of the language whose focus on learning the mother tongue will be to maintain a clear connection between them and the geographical location which is a symbol of their origin and identity. One of the literacy programme facilitators (LPF9) felt that expanding on urban literacy would help the mother tongue literacy programme to achieve its aims:

More focus should be given to urban literacy with mother-tongue speakers who have migrated to other areas. With the socio-political changes, most people have escaped or relocated from their community to other areas like Yaounde and Douala. If we organize urban literacy in some of the strategic towns, this will be appreciated by many people and will help the mother tongue literacy programme to attain its desired goals. (Interview with LPF9, 11022021)

A similar comment was made by a literacy programme facilitator (LPF6) who emphasised that urban literacy should be prioritised:

I will recommend that we prioritize urban literacy for speakers of various languages. Most of these communities have their village cultural and development groups in some major cities. If we focus on urban literacy, it will give hope, especially to the mother tongue speakers who have been displaced because of the crisis. (Interview with LPF6, 11022021).

The literacy programme facilitator (LPF5) also reiterated the importance of expanding on urban literacy efforts as a means of ensuring greater outcomes in the mother tongue literacy programme:

I believe we should continue to motivate teachers to go on with teaching in the context of the socio-political changes and particularly to expand literacy in urban areas where people have migrated to. With the socio-political changes, we have had more involvement of the diaspora so I feel that embarking on urban literacy will be a very fruitful venture. (Interview with LPF5, 11022021).

The effort to continue to maintain the vitality of the language in the urban areas and construct knowledge collaboratively with all major stakeholders of the mother tongue literacy programme is highly cherished by Literacy Teacher (LT10):

I think that Urban literacy should be encouraged amongst all the stakeholders of the Mother tongue literacy programme. In urban areas like Yaounde and Douala, we have several people who are eager to learn the language. We can organize literacy classes for adults and children living in urban areas so that even if the crisis continues, our language will not die. (Interview with LT10, 29102021)

Literacy teacher (LT11) also noted the importance of expanding urban literacy efforts and how this could affect the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme.

Urban literacy should be encouraged. I was involved in an urban literacy initiative last year where I taught children and my colleague taught adults. This was during the holidays and everything went well. Although some of the children I taught struggled with speaking the mother tongue, I think with more effort, they will not only learn how to read and write but they will also learn how to speak the language. At the end of the time, it was recommended that urban literacy should be enhanced by the facilitators and teachers of the mother tongue literacy programme. This strategy is very good and should be encouraged in order for literacy to continue to grow. (Interview with LT11, 29102021)

Literacy learner 17 (LL 17) attributed the reasons for expanding urban literacy efforts to the inherent ability of the diaspora to raise resources to support the teaching of the mother tongue:

Encourage the teaching of the Nkwen language in various towns where we have Nkwen people. This will help the programme to continue to grow and will make people in the

diaspora to raise funds to support teachers and literacy programme facilitators. (Interview with LL17, 29102021)

This new perspective could open up new opportunities for the expansion of the mother tongue literacy programme in a more meaningful way to achieve the desired learning outcomes.

4.1.3.3 Step-up Mobilisation Amongst Stakeholders. In ethnolinguistic contexts, the need to get more stakeholders involved in the mother tongue literacy programme is a vital and urgent step toward the sustainability of the literacy programme. For several decades the promotion of mother tongue literacy programmes has been greatly influenced by funds and perspectives of expatriates and civil society organisations. This approach has rendered most of the indigenous language communities powerless to embark on contextually relevant and sustainable initiatives of developing and promoting literacy programmes in their language. As a result of this micromanagement approach, the designing, and implementation of mother tongue literacy programmes in the context of the socio-political changes has faced various challenges because of negative mindsets that have established a chronic dependence mentality in the language communities. Stepping up mobilisation will mean shaping the perceptions and attitudes of indigenous speakers of the languages and helping them to get involved in the mother tongue literacy programme in a systematic manner (Chiatoh, 2011).

One challenge to the mother tongue literacy programme in the context of the socio-political changes is to maintain the motivation of various stakeholders. It was difficult to reliably ascertain that the people enrolled in the mother tongue literacy programme and the various stakeholders were going to maintain the same enthusiasm amidst the socio-political changes.

Several learners, teachers, and literacy programme facilitators felt that an emphasis on mobilisation towards the attainment of the goals of the mother tongue literacy programme was necessary for the context of the socio-political changes.

Literacy learner (LL17) rationalized that:

... time waits for nobody. So even in a crisis, we need to continue to preserve our language. We need to increase our effort to encourage people through mobile groups and holiday classes. This strategy will help many of our people to enrol themselves into the literacy programme. It will also help our children who are out of the community to take part in holiday classes. It is important to make an effort in this way to encourage people to continue to take part in the literacy programme. (Interview with LL17, 29102021)

The literacy teacher (LT13) also expressed his views about the need for more advocacy as a means of improving the implementation of the mother tongue literacy programme:

We need to Increase advocacy with the government so that there can be a policy on multilingual education which will help in the sustainability of mother tongue literacy. We also need to expand on advocacy with mother-tongue speakers in and out of the community so that they can take part in literacy campaigns. Such Campaigns are organized during holidays and during some short periods like 3 weeks to enable interested people to grasp the opportunity to learn their language. (Interview with LT13, 29102021)

The period of the socio-political changes has seen an increase in the efforts of various groups to provide basic needs to internally displaced people. During this period, the efforts of development agencies have been mainly on bringing physical or psychosocial support to people

who have been affected by the socio-political changes. However, the literacy programme facilitator also recommended an increase in mobilization efforts:

I also recommend that considering the various challenges that various stakeholders have faced because of the socio-political changes, we need to increase our mobilization efforts to help many people in and out of the community to be involved in the mother tongue literacy programme. We have been encouraging communities to engage teachers who can move around in the major cities where their people have settled to organize literacy classes. We also encourage the organization of more literacy classes during short periods like 21 days of intensive literacy and holiday classes to motivate both adults and children to be involved in the mother tongue literacy programme (Interview with LPF3, 11022021)

With increasing mobility because of the socio-political changes, there is consequently an increasing need to equip literacy teachers and literacy programme facilitators to provide more flexible learning opportunities to mother-tongue speakers whose needs of learning and using their mother tongue are not being addressed because of the impact of the socio-political changes. In the context of increasing technology, there is every possibility to engage stakeholders through various mobilization efforts to subscribe many potential learners of the mother tongue literacy programme.

4.1.3.4 Increase Safe Learning Spaces. In the learning environment of the mother tongue literacy programme, the learners, teachers, and literacy programme facilitators have encountered physical, emotional, and social dilemmas brought about by the socio-political changes. The term safe learning spaces will refer to a physically and emotionally safe environment in which learners, literacy teachers, and literacy programme facilitators feel their life and dignity are not endangered because of their beliefs, knowledge, and skills. Learners, teachers, literacy programme facilitators, and other stakeholders of the mother tongue literacy programme must have reasons which make them confident to go to onsite literacy classes without any fear of being brutalised, or abducted because they participate in the mother tongue literacy programme.

In the context of the socio-political changes, the minds of learners and teachers are not without fear because of the challenging experiences that they have gone through or witnessed. Learners and teachers have witnessed school buildings and other public structures broken up into fragments by fire and other explosives. Others may have not witnessed physical violence but have been victims of all sorts of propaganda that has left them so frightened and devastated. Providing safe spaces for both learners and literacy teachers has proven to be quite important in the context of the socio-political changes. Learners and teachers have been overwhelmed by physical scenes or emotional trauma, such that they need safe learning spaces where they can go with confidence to learn how to read and write their language. With the destruction of many school buildings and other public structures, learning environments have become so limited. In the course of the interviews, the learners, teachers, and literacy programme facilitators expressed the necessity for these safe learning spaces. A safe learning space will be

where a learner or a teacher will have minimised fear of being abducted, brutalised, or killed. Participants have seen their friends, family members, and other acquaintances being brutalised and/or killed unjustly, or being hit by a stray bullet because they were at the ‘wrong place’ and they will prefer a learning environment that assures them of a certain degree of safety.

Literacy learners, literacy teachers, and literacy programme facilitators commented on the relationship between the provision of safe learning spaces and the attainment of learning outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. Figure 12 shows the relationship between the provision of safe learning spaces and the attainment of the learning outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. The table also gives some hints on some steps to be taken by the designers and implementers of the mother tongue literacy programme to enable the literacy programme to continue to thrive amidst the socio-political changes.

Table 8

Descriptions of the Connection Between Safe Learning Spaces and the Attainment of Learning Outcomes.

Some descriptions of safe learning environments	How it affects the attainment of learning outcomes
Here people will know they can learn without embarrassment from unidentified gunmen	Learners and teachers focus and make progress
Environments that provide new and safe learning opportunities	Can help the literacy programme to expand

Safe zones like Churches where there is some security	This promotes peace of mind and excellence in learning
Meet basic needs of health, food and social security to build hope and motivate learners and teachers	They concentrate on their learning or teaching.
Meet basic needs of health, safety, social security and other relevant aspects that help learners and teachers to have a cold head in their learning environment	It helps them to achieve a lot in their learning and teaching
So having literacy classes located in such places will encourage both learners and teachers to come and continue to interact	Social interactions encourage learning
The safety of learners can be ensured by the location of literacy classes in places like churches and palaces	This will bring a lot of motivation and concentration for learners and teachers.

Source: Fieldwork 2021

The perspectives of the literacy learners, literacy teachers, and literacy programme facilitators, indicated that there is a connection between a safe learning environment and the attainment of learning outcomes. A safe learning environment will encourage learners to focus and to make progress and this may help the literacy programme to expand:

Be intentional in the design of literacy materials. Brainstorm and come up with strategies and approaches to literacy, especially in the context of socio-political changes. Like shifting literacy classes to places where people will know they can learn without embarrassment from unidentified gunmen. This will help learners and teachers to focus and make progress...Search for environments that provide new and safe learning opportunities that can help the literacy programme to expand. For example, the identification of safe learning spaces in Churches and palaces (Interview with LPF1, 11022021)

Knowledge about the safety of a learning environment will help learners and teachers not to rush through the teaching and learning process and this will enable them to achieve more.

Meet basic needs of health, safety, social security and other relevant aspects that help learners and teachers to have a cold head in their learning environment. Human beings cannot concentrate when their safety is at stake. In the same way, when learners and teachers know that the learning environment is not safe, they will rush through the teaching and learning process and may achieve very little. (Interview with LPF3, 11022021)

According to the literacy programme facilitator (LPF4), a safe learning environment encourages social interactions and social interactions bring about learning.

Identify safe places like churches and palaces and continue to have physical gatherings for literacy learning and teaching when necessary. I believe that there is some regard for some environments by the powers that be. Since these crises started, the CABTAL office in Bamenda has not been attacked by anybody because those who attack other places consider the CABTAL office as a sacred place. Similarly, Church buildings and palaces

are held in high esteem except in extreme situations. So having literacy classes located in such places will encourage both learners and teachers to come and continue to interact. Social interactions encourage learning. (Interview with LPF4, 11022021)

Data collected from literacy teachers indicated that a safe learning environment brings about better interaction between learners and teachers and results in more creativity by the learners. This perspective was captured during interviews with the literacy teacher (LT 8):

Adapt the learning to meet the needs of learners, especially in the area of health, security and survival in the context of the socio-political changes. Locate classes in areas that are safer for learners and teachers. I teach better in an environment that is safe. I interact better with learners and this also helps learners to naturally bring out the inspirations that are hidden in their minds. (Interview with LT8, 29102021)

The perspectives of the literacy learners, literacy teachers, and literacy programme facilitators indicate that the changes in the socio-political environment have an impact on the learning outcomes. Learners and teachers also made comments regarding the influence of fluctuations in the learning environments on the learning approaches. This has been presented in section 4.3. and section 4.4 above. This will also be discussed in the next section.

4.1.3.5 Modify Curriculum to Reflect Current Needs. Several issues in the learning environment can influence the curriculum. If the hidden factors are not identified, learners, teachers, and literacy programme facilitators may continue to form some assumptions and expectations that are not commensurate with the realities of the learning environment. Thus, considering the modifications to the curriculum that should be made because of current results in the mother tongue literacy programme is of utmost significance. With social changes in the learning environment, a modification of the implicit values, behaviors, procedures, and norms that guide the mother tongue literacy program will help to accommodate the new behavioral patterns, professional standards, and social beliefs that have emerged in the learning environment because of the socio-political changes.

Interactions with literacy learners, literacy teachers, and literacy programme facilitators have indicated some evolving perspectives concerning the influence of the learning environment on the curriculum. As I visited literacy learners, literacy teachers, and literacy programme facilitators in the different language communities involved in this research, the responses of the participants served as signals about the influence of the socio-political changes on the curriculum of the mother tongue literacy programme. As part of my experience of living and working in the context of the socio-political changes, I sought to understand the possible changes in the curriculum that could be influenced by the socio-political context. In section 4.4, I presented the perspectives of the participants regarding how the socio-political changes have necessitated the creation of safe learning spaces. In this section, I explore further how the socio-political changes have influenced the curriculum of the mother tongue literacy programme.

During the interviews with the literacy teachers of Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen, and Weh, I noticed that the teachers had been very involved in several discussions concerning modifications to make to the curriculum of the mother tongue literacy programme. As I interacted with the teachers regarding the modifications to make to the literacy programme, I also asked clarifying questions like, “What will you suggest in terms of changes to the curriculum because of the realities of the socio-political changes?” During the individualized interviews, the responses revealed some needs that had been created by the socio-political changes and the teachers suggested what these changes meant for them and the learners and the adjustments that needed to be made to the curriculum to allow the mother tongue literacy programme to continue to survive in the socio-political environment. During the focus group discussions, I encouraged teachers to examine the following:

- Does the current curriculum respond to learners’ interests in the present context?
- Are there new ideas, patterns and professional standards that could motivate learners to be more engaged?

Other suggestions like the addition of functional literacy components which require the inclusion of practical activities to help learners to apply their learning through advocacy efforts, starting small business ventures, health tips, agriculture, human rights, and other relevant domains. The teachers and the literacy programme facilitators suggested modifications to the curriculum of the mother tongue literacy programme by offering varied perspectives.

While discussing with Literacy programme facilitators, a majority of them suggested some modifications to the curriculum. For example, in my discussions with the Literacy programme

facilitator (LPF 1), he suggested language and crisis management and health tips as components to be included in the curriculum

I will suggest that we introduce aspects to help people to understand how to use the mother tongue literacy programme to contribute to resolving the socio-political changes. We can also choose literacy materials that are relevant to the learners in their present context for example materials about covid, and how to protect oneself from falling sick because sometimes getting to the hospital might be challenging on ghost town days and on some days when there are lots of tensions. (Interview with LPF1, 11022021)

Another literacy facilitator suggested the inclusion of audio-visual strategies to help learners to continue to learn as they move along.

Since people are constantly on the move because of the sociopolitical changes, an audio-visual strategy will help them to continue to learn through their mobile phones and other devices as they move along. (Interview with LPF2, 11022021)

In discussing with the literacy programme facilitator (LPF5), he alluded to the fact that the inclusion of a functional literacy component could be useful in provoking meaningful interactions.

Include functional literacy lessons such as “Can mother tongue contribute to resolving the socio-political situation?” This can be a useful topic to include in the curriculum. Learners and teachers will have very meaningful discussions on such a topic. (Interview with LPF5, 11022021)

In addition to this view of including functional literacy components, the Literacy Programme Facilitator (LPF 7) also suggested the inclusion of aspects of welfare, the creation of common initiative groups and survival techniques.

I suggest the inclusion of aspects of welfare that help people to receive basic needs. This will bring a lot of motivation. We can also encourage the creation of common initiative groups that will help them get involved in other activities as they learn to read and write. Include functional Literacy components to enable participants to get access to proper information and practical activities that help them to survive in the context of the socio-political changes. Help people to learn about basic survival techniques and medicinal plants which can help them in the event of migration into the bush. (Interview with LPF7, 11022021)

More than half of the literacy teachers articulated that it was important to make changes to the curriculum as they and the learners grappled with the new realities of the sociopolitical context. The frequent references to basic life needs created by the sociopolitical changes indicated that it was an area that needed a change of curriculum and a change in the teaching strategy.

Alluding to the needs that have been created, Literacy Teacher (LT6) insinuated that there should be a change in vocabulary and the content of lessons to suit the socio-political context.

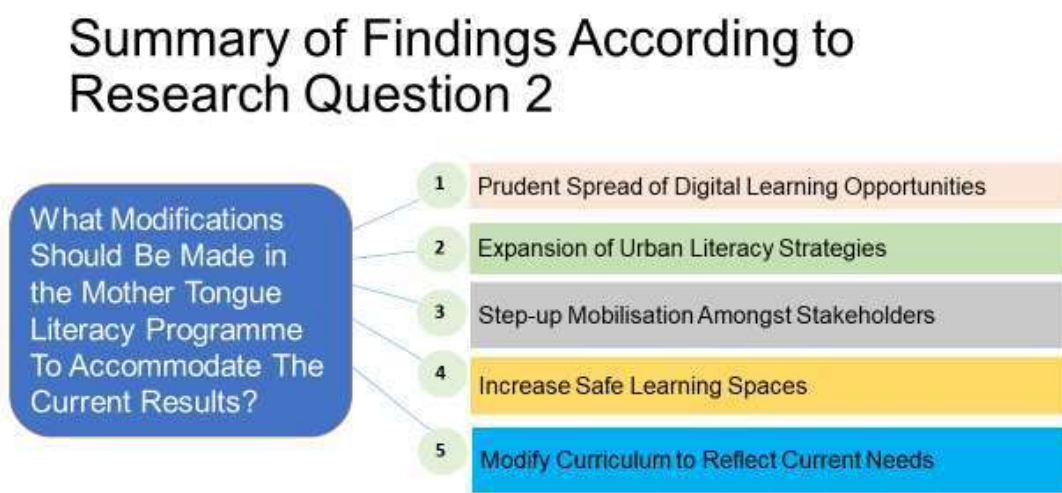
Some vocabularies have changed. We can no longer use words like Soldier, gun and school freely because of fear of the unknown. The materials meant for schools have not been taught for a long time because of irregular attendance and uncertainties. People are afraid to send children to classes because of the volatile nature of the socio-political context. The content of the lessons has been modified especially when we have to teach using social media and other digital platforms... We need to work with the reality on the ground and organize lessons according to the needs of the learners. (Interview with LT8, 29102021)

A couple of literacy teachers also observed that increasing the advocacy content and aspects of the importance of the mother tongue in resolving conflicts could be of help.

Increase advocacy with the government so that there can be a policy on multilingual education which will help in the sustainability of mother tongue literacy. We need to produce new materials that are adapted to the context of the Socio-political changes and the digital learning platforms. If we can discuss the importance of the mother tongue in resolving conflicts, it could help in this context. (Interview with LT15, 27/11/2021)

Figure 10

Summary of Findings According to Research Question 2



4.1.3.6 Summary. The socio-political climate prevailing in the North West and Southwest regions has great potential in determining the curriculum of the mother tongue literacy programme. The socio-political environment has encouraged ideologies that have influenced the power structure within the context of the mother tongue literacy programme. Hence, the need to take a deeper look at the influence of socio-political changes on the curriculum of the mother tongue literacy programme is fundamental in influencing the learning outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme.

While these results appear to indicate that the socio-political changes have influenced some modifications to the curriculum of the mother tongue literacy programme, the situation remains a complex one because several other aspects of the learning environment could influence the modifications of the curriculum. However, the pattern of these findings is in alignment with the argument that the realities of a learning environment, are fundamental in influencing learning outcomes (Lizzio, Wilson, & Simons, 2002).

4.1.4 Presentation of Findings According to Research Question 3

In Section 4.2.3, I presented findings on how the socio-political changes have influenced some possible modifications to the curriculum of the mother tongue literacy programme. In this section, I give an account of the main findings concerning the third research question.

What are the Implications of these Modifications on the Future of the Mother Tongue Literacy Programme?

I present the implications according to the findings of the research presented in section 4.2.3 under research question 2. So for every emerging theme concerning suggested modifications, I present the perspectives of the participants regarding the implications of such modifications on the future of the mother tongue literacy programme.

4.1.4.1 Sharing of Best Practices and Better Monitoring. The development of digital literacy efforts has enabled literacy programme facilitators, literacy teachers and learners to easily access information and also share ideas with a wider community of people. For example, the literacy programme facilitator is connected on the platforms of Mankon, Weh and Nkwen and can share best practices.

He can access these different learning platforms to learn various culturally relevant practices that could be adapted by other facilitators and teachers. This has helped them to present what is relevant to meet the needs, and interests of the learners of the different language groups. The literacy programme facilitator (LPF5) stated:

I am connected to the WhatsApp groups of several languages and I can learn best practices from those platforms which can be shared with other facilitators and teachers and this will help teachers to present what is relevant to meet the needs of the learners in their context.

(Interview with LPF5, 11022021)

A digital learning platform can give a richer learning environment since learners and teachers have the option to visualize, play online games, watch videos and other learning aids which makes their learning more attractive. This gives the digital literacy aspect the potential to make the mother tongue literacy programme inclusive by providing learning opportunities for all learners including those with disabilities. This point is shared by literacy teacher (LT6) who acknowledged that the audiovisuals that were shared reached out to people who in normal circumstances were not able to go to physical literacy classes.

I have seen that through digital literacy we can reach out to people who cannot walk to literacy classes, and some who have eye problems can listen to the audio lessons that we produce on bloom. (Interview with LT6, 29102021)

With digital literacy efforts, learners on different digital platforms can receive fast feedback concerning their learning. They receive feedback from other learners and from different literacy teachers who are connected to the same learning platform. With such ease in monitoring and feedback, literacy teachers and literacy learners can concentrate their efforts on relevant aspects.

Literacy programme facilitators and literacy Teachers can disseminate new concepts and ideas more quickly, touch more people and impact more lives with the mother tongue literacy programme. Besides, digital literacy allows literacy teachers to draw inspiration from several resource persons connected to the digital learning environment and this gives deeper teaching and learning experiences. One of the literacy teachers attested that he has benefitted from the content that has been developed by other literacy teachers.

Thanks to digital literacy, I am also able to benefit from the lessons of other teachers and the contributions of learners from the different platforms. These ideas make my lessons include lots of experiences. (Interview with LT8, 29102021)

Touching on the provision of digital learning facilities, a majority of the participants felt that this modification will lead to better monitoring of the mother tongue literacy programme. Alluding to such a benefit to the mother tongue literacy programme, literacy programme facilitator LPF1 attested that:

For us Literacy programme facilitators, we will be able to monitor what is going on in the online literacy classes if we have mobile devices that are connected to the online literacy classes. (Interview with LPF1, 11022021)

4.1.4.2 Increased Relevance of the Literacy Programme. Regarding the growth of the attractiveness of the mother tongue literacy programme because of the provision of solar energy devices, several literacy programme facilitators and literacy teachers confirmed that such facilities would contribute to making the literacy programme better:

It is true that we have electricity problems and sometimes phones are not charged. But if we provide solar systems that can help in the charging of phones, this will greatly enhance the expansion of the literacy programme. (Interview with LPF3, 11022021)

One implication of increasing urban literacy efforts is that it will contribute to attempts aimed at continuing the maintenance of the vitality of the language in urban areas. This will help various stakeholders to construct knowledge collaboratively with all major stakeholders of the mother tongue literacy programme.

With increased mobility, stakeholders are concerned about the survival of their mother tongue and the literacy programme. The socio-political changes have forced several language speakers to move to more cosmopolitan areas. In urban areas, it takes extra effort to continue to use the language for both oral and written communication. Several participants felt that an expansion of urban literacy efforts and the interaction of different language speakers on the platform of the mother tongue literacy programme will promote the vitality of their language:

I think that Urban literacy should be encouraged amongst all the stakeholders of the Mother tongue literacy programme. In urban areas like Yaoundé and Douala, we have several people who are eager to learn the language. We can organize literacy classes for

adults and children living in the urban areas so that even if the crisis continue, our language will not die. (Interview with LT10, 29102021)

The mother tongue literacy programme is no longer for a homogenous population in a given geographical location. The Mother tongue literacy programme now reaches out to people across varied geographical locations.

4.1.4.3 Liberation from Stereotypic Literacy Practices. The data shows that the changes in the mother tongue literacy programme and particularly the expansion of digital learning opportunities came with more implications such as the replacement of some traditional literacy practices which limited progress. One of the literacy programme facilitators testified that the socio-political changes and the modifications that ensued have brought some deliverance to the mother tongue literacy programme.

We have broken free from the cycle of endless literacy classes and have been able to run literacy classes for a specific duration according to the need of the people. I have learned that the literacy provision can be specific according to the need of the learners. At first, we had classes that went on and on and it was hard to know when to graduate learners. Now we set specific objectives for a particular group of learners within a stated time. (Interview with LT7, 29102021).

Applying critical thinking to their efforts of teaching the mother tongue was necessary for the deliverance. The socio-political changes prompted literacy teachers and literacy programme facilitators to question their very literacy practices. Such reflective practice enabled them to identify new opportunities. The literacy programme facilitators and the literacy teachers finally

discovered the possibility of continuing to practically teach their mother tongue in the socio-political context.

Another way of being liberated from the stereotypic literacy practices has been through creative efforts of using technology to teach the mother tongue. Touching on the creativity in digital literacy efforts, the literacy teacher (LT14) affirmed that:

We are able to use WhatsApp to do digital literacy. This has brought about a lot of creativity. Some of us have discovered that we can actually do many things with our mobile phones when it concerns teaching our language. We can now use our android devices to teach literacy to people who are abroad. I could hardly imagine that this could work but with the crisis, I have learned how to do it. (Interview with LT14, 29102021)

According to literacy teacher 16 (LT16), learning to use the digital literacy approach came through hard work, patience and perseverance. This is a virtue that literacy teachers have developed despite several discouraging factors.

... I was able to open a WhatsApp group which enabled me to continue to teach and initiate discussions about the continuous teaching of the Weh Language. We also produced an audiovisual document which communicated information on how to protect ourselves from being infected by the coronavirus and many people were so excited to receive this information on their mobile phones through WhatsApp. It took quite a lot of patience, perseverance and hard work to succeed in this because there were all kinds of discouragements. I am happy that I could learn this and apply it to my own language. (Interview with LT15, 14012022)

This was a critical point for the participants because it led to an increase in literacy programme participants and also broadened the scope of the mother tongue literacy programme. After experiencing the benefit of such an approach as an opportunity to spread the literacy programme, the Literacy programme facilitator (LPF1) stated that:

I believe we need to be intentional at this time to provide digital devices that will allow literacy teachers to continue to teach and for learners to continue to learn how to read and write in spite of the sociopolitical changes. For us Literacy programme facilitators, we will be able to monitor what is going on in the online literacy classes if we have mobile devices that are connected to the online literacy classes. (Interview with LPF1, 11022021)

This point of digital learning facilities was also expressed in confidence by the literacy programme facilitator LPF 3 who felt that the provision of solar facilities was a way of helping to spread the mother tongue literacy programme:

I believe that if we implement digital literacy it will be very useful in the context of the socio-political changes. It is true that we have electricity problems and sometimes phones are not charged. But if we provide solar systems that can help in the charging of phones, this will greatly enhance the expansion of the literacy programme through digital literacy. (Interview with LPF3, 11022021)

4.4.4.4 Mother Tongue Literacy as a Source of Hope for Displaced People. The mother tongue literacy programme was initially conceived to teach people how to read and write a language that they already spoke. This learning happened in a geographical location where people had lived for most of their lives. Language acquisition was natural because children and youth interacted with others who spoke the language. However, with the socio-political changes and increased migration, several participants felt that expanding urban literacy efforts will bring hope to despairing people who have been forced to relocate to urban areas that seem to disconnect them from some realities of the context in which they have lived most of their lives:

Most of these communities have their village cultural and development groups in some major cities. If we focus on urban literacy, it will give hope, especially to the mother-tongue speakers who have been displaced because of the crisis. (Interview with LPF6, 11022021).

As various participants responded to questions regarding the implications of the changes made to the mother tongue literacy programme, it was obvious that such modifications will encourage the involvement of many who consider the mother tongue literacy programme as an essential source of hope as they looked for ways to bring back peace and sustainable development to their communities. These participants are focused on developing their unique identities which contribute to their creativity.

I have been involved in producing literacy apps in Babanki, Mankon, and Weh. Whenever I share those apps on Facebook or WhatsApp, I get a number of speakers of the language calling me to say I have brought them hope. They are confident that with this online learning opportunity, they will continue to contribute to the development of their community. As a literacy programme facilitator, I can use my small studio in my office to

create apps that will help people abroad to learn their language and to build creativity. This is a source of hope for me and I think it is for many people who have migrated from their communities (Interview with LPF4, 11022021).

4.5.4.5 Greater Involvement of Stakeholders. The spread of digital learning opportunities implied the involvement of more stakeholders in the literacy programme. The mother-tongue literacy programme was typically designed for people to converge in physical learning environments. However, with the socio-political changes and other challenges like covid, there has been a challenge to the status quo. A majority of the participants clarified that the expansion of digital learning opportunities has led to the involvement of more stakeholders from different parts of the world. When asked to comment on the implications of the spread of digital learning opportunities, the literacy programme facilitator (LPF9) elucidated the increased involvement of stakeholders as a consequence:

... Within the socio-political changes, we have learned how to implement online literacy. We didn't see this opportunity until the socio-political changes came and forced us to think outside of the box. I am on some of the platforms for the communities involved with this research and the discussions on those platforms are amazing. People with busy schedules make an effort to connect because they don't need to move to a physical class. People everywhere around the world are getting involved in the literacy programme. (Interview with LPF9, 11022021)

Talking about the implication of urban literacy efforts and concerning the greater involvement of stakeholders, one of the literacy learners attested to the efficacy of this approach to getting more stakeholders on board.

We need to increase our effort to encourage people through mobile groups and holiday classes. This strategy will help many of our people to enrol themselves on the literacy programme. It will also help our children who are out of the community to take part in holiday classes. It is important to make an effort in this way to encourage people to continue to take part in the literacy programme. (Interview with LL17, 29102021)

Hinging on the expansion of digital learning opportunities and commenting on the implication of this modification on the mother tongue literacy programme, several participants admitted that the modifications have widened the influence of the mother tongue literacy programme and have increased sponsorship by stakeholders:

Online literacy has helped many people in the cities and a few people in the village. There is more participation through available digital platforms since language speakers everywhere in the world now have gotten interested in learning. They can now provide resources for the literacy programme because they have understood the importance of mother tongue literacy. (Interview with LPF1, 11022021)

This point was reinforced by literacy learner 17 (LL 17) who considered an increase in investment of resources by the diaspora as a consequence of expanding urban literacy efforts:

Encourage the teaching of the Nkwen language in various towns where we have Nkwen people. This will help the programme to continue to grow and will make people in the

diaspora to raise funds to support teachers and literacy programme facilitators. (Interview with LL17, 29102021)

Referring to the innovation induced by the socio-political changes and attesting to the fact that this has brought about greater involvement of the diaspora population, one of the literacy programme facilitators 7 (LPF7) said:

Within the socio-political changes, many classes are still being held especially with online options and safe zones that have been identified. Some classes go on in the community even on lockdown days...People in the diaspora can connect to the literacy programme and also bring their own contributions via digital platforms. (Interview with LPF7, 11022021)

This growing perspective by the participants could open up new opportunities for more training and further research as the mother-tongue literacy programme continues to operate in the context of the socio-political changes.

4.1.4.6 Increasing Need for Further Research and Training. As the literacy teachers and literacy programme facilitators seek to communicate better with different stakeholders of the mother tongue literacy programme and especially through digital literacy initiatives, there is an increasing need to research further on different tools and methodologies that will allow them to present literacy lessons in an innovative and attractive manner to a global audience that has the potential to mobilise and support the mother tongue literacy programme to achieve better outcomes.

This point was held by more than half of the literacy teachers. One of them observed that although there was already an initiative that was started to encourage the use of digital learning

facilities, there was a need for more research and support from partners to ensure a successful expansion of digital learning opportunities. In that vein, the literacy teacher (LT9) stated:

The crisis has pushed us into more research to see how digital literacy can be expanded. We have been able to find applications that can compress videos for us to teach online. If our partners can help us to expand on the research on these digital apps and other digital opportunities that can help us to expand on the mother tongue literacy programme it will be quite useful and very much appreciated (Interview with LT9, 17122021)

Alluding to the need for further training in the domain of digital literacy, literacy teacher 10 (LT10) felt that such an initiative would require more effort toward managing digital literacy expansion.

We should increase our efforts towards digital literacy. This will mean using platforms like WhatsApp and others to continue to teach the mother tongue in the context of the crisis. This will mean more training for us so that we can handle this change. (Interview with LT10, 29102021)

Figure 11

Summary of Findings According to Research Question 3

Summary of Findings According to Research Question 3



4.1.4.7 Summary. The socio-political changes have ensued modifications in the mother tongue literacy programme. Such modifications have brought about different implications. Stakeholders can easily share best practices and better monitor the literacy programme. The mother tongue literacy programme has broken free from some stereotypic tendencies and has become more relevant thanks to the use of technology. In acknowledgement to the increased relevance of the mother tongue literacy programme, more stakeholders are involved and see the mother tongue literacy programme as a source of hope for them. Nevertheless, the use of technology has imposed the need for further research on how to better implement digital literacy in the context of the socio-political changes.

4.2 Evaluation of Findings

The previous section has detailed the implications of modifications in the mother tongue literacy programme on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. Looking at the implications may necessitate the stakeholders of the literacy programme to consider aspects that they may not have been conversant with before the socio-political changes. I would argue that, if the mother tongue literacy programme makes use of humanistic and constructivist perspectives to incorporate modifications to the curriculum of the mother tongue literacy programme, the increased relevancy of the programme in the context of the socio-political changes may well bring about better outcomes. This increased relevancy will be helpful in that literacy learners will be satisfied with what is offered by the literacy programme providers and this may cause more learners to enrol into onsite and online literacy classes and may also reduce the drop-out rate from literacy classes. There will also be satisfaction on the part of the literacy teachers and literacy programme facilitators that could come from the fact that they are meeting the real needs of the target population, especially in the context of the socio-political changes.

Zakharia and Bartlett Zakharia (2014), for example, in seeking to establish the link between literacy and conflict report that the relationship is complex and mutual. They argue that on the one hand, literacy may aggravate or extenuate conflicts and on the other hand, literacy can be instrumental to “promote economic, political, and social inclusion and redress educational inequalities and a sense of shame that may accompany the inability to read.” (2014, p. 8-9). The studies mention that conflicts often obstruct literacy programmes through the destruction or targeting of learning environments, the creation of psychosocial challenges and the initiation of unplanned movements for learners, teachers and other stakeholders. Although the studies mention the relevance of integrating modifications to the literacy programme as a means of resolving conflicts, it, however, fails to look at the impact of conflicts on learning outcomes. In this study, we examined the extent to which escalating socio-political changes have brought about changes on the mother tongue literacy programme and the implications of these changes on the future of the mother-tongue-based literacy programme.

In this section, I would like to examine the findings of the three research questions from the position of humanistic and constructivist theories concerning the literature reviewed. To reiterate, the research topic is: “The Impact of Socio-political Changes on the Outcomes of a Mother tongue-based Literacy Programme: Case of North West of Cameroon”.

Three research questions are employed to investigate the impact of the socio-political changes. My first research question evaluates the results that have come about in the mother tongue literacy programme because of the socio-political changes. My second research question seeks to determine the modifications that should be made in the mother tongue literacy programme to

accommodate current results. My third research question examines the implications of these modifications on the future of the mother tongue literacy programme.

4.2.1 The Impact of the Socio-Political Changes on the Mother Tongue Literacy Programme

The results suggest that the socio-political changes have had both negative and positive impacts on the mother tongue literacy programme. Touching on the impact of the socio-political changes, the results show that the socio-political changes have brought about disruption in the daily life of stakeholders, a decline in onsite literacy class attendance, a drop in the distribution and use of printed literacy material, a drop in the motivation of literacy teachers and literacy learners and difficulty to monitor the progress of the literacy programme. However, the socio-political changes have also led to an expansion of the scope of the mother tongue literacy programme.

From the onset, the organisers of the mother tongue literacy programme set particular objectives that they wished to achieve in these communities. Nevertheless, the socio-political changes have influenced an alteration to the status quo by advancing new ways of thinking and acting in the context of the socio-political changes. The new perspectives of the different stakeholders would inform the modifications of the curriculum so that the programme organisers would no longer depend on stereotyped teaching materials and approaches but would rather incorporate the real needs of the learners and thread them into the learning materials; an approach that is supported by a combination of a humanistic and a constructivist perspective to learning that I presented in chapter 2.

In practice, this incorporation of the learners' needs would focus on the six themes which show where the mother tongue literacy programme needs the greatest attention. The findings for the research also indicate that the expansion/widening of the scope of the mother tongue literacy programme will need more pragmatic attention by the organisers of the mother tongue literacy programme to ensure that the expansion of the literacy provision ties with the needs, aspirations and values of the learners in the context of the socio-political changes.

With the disruption brought about by the socio-political environment, the results also showed that the creation of safe learning centres, which would simultaneously serve as spaces for humanitarian actions where people would have the opportunity to learn reading and writing and also get access to some of their basic life needs will contribute to mitigating the effects of such disruption. Such disruption would require that functional literacy materials and other religious materials are made available for people to easily access and use to develop their humanity awareness as the path of cultivating their reading and writing skills, in the context of the socio-political changes (Pattiwael, 2019). Given the physical and psychological needs created by the socio-political changes, as detailed in the previous sections, the availability of safe learning spaces and the provision of basic life needs could act as a strong motivation and confidence for learners and consequently lead to better learning outcomes (Young, Williamson, & Egan, 2016).

Prior work has documented the correlation between conflicts and literacy. Conflict can affect teaching and learning outcomes (Shemyakina, 2011; Kiprop-Marakis, Kipkoech & Ahmed, 2019). In an environment of conflict, the dynamics of teaching and learning change and the demand for physical learning environments change because of increased risk and the destruction of buildings. There is unplanned migration by teachers and learners as they look for safety. There is physical

violence which may result in psychological trauma. Physical violence can lower the returns on investment in education. With conflicts, the underlying supply and demand for education change (Justino, 2016). For instance, with the destruction of school buildings and other locations that hosted literacy classes, the supply of quality learning in literacy classes was reduced because teachers were mostly running around for their safety and were not available to teach. Secondly, one reason why there was a decline in onsite literacy classes is because of the migration of literacy teachers. The increased risk involved in going to literacy classes contributed to reducing the demand for the literacy programme. Furthermore, with increased insecurity, learners had to stay home because of fear or because of what they had seen happen to their friend or close relative. In seeking to improve access to onsite literacy classes for learners of the mother tongue literacy programme, special efforts are required which consider safety above all other concerns. More safe learning spaces must be identified or created where learners are safe from abductions, violence, dangerous objects or infrastructure. In the context of the socio-political changes, community-participation in providing safe learning spaces would be more appropriate.

With damaged dwellings and other effects on the livelihood of the learners, the distribution of printed literacy materials dropped significantly. There are potential explanations for those findings. Firstly, households facing uncertainty were more inclined to invest more of their resources to buy basic daily life needs. It is possible that the expected return on investment in the literacy programme was lower, especially in areas that felt a greater impact of the socio-political changes. Learners and teachers needed to afford basic daily needs before attempting to buy printed literacy materials. Thirdly, some learners were exposed to the conflict for a longer period of time. For example, learners who were enrolled in literacy classes in Bababki, Weh and Mankon were

already quite involved in the mother tongue literacy programme before the peak of the socio-political changes. Thus, the distribution of printed literacy materials is directly proportional to the number of learners enrolled into the literacy programme. However, the decline in the distribution of printed literacy materials does not allow us to determine with certainty whether the situation was significantly better before the socio-political changes. Thus it may be advisable to explore further to identify other factors that may influence the distribution of printed literacy materials. Increasing the distribution of printed literacy material will require the intervention of stakeholders who should strive to restore stability in the lives of the learners by providing opportunities for them to get involved in some income-generating activities which can ameliorate their purchasing power. Such an effort may serve as an incentive to learners and may encourage them to come back to literacy classes and purchase printed literacy materials. Furthermore, the development of literacy materials may require a shift from content-based curricula to a ‘learning outcomes’ model (Manzoor, Aziz, Jahanzaib, Wasim & Hussain, 2017). The implication of such a shift would be the alteration of the forms of learning which can include audiovisuals, visual aids and other forms of materials that use ICT to meet the needs of the learners (Coyle, 2018; Toetenel & Rienties, 2016).

The literacy learners and teachers from Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen and Weh have faced different realities of the socio-political context and they have different expectations. There is some degree of unanimity in the literature regarding the impact of conflicts on learning outcomes. The relevance of a humanistic constructivist approach to literacy and education has been underscored. Including humanistic and constructivist elements in educational practice will render teachers to be “more effective in helping learners to develop skills in relation to teamwork, problem-solving,

systems improvement, lifelong learning and other areas that are becoming increasingly necessary for success in the workplace” (Chen & Schmidtke, 2017). In the four communities, many of the adults involved in the mother tongue literacy programme have never had the opportunity to complete secondary school. Several people were denied a formal education because of poverty or different forms of cultural bias, especially against women. The mother tongue literacy programme, which is principally organized by community stakeholders in partnership with CABTAL, seemed to bring new hope and motivation to stakeholders. The aims of the literacy programme are that firstly, new and revised quality literacy materials are made available to these 4 communities; secondly, that more people are literate in their mother tongue and finally, that there is an effective use of mother-tongue scriptures and other vernacular materials in print and non-print forms.

CABTAL aims to facilitate Bible translation into Cameroon’s indigenous languages and encourage language-based community development. In order to achieve this aim, CABTAL works in partnership with different stakeholders in these language communities and it is in the framework of this partnership that CABTAL is involved in the mother tongue literacy programme operating in the Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen and Weh areas. In this context, humanitarian action towards learners of the mother tongue literacy programme will necessitate the involvement of staff with the skills to motivate, monitor and track the outcomes (Burde, Kapit, Wahl, Guven, & Skarpeteig, 2017). Therefore, when designing the curriculum for the literacy programme, it would be beneficial to build upon the research presented here, regarding a drop in motivation for learners and teachers; to understand the different expectations of the learners in the socio-political context so that literacy materials are developed based on the findings, and that will enable learners to get involved in practical activities that will help them to survive in the socio-political context.

The findings of this research also indicate that literacy programme facilitators and literacy teachers have faced difficulties as they sought to monitor the literacy programme. One key discovery is the application of digital literacy efforts. A very important task for the organisers of the mother tongue literacy programme would be to target populations of language speakers in urban areas and to create more online literacy classes. Such opportunities will be the right places to continue to expand and monitor the literacy programme. In addition to these areas of high demand, there is an issue that should be addressed. During the research, it became apparent that fewer literacy teachers could use available technologies for literacy. It is therefore important for programme organisers to seek to understand the practical areas that literacy teachers need help so that they can better monitor the literacy programme using available technologies. With this understanding, they will need to make modifications to the instructional materials that educate literacy teachers and literacy programme facilitators on how to better monitor the literacy programme for better outcomes in the four language communities.

Finally, if the literacy programme is organised to provide literacy teaching using both onsite and online strategies, then this will demand an improvement on the quality of training offered to the teachers and literacy programme facilitators. As has been described earlier, the literacy programme initially targeted homogenous populations. However, with the rapid increase in the use of technology, and with the education levels of literacy teachers, they may be unable to cope with the additional content of the instructional materials without additional training and reinforcement. It should therefore be mandatory for programme organisers to understand the areas where teachers need more help, especially concerning the use of technology. The teachers should be given opportunities to intentionally observe, ponder, discuss and receive guidance from others

who are more experienced in teaching literacy using technology so that they can learn more practical ways of addressing the needs of their learners. It would be too ambitious to conclude that an application of digital approaches to literacy will bring about spectacular results in terms of monitoring the literacy programme; however, I believe that this would consequently lead to more expansion on the scope of the mother tongue literacy programme and an improvement on the outcomes of the literacy programme.

4.2.2 The Significance of the Modifications to be Made in the Mother Tongue Literacy Programme to Accommodate Current Realities

There is empirical evidence on how modifications in the learning environment can improve learning outcomes (Wang & Degol, 2016). However, the modification of a learning programme will greatly depend on the context, its design, implementation strategies, the content of the learning materials, and the definition of learning outcomes. With the current expansion of technology, modifications in the learning environment will therefore need to consider the modification of technological tools which can help to improve the interactions between learners and teachers in the specific learning environment.

The results suggest that the socio-political changes have ensued several modifications to the mother tongue literacy programme. The socio-political changes have necessitated; a prudent spread of digital learning opportunities; an expansion of urban literacy strategies; a step-up in mobilisation amongst stakeholders; an increase in safe learning spaces, and a modification in the curriculum to reflect current needs.

The influence of digital learning opportunities has fostered continuous learning in the mother tongue literacy programme (Bigelow, Vanek, King & Abdi, 2017; Mayer, 2017). The

literacy programme providers have maximized the use of digital skills to incorporate or expand on digital literacy efforts for participants of the mother tongue literacy programme. Such realization will require massive mobilization and investment of stakeholders. The communities involved are quite implicated in mobilisation on radio, through cultural groups in urban areas and various social media platforms. As mentioned earlier, there is a need for more professional development for teachers and literacy programme facilitators not only to handle the humanistic aspects (physical, social and emotional needs) of learners but to also facilitate digital learning. There will therefore be a need for literacy lessons to be adapted to consider the easy transferability and cost-effectiveness of this digital strategy in the long term (Laanpere, 2019). In particular, the production of more talking books and the development of new teaching and learning techniques, the increase in safe learning spaces and the modification of curriculum to reflect current realities will encourage the participation of several stakeholders. It is worth noting that implementing these modifications will come with some challenges (Feerrar, 2019; Meyers, Erickson & Small, 2013). Some of the challenges mentioned in this research include non-possession of android devices by learners and teachers, regular power cuts and inadequate skills by literacy teachers to facilitate digital literacy opportunities. However, the emphasis on more professional development for literacy teachers and literacy programme facilitators, the provision of digital devices at affordable prices and the involvement of the diaspora to support the literacy programme would be an appreciated move. This notwithstanding, the literacy programme facilitators will need to invest time to develop lessons, which provide teachers with some guidelines on how literacy teachers should speak and comport themselves and how they should manage their time to ensure that learners stay motivated. Influencing teacher behaviour in the socio-political context will require further research on how

this can be practically implemented. Such an enterprise may require additional costs for the different stakeholders.

The Mankon community for example has started an e-learning platform where people are connecting from every corner of the world to learn their language. Such initiatives could be expanded to the entire literacy programme of CABTAL. Nevertheless, to expand with such initiatives, literacy teachers in the socio-political context must not forget to account for the social and emotional needs of learners for them to continue to learn. Literacy teachers and literacy programme facilitators will need to consider the inclusion of content that deals with the effect of violence on learners. The literacy programme providers will also need to engage a specialist who can handle the psychosocial needs of learners who have been traumatized by the socio-political environment. Safe learning centres will increase a sense of belonging for both learners and teachers and they might work together as a team to have some control of the learning environment. Considering that the environment of the mother tongue literacy programme has changed from being homogenous to a multilingual context, literacy teachers must learn to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of a multilingual audience.

Also, considering that there has been the damage of infrastructure that once hosted literacy classes and that available learning spaces may be far apart, the literacy programme designers must create allowance so that literacy teachers who are unpaid volunteers will only be able to offer reduced learning time per session which makes use of few learning materials.

4.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the impact of the socio-political changes on the mother tongue literacy programme by giving a variety of aspects including descriptive statistics on how the socio-

political changes have impacted the mother tongue literacy programme. The chapter also sought answers to the three research questions. Research question 1 was aimed at examining how the socio-political changes has impacted the mother tongue literacy programme. Six themes emerged: disruption of the daily life for stakeholders; decline in onsite literacy class attendance; drop in the distribution and use of printed literacy material, drop in the motivation of literacy teachers and literacy learners, difficulty to monitor the progress of the literacy programme, expansion/widening of the scope of the mother tongue literacy programme. Research question 2 sought to find out the modifications that should be made in the mother tongue literacy programme to accommodate current results. From the coding and triangulation of responses, five themes emerged: the prudent spread of digital learning opportunities; expansion of urban literacy strategies; step-up mobilization amongst stakeholders; increase in safe learning spaces and modify the curriculum to reflect current needs. Research question three sought to examine the implications of the modifications to be made to the mother tongue literacy programme. Six themes emerged from the data: sharing of best practices and better monitoring, increased relevance of the literacy programme, liberation from stereotypic literacy practices, the mother tongue literacy programme has become a source of hope to displaced people, there is greater involvement of stakeholders and there is an increasing need for further research concerning digital literacy.

Our review has shown that there is an increasing influence of socio-political changes on learning outcomes over the last two decades. The teaching, learning and researching of different literacy programmes operating in various socio-cultural dimensions have been an object of research that has developed rapidly as various language learning opportunities are plagued by war, socio-political upheavals and other pandemics. Within the last 5 years, the impact of the socio-

political changes on the mother tongue literacy programme operating in the North West Region of Cameroon is multifaceted. We have argued for a humanistic constructivist approach to literacy programmes in a socio-political context which cannot avoid dealing with challenges brought about by the socio-political context and the emerging values and ideas that need to be considered by the literacy programme providers as they develop a new direction for the mother tongue literacy programme in the context of the socio-political changes. We have looked at the impact of the socio-political changes on literacy learners, literacy teachers and literacy programme facilitators. The research has reminded us that literacy programmes are always susceptible to the negative influences of political and social changes (Luke, 2018; Scott, Sheridan, & Clark, 2015; White & Cooper, 2015). The findings of the research also suggest however that socio-political changes might have a positive contribution to the development of literacy programmes in a socio-political context. This constitutes a stepping stone towards the development of critical awareness for literacy programme providers as they operate in a socio-political context. Nevertheless, even this perspective could be challenged as various scholars research literacy programmes in different socio-political contexts.

I have evaluated the findings of this research in line with humanistic and constructivist theories of learning and the literature that was reviewed in chapter 2. Although the socio-political changes have impacted the mother tongue literacy programme both negatively and positively, there is a need to continue to explore best practices for implementing literacy programmes in a similar socio-political context. In the next chapter, I will discuss the implications of these findings for the different stakeholders (learners, teachers, literacy programme facilitators, civil society organisations like CABTAL and the government).

CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

As pointed out in chapter 1, changes in the learning contexts may ensue complex outcomes that are connected to the lack of acquisition of contemporary skills that help learners to navigate through lifelong learning opportunities (Goldie, 2016).

This research sought to examine the impact of socio-political changes on the outcomes of a mother tongue literacy programme operating in the North West Region of Cameroon.

With escalating socio-political changes in the North West region of Cameroon, the learning environment of the mother tongue literacy programme has been characterised by several challenges and expectations from various stakeholders. Some of the challenges brought about by the persistent socio-political environment have influenced the enrollment, teaching, and learning outcomes and the commitment of various stakeholders to the mother tongue literacy programme in the area. With these changes, it was obvious that the implementation of the mother tongue literacy programme would require new ways of thinking in order for the literacy programme to make use of emerging opportunities and to continue to be relevant in the socio-political context.

The purpose of this research was to show the impact of the sociopolitical changes in the Northwest Region of Cameroon on the mother tongue literacy programme of the Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy (CABTAL). The goal was to seek an understanding of this impact in order to suggest modifications to the objectives, teaching methods, and desired learning outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. To achieve this purpose, the research attempted to examine existing mother tongue literacy efforts and opportunities and their efficacy for people who have been affected by the socio-political changes of the Northwest and South West Regions of Cameroon. The research intended to investigate the impact of the sociopolitical

changes on the teachers, learners, literacy programme facilitators, and CABTAL, by examining the results that have come about in the mother tongue literacy programme because of the sociopolitical changes and the modifications that needed to be made to accommodate the current results. This study also intended to analyse the implications of the modifications on the future of the mother tongue literacy programme.

This research is a case study with components of an ongoing action research (McNiff, 2013; McNiff, 2016; Stringer, 2008). The researcher intended to explore the experiences of learners, literacy teachers, and the CABTAL literacy programme facilitators regarding the results that have come about in the mother tongue literacy programme because of the socio-political changes and the modifications that should be made on the curriculum to accommodate the current results. We also intended to have a better understanding of the implications of current results with respect to new patterns, expectations, skills, beliefs and attitudes that have emerged because of the socio-political changes.

The use of a qualitative research method allowed the researcher to have an in-depth understanding of how the sociopolitical changes have affected the performance of learners, literacy teachers, and CABTAL literacy programme facilitators. The choice of a qualitative methodology was also motivated by its ability to help the research to focus on exploring a phenomenon in a specific context. This was suited to explore the phenomenon in the socio-political context of the mother tongue literacy programme.

In every research, no matter how well constructed and conducted, there are always matters and occurrences that arise which are out of the researcher's control. These matters and occurrences

limit the magnitude to which the research can go and may affect the results and conclusions that are depicted at the end of the research. In the same vein, this research faced some limitations.

Firstly, the escalating socio-political environment made access to research participants quite challenging. This made the data collection process more time-demanding and more laborious than anticipated. I had made a conscious effort to observe a degree of consistency in the data collection process but circumstances did not always permit it. For example, although I planned to do individual interviews with all targeted interviewees as per some tentative schedules developed through preliminary contacts before the data collection phase, there was a recurrent need for compromises to be made due to the conflicting schedules of participants and the unpredictability of the socio-political changes. After spending a considerable amount of time identifying potential interviewees, there were cases where there was an unprecedented escalation of violence and several people initially envisaged were no longer available and it became difficult for me to arrange interviews with new potential participants. To overcome these limitations, I was therefore obliged to leverage ‘divine opportunities’ on several occasions to conduct interviews with available participants. I also triangulated the data or relied on alternative data sources such as phone calls to have a deeper understanding of the views of some of the participants who were interrupted during the interview.

Also, the analysis of the massive data that emerged during the data collection phase has proven to be challenging and the line between information that is meaningful and relevant for the research and some naive political ideas from participants was sometimes unclear. This was partially addressed by reinforcing the trustworthiness of the research such as the triangulating of different data sources and situating the findings in the literature to identify prominent points.

Additionally, as with most case studies, seeking direct generalisation of the findings to other contexts is likely to be futile, but this is partially overcome by providing a thick description (Geertz, 2008; Kharel, 2015; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2015).

Furthermore, the work schedule of the researcher constituted a huge challenge. Considering that this research was engaged just shortly before the researcher got the responsibility of serving as the chief executive officer of an organisation constituted a major limitation to this research because there was a struggle to maintain a balance between work and time for the research. To overcome this, the researcher requested several permissions and delegated some responsibilities in the office to focus on the research.

Filling out the informed consent forms in the context of the socio-political changes was quite a challenge. Participants were concerned about the harm that could come to them if someone misunderstood why they filled out the informed consent forms. Such panic made some of the interviewees to be quite tense and some withdrew from the research. To overcome this, the researcher continued to find other potential interviewees until triangulated findings showed that there was saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Guest, Namey, & Chen, 2020; Saunders et al., 2018).

In this chapter, I will first of all present the implications of this research before presenting recommendations for application and recommendations for further research. I will complete this chapter with a take-home message for the different targeted audiences of this research.

5.1 Implications of the Research

This research was conducted to assess the impact of socio-political changes on the outcomes of a mother tongue literacy programme operating in the Northwest Region of Cameroon.

As shown by the responses of the participants, this research brings out the perspectives of the learners, literacy teachers, and literacy programme facilitators as they operated in the context of the socio-political changes. Gaining an inside into the views of the participants regarding the impact of the socio-political changes will inform the design and implementation of literacy programmes that achieve better outcomes in similar contexts.

From the exploration of the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme as presented in the perspectives of literacy learners, literacy teachers, and literacy programme facilitators, this section maps out the implications of this research for different categories of stakeholders. Although the views of the different participants may represent what is happening in four language communities which is just a segment of the communities of the North West region, the data shows that there is an impact that goes beyond the mother tongue literacy programme and affects the entire Northwest Region and the whole of Cameroon socially, culturally, educationally and economically. Therefore, the focus on the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme which targeted a segment of the informal learning sector has also highlighted some issues that do not only pertain to the mother tongue literacy programme but cut across the educational system and the informal learning sector of the Northwest Region of Cameroon. In order to examine the claims presented in this research and to propose new perspectives, the implications are examined based on emerging themes from the research questions discussed in chapter 4.

5.1.1 Implications of the results according to emerging themes

The impact of the socio-political changes has critical implications for learners, literacy teachers, and literacy programme facilitators. The findings show that there has been a significant disruption

in the daily life of stakeholders, a decline in onsite literacy class attendance, a drop in the distribution and use of printed literacy material, a drop in the motivation of literacy teachers and literacy learners, the difficulty to monitor the progress of the literacy programme and the expansion of the scope of the mother tongue literacy programme.

In connection with the disruption of the daily life of the stakeholders, there is the escalation of hardship and poverty for the learners and literacy teachers. As presented by one of the participants (LL5, 17112021) in section 4.2.2.1. Life has become so hard because of the situation. Learners and literacy teachers can barely afford basic commodities and this affects their commitment to the mother tongue literacy programme. Several people associated with schools and other informal learning avenues like the mother tongue literacy programme have been targeted. Literacy teachers are also sometimes targeted by gunmen in an attempt to get a ransom. For the literacy programme facilitators who are sometimes targeted, the need for survival has in most cases surpassed the need to supervise the literacy programme.

A review of the literature indicates that the emergence of new social and cultural standards of society could be instrumental in shaping learning environments by urging them to adhere to the current realities of the context (Wang, Tseng, & Yen, 2014). According to Justino (2016) and Williams (2016), socio-political changes can impact adults and children at several levels including economic, social, educational, and emotional dimensions. In the context of the mother tongue literacy programme, learners and teachers have faced different forms of trauma, social separations, poverty, and other physical and social challenges that have hindered them from being regular in the mother tongue literacy classes. The literacy programme facilitators have been victims of secondary trauma as they listen to the stories of learners and literacy teachers. There is, therefore,

a need for learners, teachers, and literacy programme facilitators to make physical, emotional, economic, and ideological adjustments to adapt to the current realities of the socio-political context (Ungar, 2015). This means that the learners would no longer depend on a ready-made curriculum and teaching materials but would be more open to materials that incorporate their real needs. This approach is supported by the humanistic and constructivist perspectives that I presented in chapter 2. In practice, the consideration of learners' needs would focus on the key areas where the socio-political changes have had the greatest impact. Due to damaged shelter, interruption of a sense of belonging, uncertainty about daily life and welfare, unplanned movements, and inconsistency in literacy class attendance, the anticipated learning outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme have been affected. This will require that the Cameroon Association for Bible translation and literacy, which is the main facilitator of the mother tongue literacy programme, would need to make adjustments to include socio-emotional learning goals while maintaining high-quality reading and writing goals (Cummings, Merrilees, Taylor, & Mondy, 2017, p. 8). Although this approach has been criticised for not following a set curriculum which makes it difficult to apply in a contemporary schooling situation, Cefai, Bartolo, Cavioni, & Downes (2018, p12) argue that "It should become a core aspect of curricula across Europe, with adequate and sufficient resources, given the amount of training and time that prioritising it would dictate." The consideration of socio-emotional learning in the context of the mother tongue literacy programme would be a more holistic way of approaching learning with learners who have been traumatised by the socio-political environment. Approaching literacy from this perspective benefits from the overlap between the cognitive and social constructivist approaches to learning while adding the emotional aspect of learning.

The findings of this study also indicated that there is a decline in onsite literacy class attendance. With onsite literacy classes, the organisers of the mother tongue literacy programme had particular objectives that they wished to achieve in the community before the socio-political changes. The programme aims are that firstly, new and revised quality literacy materials are made available to the Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen, and Weh communities; secondly, that more people from these communities are literate in their mother tongue and finally, that there is an effective use of mother-tongue scriptures and other vernacular materials in print and non-print forms. If the humanistic constructivist approach is followed, the programme organisers would allow for equal participation between themselves and the recipients, which will help to change the status quo by encouraging shared responsibility among the different stakeholders. One of the strategies for combating the decline in onsite literacy classes would be to expand on digital learning opportunities and the introduction of short-term literacy campaigns in urban areas during which learners could take a shorter time to learn what is required. In an attempt to encourage various stakeholders to learn how to read and write their language through the literacy programme, there is a need to put in place various forms of encouragement to be given to suitable learners to enable them to acquire the necessary reading and writing skills by attending literacy classes designed for these purposes. This would mean recognising the uniqueness of each learning context and supporting learning according to the realities of each context. For example, due to the hardship faced by the learners, there would be a need to help them to regain their self-esteem by increasing the safe learning spaces which allow learners to receive adequate care and encouragement. Literacy teachers and literacy programme facilitators would need to collaborate with community stakeholders to provide proper orientation to learners regarding safe learning spaces. An offshoot of such adjustment

would be the widespread implementation of household literacy classes where learners would not need to face the hurdles of restricted movements. This would mean that literacy programme providers would source more funding to subsidise the printing and distribution of literacy materials. This notwithstanding, it is possible that with the various adjustments made by both the literacy programme providers and the stakeholders, some literacy learners might still make negative choices that are not related to the impact of the socio-political changes (Loeng, 2020; Rogers & Horrocks, 2010). To achieve better outcomes, literacy programme providers will need to engage in reflections and discussions among stakeholders: literacy teachers, literacy programme facilitators, community stakeholders, donor agencies, and civil society organisations to find the most effective ways of implementing the mother tongue literacy programme in the context of the socio-political changes. The discussions and reflections will enable various stakeholders to suggest and tailor learning activities to incorporate the daily experiences of learners. According to Kohonen, Jaatinen, Kaikkonen and Lehtovaara (2014), such an effort will help learners to identify learning opportunities that take into account their realities.

The findings also reveal that there is a drop in the motivation of literacy learners and teachers. The context of the socio-political changes has provoked emotional insecurity for learners, teachers and literacy programme facilitators. This will demand an extra effort from the literacy programme providers to integrate aspects of the curriculum that considers socio-emotional learning, and reinforce teacher training and coaching that provide professional and emotional support to teachers and learners according to the realities of the socio-political environment (Cummings, Merrilees, Taylor, & Mond, 2017). The literacy programme providers will also need to make provisions to support and motivate learners and teachers as they go through various psychosocial transitions in

the socio-political environment (de Wal Pastoor, 2015). Encouraging the creation of more safe learning spaces, the inclusion of some practical activities such income generating activities in the curriculum, the inclusion of training on digital literacy, and the provision of psychosocial support will be a more pragmatic way to help the learners and teachers to maintain their motivation and commitment because the mother tongue literacy programme provisions tie in with their aspirations and real needs. The evolution of the socio-political changes from when it started to the present, has resulted in various effects on the motivation of learners. According to Cook & Artino Jr (2016, p997), some of the factors that affect the motivation of learners include: “competence, value, attributions, and interactions between individuals and the learning context”. In the case of the learners of the mother tongue literacy programme, their interaction with the socio-political environment has been instrumental in determining their motivation. The socio-political environment has also affected their reading and writing efforts and the use of technology in literacy. Reading and writing in onsite literacy classes is not very likely in many areas because of the risks involved. Social interactions through the organisation of trauma healing sessions in the safe learning centres will therefore deeply motivate literacy learners and literacy teachers. The safe learning centres have been avenues for psychological healing for learners, teachers, and literacy programme facilitators. This agrees with the conclusions of Aber et al. (2017) that learning in a “Healing Classroom” setting positively improves the learning and emotional outcomes of learners by ameliorating the learning environments. I would suggest the creation of literacy classes, which would simultaneously serve as psychosocial support centres, reading and writing clubs where people would have the opportunity to practice reading and writing with the different publications that cover aspects of health, hygiene, agriculture, human rights, religious beliefs, business and

other aspects that contribute to the holistic development of the learners. Such an approach will require the use of primers, functional literacy materials, bibles, and other relevant materials that are available to learners. Given the relevance of functional literacy in the context of the socio-political changes, the availability of applicable materials could act as a strong motivation for learners and consequently lead to increased participation in both online and onsite literacy classes. However, the application of this would require a change in the learning and teaching approaches (Tanaka et al., 2016).

Additionally, the findings of this research show that the socio-political changes have caused difficulty to monitor the mother tongue literacy programme and have also led to an expansion of the scope of the mother tongue literacy programme. Not only has the ongoing socio-political changes contributed to the destruction of schools and other environments that hosted literacy classes, but it has also made travelling in the area quite unsafe and expensive. With the difficulty of movement, it is also hard to supervise the literacy programme. It is arduous to evaluate how many literacy teachers still effectively teach and how many have fled because of the socio-political changes. Several learners have also stayed away from the literacy classes, fearing for their safety. The situation of the socio-political changes is putting pressure on literacy learners of the mother tongue literacy programme through different physical and psychological needs that have been created. The increase in migration due to the socio-political changes has made learners of the Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen, and Weh language communities to be aware that they no longer live in a homogenous context. They are conscious that they live in a sociopolitical and multilingual context and they have different expectations associated with the realities of these contexts. The implication is that learners would need to make conscious adjustments as they continue to face the

challenges of the socio-political changes. One such adjustment is the intentional exploration of the digital learning option which helps to reduce to a greater extent the physical gathering in literacy classes.

Due to the socio-political changes, the increased rate of migration has caused learners to interact with speakers from other language communities. One implication will be that learners of the mother tongue literacy programme will need to make an effort to go beyond just learning the mother tongue but to learn other languages so that they can continue to communicate with others from different language areas. So far, the mother tongue literacy programme has focused on teaching reading and writing skills in the mother tongue. With increased migration and the need for digital literacy, literacy learners would need to consider literacy lessons in English so that they can better manipulate the digital learning environment and benefit from the available learning opportunities. Like literacy learners and literacy teachers, it is also harder for literacy programme facilitators to access the existing literacy classes. With the difficulty to monitor existing literacy classes in the communities, some stakeholders have tried to arrange alternative literacy efforts for language speakers who have migrated to other areas. As the socio-political changes persist, various stakeholders have started their own literacy classes in urban areas, and have invited others to join them to expand on the urban literacy efforts. For example, the Mankon, Babanki, and Weh Communities have launched urban literacy and holiday literacy efforts which provide another opportunity to learners who had migrated to other areas. Continuing to expand on the mother tongue literacy programme amidst socio-political changes may thus encourage learners who have been displaced to other areas to continue to benefit from the provisions of the mother tongue literacy programme. Such expansion provides hope to the literacy programme providers and to the

learners and teachers who have been displaced by the socio-political changes. For those in the community, household literacy and safe learning spaces will contribute to curbing the challenge of movement in the community.

Considering the expansion of the scope of the mother tongue literacy programme, a majority of the communities involved in this research have continued to organise the reading and writing of their languages on various social media platforms like WhatsApp, YouTube and zoom.

Communities like Mankon and Babanki have organised digital learning platforms which have helped to meet the increasing demand for mother-tongue literacy by community members located in different parts of the world. Lessons are designed and shared on their WhatsApp fora and different participants study the lessons and interact on the platform and the teacher and other knowledgeable people give input and feedback to facilitate the learning process. Interactions happen through voice messages and texts and all participants are able to follow.

Different apps have been developed to help speakers of a particular mother tongue to continue to learn their language despite the challenges of the socio-political environment. Although the use of digital platforms for literacy came with the challenge for learners and teachers of the mother tongue literacy programme to improve their skills in using information and communication technologies (Shopova, 2014), many teachers and learners are learning to take the challenge in order to remain relevant. Some of the learners and teachers are discovering how to better use their mobile phones to improve their literacy skills inspite of internet challenges. The expansion of digital literacy efforts has been a major highlight during this research. All four communities involved in this research have learned how to produce talking books that are distributed on various social media platforms.

The expansion of digital literacy efforts in the mother tongue literacy programme can bring about a number of advantages. First, the changing goals of the mother tongue literacy programme due to the modifications in the curriculum will benefit from the shift from solely onsite literacy classes to a blend of both online and onsite literacy classes. Furthermore, the rapid invasion of technology will require adjustments in the mother tongue literacy programmes to accommodate the current realities. Learners, literacy teachers, and literacy programme facilitators will need to make adjustments to use online learning and teaching opportunities. Thus, integrating and expanding the use of technology in the mother tongue literacy programme is inevitable. Second, the expansion of digital literacy opportunities will fit the humanistic constructivist approach used in this research. As the speakers of Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen, and Weh languages seek to maintain the vitality of their language, it will be beneficial to draw from the interactions in online and onsite learning environments. The use of mobile phones, computers, and other digital tools will be quite instrumental in expanding the interactions and opportunities of the mother tongue literacy programme. Third, the expansion of digital learning opportunities will facilitate communication and monitoring of the mother tongue literacy programme. The growth of technology and the internet has broken down the communication barrier that existed in onsite learning environments, especially in the context of the socio-political changes. Online learning platforms will facilitate the sharing of texts, audio, and videos that will contribute to improving the speaking and listening abilities of learners and will facilitate the monitoring of the progress of the mother tongue literacy programme.

However, the expansion of digital learning opportunities will require that the programme providers design creative instructions on how to navigate the digital learning environments. This

will also require adequate training of the literacy teachers on how to use digital learning environments to motivate learners who can easily be distracted by enticing adverts on the internet. Training on the production of talking books and other literacy apps that can be used in digital learning spaces will contribute to better outcomes in the mother tongue literacy programme.

Although learners cannot exert political pressure to stop the socio-political changes, they can continue to work hard to change their investment in digital literacy tools which are indispensable in the context of the socio-political changes. Such an investment will contribute to increasing enrollment in online and onsite classes and will achieve a certain parity for learners with various forms of disability, and improve learning outcomes at all levels of the mother tongue literacy programme. In the next section, I will present recommendations for applying the findings of this research.

5.2 Recommendations for Application

The effects of socio-political crises and wars on learners have been admitted (Graham, Minhas, & Paxton, 2016; Weisiger, 2016). These crises could produce positive or negative emotions which have different dimensions of effects on the learners (Dewaele & Al-Saraj, 2015). In today's world of increasing socio-political changes and wars, there is a need for greater collaboration of stakeholders in order for language learning opportunities to achieve better outcomes. The quest for a better understanding of the impact of socio-political changes on the outcomes of a mother tongue literacy programme operating in the Northwest region of Cameroon has helped to throw more light on possible areas where literacy programme providers may need to focus their efforts in order for the mother tongue literacy provisions to continue to be relevant in the context of the socio-political changes. My desire is that the findings of this research will help

the organisers of the mother-tongue literacy programme to redefine the goals and expected learning outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme in order to accommodate current realities. Such adjustments could help to achieve better outcomes from the literacy provision. In chapter 4, I presented possible modifications that needed to be made in the mother tongue literacy programme in order to accommodate current results and achieve better outcomes. One such modification is that, though the socio-political changes have brought about changes in the mother tongue literacy programme, it has provided a platform for a prudent spread of digital learning opportunities. In section 5.1 above, I have presented some advantages of expanding on digital learning opportunities. Regarding the disruption of the daily lives of learners and teachers which in most cases has resulted in unplanned movements and hardship, it is hard to continue to congregate in all the onsite literacy classes. The prudent spread of digital learning opportunities will therefore be a major milestone in the mother tongue literacy programme as it operates in the socio-political context. However, even with the advancement of digital tools and technologies which continue to influence language use, literacy, and the performance of learners in a variety of ways (Baron, 2015; Keeley & Little, 2017; Kern, 2015; Mohammadyari & Singh, 2015; Van Deursen & Van Dijk, 2014), the empirical evidence provided by the findings of this research showed that literacy teachers such as LT 9 (Section 4.2.3.1.1) were not adequately equipped with all the technological abilities required to confidently embark on digital literacy. Their attempts accompanied by uncertainties shaped their desire for more technical help from experts in the digital literacy domain. The low digital literacy levels of several learners operating in the socio-political context have prevented them from benefiting from the various opportunities that are presented through digital learning platforms. With this in mind, it will be essential for the literacy programme organisers to

make efforts to deal with some of the limitations of digital literacy efforts, and eventually include mitigation strategies through the development of relevant materials and training that enable various stakeholders to come up to speed. This demands that the literacy programme providers become more technology conscious and take the responsibility to build the capacity of learners, teachers, and literacy programme facilitators to allow them to participate in digital literacy opportunities. The building of capacity will also include giving orientation to teachers and literacy programme facilitators to experiment with online teaching with learners who migrated because of the socio-political changes and others who migrated for other reasons to different parts of the world. This application will lead to an increase in the participation of various stakeholders across the world and an eventual expansion of the scope of the mother tongue literacy programme.

I also presented that with the impact of the socio-political changes, there is a need for organisers of the mother tongue literacy programme to expand on urban literacy efforts. Expanding on urban literacy will require the various stakeholders of the mother tongue literacy programme to identify the towns where there are large settlements of members of a specific language community and take intentional steps towards starting literacy classes in those areas. To implement this, the organisers of the mother tongue literacy programme will be required to identify the needs in terms of material development and teacher training so that when the programme expands to many urban areas it will achieve the desired outcomes. The organisers will therefore have to conduct a needs assessment (Payne, Hodges, & Hernandez, 2017) by interviewing the stakeholders (community leaders, literacy teachers, and literacy programme facilitators) and will use their comments to inform the expansion strategy and the content of the literacy provisions. Programme organisers could also be involved in various digital platforms of the different communities to enable them to

better understand some of the challenges faced by the internally displaced people from the different communities.

In view of my argument concerning the expansion of urban literacy efforts, some experienced literacy teachers will be allowed to start literacy classes in the urban area. As they teach in literacy classes, they will intentionally start identifying and mentoring potential literacy teachers who would have had the opportunity to observe, ponder, discuss, receive guidance, and eventually be trained by the experienced literacy teachers. This approach toward urban literacy will be a way for communities to learn and share best practices through inter-community collaboration which enables literacy teachers and literacy programme facilitators to network with their peers from the neighbouring language communities and to share ideas about successes and challenges. These teachers and literacy programme facilitators might also be able to identify issues that need to be improved or consolidated in the mother tongue literacy programme.

In chapter 4, I also presented that with the impact of the socio-political changes, there is a need for the organisers of the mother tongue literacy programme to step-up mobilisation amongst stakeholders. Mobilisation will be a key step towards expanding the mother tongue literacy programme albeit socio-political changes. An increase in mobilisation will allow more people to understand and be involved in the mother tongue literacy programme and will enable opinion givers to take the lead to organise and initiate actions for the launching of the mother tongue literacy programme in different parts of the world where mother tongue speakers have been identified. With mobilisation, other stakeholders will support the program financially, morally, or in other creative ways that can cause the mother tongue literacy programme to achieve better outcomes. Before the socio-political changes, the mother tongue literacy programme had been

more donor driven with minimal ownership by speakers of these languages. Stepping up mobilisation will therefore enable community leaders to take more ownership of the mother tongue literacy programme by encouraging the participation of more learners, literacy teachers, and literacy programme facilitators. Mobilisation will help to identify different resource-people who can contribute their expertise to identify and address different needs of the beneficiaries of the mother tongue literacy programme.

All the communities involved in this research have organisations that enable them to collectively think and act upon development initiatives. The community organisations are set up such that there are branches located in different quarters or neighbourhoods. The community organisations also federate in other towns and countries to carry out activities such as language development, community development, and fundraising to support what is going on back in the community. If the mobilisation targets community organisations, various branches might eventually be involved in planning, sponsoring, and evaluating mother tongue literacy activities. Stepping up mobilisation will help the community organisations to eventually provide the infrastructure that can host mother-tongue literacy classes. The mobilisation efforts can also help these community organisations to seek partnerships with local government institutions and other agencies like councils to continue to expand the mother tongue literacy programme. With community organisations represented in different countries, stakeholders can build networks with external organisations such as civil society organisations to achieve the goals of the mother tongue literacy programme. Practically, a step-up in mobilisation will enable stakeholders and community organisations to plan, supervise and sponsor reading and writing workshops, literacy book

development workshops, teacher training events, and various literacy campaigns during specific times in given locations.

In chapter 4, I also showed that there is a need for organisers of the mother tongue literacy programme to increase safe learning spaces. In the context of this research, safe learning spaces are learning spaces with minimised risks that do not provoke anxiety in learners and literacy teachers who should be focusing their attention on teaching or learning to read, write and practically apply the use of their language without any fear of a catastrophe associated to the learning environment of the mother tongue literacy programme.

Although there is empirical evidence that the notion of a safe space to promote student engagement and enhance academic outcomes is pervasive (Barrett, 2010), it can be argued that the safety and well-being of learners are important aspects to consider in the socio-political environment because it determines the attainment of the goals of the mother tongue literacy programme. People have different experiences depending on their specific learning environment and their subjective perceptions of the learning environment and their personal characteristics can influence their behavior and individual learning outcomes (Kutsyuruba, Klinger, & Hussain, 2015). Therefore, a closer look at the relationship between the safety of the learners and teachers in the socio-political environment and the attainment of learning outcomes will be quite instrumental for the future of the mother tongue literacy programme. In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, besides physiological needs, the most basic need of human beings is the need for physical survival or safety need. It is therefore needless to try to achieve esteem needs (the feeling of being literate in one's language) when the basic need of survival and physical safety has not been met (Bozyiğit, 2021).

With the traumatic experiences brought about by the socio-political changes, learners and teachers need places where they can learn with serenity and also get healing from different forms of trauma. When learners and teachers don't feel safe, they will stay away from literacy classes. No one can know the safe areas of the community more than the community leaders. As discussed above, community leaders and community organisations could work in synergy to provide the infrastructure that allows the learners and the teachers to feel secure as they learn the mother tongue in the socio-political context. Regarding the safe learning spaces being used as trauma healing centres for both learners and teachers of the mother tongue literacy programme, these will help learners and teachers who come to the learning environment with feelings of distress, fright, or frenzy because of traumatic experiences to interact with others so that they can relax and learn to survive in the socio-political context. Safe learning spaces could be in palaces, churches, or other places determined by the community.

I also showed that there is a need for organizers of the mother tongue literacy programme to modify the curriculum of the mother tongue literacy programme to reflect current needs. A modified curriculum will help the organisers of the mother tongue literacy programme to make adjustments to what the learners are expected to learn during each session in the literacy class (Coady, Harper, & De Jong, 2016). For example, before the socio-political changes, a typical literacy class will last for an average of one hour and learners could spend one-hour learning about two unfamiliar vowels. Depending on the situation, learners could be expected to learn just one unfamiliar vowel for a maximum of 30 minutes in the literacy class, and the rest are done as assignments at home. As discussed earlier, a modification to the curriculum could require the inclusion of practical lessons that will meet the needs of the learners (Foreman & Arthur-Kelly,

2017; Corcoran, Cheung, Kim, & Xie, 2018). These practical lessons should be according to the needs of learners in a specific context. This will require a lot of creativity from the teachers who will need to adapt to each context according to the needs of the learners. The modified curriculum will not need a change in teaching methods. Nevertheless, the organisers of the mother tongue literacy programme will need to identify the literacy levels of the learners so that the modifications can enable the learners to continue to achieve better outcomes.

5.3 Recommendations for Future Research

This research utilised a qualitative approach to examine the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of a mother tongue literacy programme operating in the Northwest Region of Cameroon. I hope that what was learned through this research will serve as a springboard for future investigations concerning literacy in the context of socio-political changes. The findings presented here will help the providers of the mother tongue literacy programme to deepen their understanding of the socio-political context so that they can make necessary adjustments to implement literacy programmes that take into consideration the cognitive and emotional needs of those who are directly concerned (Eysenck & Keane, 2015). However, since Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen, and Weh represent just a segment of the languages of the Northwest and Southwest Regions of Cameroon involved in the mother tongue literacy programme, further research into the impact of socio-political changes on all the other languages involved in the mother tongue literacy programme, would allow a possible generalisation of the research findings. With this possibility, a redesign of the theoretical and methodological framework for the research would be required. Another area for further research would be the application of the suggestions that I made in the

previous section by using action research methodology, where there is a cycle of application and review so that the efficacy or otherwise of these suggestions can be evaluated and they can be amended as and where necessary. I have presented in the preceding section that there is a need for organisers of the mother tongue literacy programme to expand on urban literacy efforts. This expansion will require the collaboration of civil society organisations and community organisations in the implementation of the mother tongue literacy programme. Another option for further research, therefore, could be an exploration of the leadership role of civil society organisations like CABTAL and other community organisations in the implementation of literacy programmes, and how their collaboration might support better outcomes, especially in the context of the socio-political changes.

One limitation of this research is the uncertainty of the research environment which influenced the data collection process. This was not very encouraging for the research. Many of the participants of this research commented on the volatile nature of the socio-political environment. As a researcher, I became distressed and overwhelmed as I listened to the traumatic experiences of the participants as they navigate the environment of the mother tongue literacy programme. Dealing with unpredictable happenings and helping participants to remain focused in providing answers to the different research questions was a stressful process for the researcher and for the participants as well. Furthermore, exposure to the thought of being abducted or being caught up in an unprecedented gun battle between the military and the separatist fighters caused a lot of emotional stress. Such a stressful feeling had a significant effect on the data collection process. Data was therefore collected in a rush to ensure the safety of the participants and the safety of the researcher. As I presented in Chapter 4, during one of the interviews, an unidentified person was

passing by and the participant demonstrated a lot of body language to indicate that we needed to stop talking. This portrayed the volatile and uncertain nature of the socio-political environment.

It would therefore be helpful to capture the experiences and perspectives of researchers who have had the opportunity of living the realities of the socio-political context. So further research might explore the experiences of researchers who conduct research in the context of socio-political changes.

The main issues surrounding the socio-political changes are related to language and culture which stem from a colonial background. Nevertheless, there has been considerable effort to document and make available resources in the different local languages of Cameroon. In reviewing the literature of this research, I have highlighted some challenges of implementing mother tongue literacy programmes in the context of Cameroon due to colonial legacies. The realities highlighted underscore some of the causes of negative language attitudes towards the use of different Cameroonian mother tongues. Consequently, considering the multilingual and socio-political nature of the context of the mother tongue literacy programme, an area for further research could be the role of mother tongue literacy in providing educational opportunities amidst socio-political changes.

Considering that there is more to literacy and literacy programmes than just acquiring the skills of reading and writing as a major outcome, literacy and literacy programmes can be perceived in terms of what people do with literacy through social interaction in a situated social context. In that light, an important question that could be a platform for further research will be to identify some emerging literacy practices (Hawken, Johnston, & McDonnell, 2005; Reder, 2015) because of the impact of the socio-political changes on the mother tongue literacy programme.

5.4 Conclusions

The research presented in this dissertation drew on the theoretical contributions from the humanistic and constructivist perspectives of learning, to establish a research methodology that would investigate the impact of socio-political changes on the outcomes of a mother tongue literacy programme operating in the Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen and Weh communities of the North West Region of Cameroon. This research concentrated on how the socio-political changes have impacted the mother tongue literacy programme operating in these four communities.

This research aimed to help literacy programme organisers to maximise the effectiveness of literacy programmes amid diverse challenges. For the Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy (CABTAL) in particular, this research sought to provide evidence that could help the administration to modify the objectives, teaching methods and desired outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme.

This research also aimed at uncovering potential areas of modification of the literacy curriculum that could enable learners, literacy teachers and literacy programme facilitators to achieve key learning and teaching objectives. This was a major source of motivation for the research and the hope is that the insights drawn from the findings would be applied when designing literacy programmes for communities that face similar realities in the socio-political context.

Finally, this research was to help improve my understanding and to make suggestions regarding the impact of socio-political changes on a literacy programme in a specific social context. This focus enabled me to expand upon the understanding of the impact of the socio-political changes on the learners, literacy teachers and literacy programme facilitators.

Looking at literacy from a humanistic and constructivist perspective and employing a case study with elements of an ongoing action research methodology, this research sought to deal with the following three questions which I set out in Chapter 1 (See page 7). Firstly, I aimed to establish the results that have come about in the mother tongue literacy programme because of the socio-political changes. Secondly, I wanted to find out what modifications needed to be made in the mother tongue literacy programme to accommodate current results. Finally, I was interested in exploring the implications of these modifications on the future of the mother tongue literacy programme.

I will now sum up my answers to these questions as formed by the findings of my research. These responses need to be understood in connection with the context of the mother tongue literacy programme which I presented in chapter 2 (See section 2.3 & section 2.4).

What Are Some Results that Have Come About in the Mother Tongue Literacy Programme Because of the Socio-Political Changes?

The questions posed during the focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews allowed the emergence of major themes and several sub-themes regarding the results that have come about in the mother tongue literacy programme because of the socio-political changes. Although it is possible to suggest some cautious generalisation about the views of the participants regarding the results that have come about in the mother tongue literacy programme because of the socio-political changes, at least as far as I was able to discern in my research, I found that there were also some variations of the results within the different communities. The findings from the data collected during this study show six dimensions of results that had come about in the mother tongue literacy programme because of the socio-political changes.

For the most part, my participants subscribed to the view that the socio-political changes had disrupted the daily life of stakeholders, limiting the opportunities for people who had the desire to learn how to read and write in onsite literacy classes. They presented their views about how the socio-political changes have affected them personally as learners, teachers and literacy programme facilitators and also how it has affected the community as well. Although they acknowledged the community dimension of this disruption, they were more concerned about the effects of this disruption on the lives of individuals.

A majority of my participants shared the view that the socio-political changes had caused a decline in onsite literacy class attendance. They believed that the socio-political changes served as a major catalyst for psychological trauma and unplanned movements of learners and literacy teachers who were already committed to the literacy programme before the socio-political changes. In this sense, the socio-political changes served as a constraint to the mother tongue literacy programme but at another level, they served as an enabler by causing an expansion of the scope of the mother tongue literacy programme through online literacy classes.

My participants also expressed the view that the socio-political changes had stimulated a drop in the distribution and use of printed literacy material. They focused on the shift in priorities that had happened because of the emergence of unprecedented hardship and some pressing needs in the lives of learners, literacy teachers and literacy programme facilitators due to the socio-political changes. They however did not identify whether this drop in distribution was also caused by some of the individual factors that influence learning outcomes within a specific learning environment (Wulf & Lewthwaite, 2016).

My participants also identified that the socio-political changes had induced a drop in the motivation of literacy teachers and literacy learners. They expressed a feeling of discouragement and non-achievement because of the aggravating effects of the socio-political changes on the mother tongue literacy programme. This was most disturbing for some participants who viewed themselves as non-literate and who had developed great aspirations of using the mother tongue literacy programme as their opportunity to acquire the skills of reading and writing in their mother tongue.

For the participants in my research, the socio-political changes were directly connected to the difficulty to monitor the progress of the literacy programme. They judged that travelling difficulties in the socio-political environment have led to the difficulty to monitor the mother tongue literacy programme. Not being able to travel freely as before or the exorbitant travelling costs have made supervision, monitoring and evaluation of the mother tongue literacy programme quite cumbersome.

My participants also held the view that the socio-political changes have led to an expansion of the scope of the mother tongue literacy programme. They believed that the expansion of digital literacy efforts and urban literacy initiatives have come about because of the socio-political changes. It is worth noting that albeit the constraining effects of the socio-political changes, it has also served as an enabler.

It is therefore valid to conclude that the sociopolitical changes have impacted the mother tongue literacy programme in two dimensions. The changes have constrained or enabled the mother tongue literacy programme. These findings seem to ascertain the need for providers of learning programmes to seek to understand the pertinent social and pedagogic factors that

influence learning outcomes (Kauffman, 2015). These positive and negative influences of the socio-political environment have varying degrees of impact on the learning outcomes depending on the particular learning environment (Khalil & Ebner, 2015; Thomas et al, 2019; Young, 2011).

Regarding the negative impact of socio-political changes or conflicts on learning, the results of this research align with the findings of Cummings, Merrilees, Schermerhorn, Goeke-Morey, & Cairns (2011), Bertoni, Di Maio, Molini, & Nistico (2019) who depicted that conflicts negatively affected the quality of the learning environment. Conflicts generate physical, psychological, and emotional needs in the lives of both learners and teachers. However, one area that their findings do not capture which has been highlighted by my research is the positive impact of conflicts on learning programmes. This research has brought out the aspect of a widened scope of the mother tongue literacy programme as a positive result that has come about in the mother tongue literacy programme because of the socio-political changes. This is a key contribution to the ongoing discussions on the impact of war or socio-political conflicts on learning and learning environments.

What Modifications Should Be Made in the Mother Tongue Literacy Programme to Accommodate the Current Results?

My interactions with participants in the Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen and Weh communities led me to conclude about the views of the literacy learners, literacy teachers and literacy programme facilitators about possible modifications to be made to the mother tongue literacy programme to accommodate current realities. Through my interviews, several participants recommended a prudent spread of digital learning opportunities. For most of the participants, their main suggestion was the provision of digital learning facilities and the production of more

audiovisual material. Since the means at the disposal of the different stakeholders had become limited, their interrupted farming activities and other means of livelihood could not be sufficient to afford basic daily needs and also purchase digital learning tools and other accessories as needed. Meeting their basic needs was more pressing than paying for transport to literacy classes and buying printed literacy materials. In an age of technology where digital devices and software are used to promote language development, such an awesome recommendation will be quite complementary to the role of the local populations who seek to maintain the originality of their language (Collins & Halverson, 2018; Gelb & Krishnan, 2018). Being able to learn how to read and write through onsite literacy classes was no longer likely for many of my informants because of the unpredictability of the socio-political environment and also because attending literacy classes did not meet the most urgent demands of their lives. Considering the concept of a hierarchy of basic needs proposed by Maslow (1987), my informants would likely identify attending onsite literacy classes as a substantially lower priority than the more pressing need for security, food and shelter.

Attending onsite literacy classes may enable people to achieve the goals of the mother tongue literacy programme, but at this point, it does not necessarily help with basic survival. A majority of the views of informants, especially the literacy learners, was that onsite literacy classes were risky for them and besides they did not meet their immediate needs.

My participants also held that one modification to be made will be the expansion of urban literacy strategies. The high level of migration because of the socio-political changes has increased the ethnolinguistic fractionalisation, which is the likelihood that two individuals randomly selected from the population of the urban area belong to different ethnic groups (Steele & Abdelaaty, 2019;

Robinson, 2020). With an increase in the unplanned movements of people who are internally displaced by the socio-political changes, the expansion of the urban literacy initiatives is aimed at reaching out to mother-tongue speakers with the focus of maintaining a cultural heritage which connects them to the area of their origin. Community organisations play a significant role in the expansion of urban literacy initiatives. How people viewed urban literacy efforts was to a certain extent affected by their desire to continue to maintain their cultural identity despite their relocation to other towns in Cameroon and beyond. The community organisations (cultural and development organisations and inter-church committees) were very influential with speakers of their language, and the different branch leaders mobilise for the literacy activities in their area.

Several of my participants also held that one modification to be made will be to step-up mobilization amongst stakeholders. With increasing movements because of the socio-political changes, there is consequently an increasing need to mobilise and equip key actors to provide more flexible learning opportunities to mother tongue speakers in various locations. The increased mobilization will also facilitate the interaction with particular sponsors and resource persons of the mother tongue literacy programme. Different structures would be used for mobilisation. In some contexts, the churches would be very influential in relation to bible literacy. In other contexts, schools and development associations would be appropriate structures to use for mobilization. Otherwise, various digital platforms like WhatsApp, zoom and Facebook would be more influential, especially concerning the expansion of digital literacy initiatives. In any case, there is every possibility to engage stakeholders through these different mobilization efforts to subscribe many potential learners to the mother tongue literacy programme.

My participants also held the view that for the mother tongue literacy programme to accommodate current results, there is a need to modify the curriculum to reflect current needs. A modification of the curriculum will satisfy the esteem needs of learners (dignity, achievement, mastery, independence) so that they can be considered by others as literate in the mother tongue (Maslow, 1987; McLeod, 2007). In general, the mother tongue literacy programme appeared to be operating in an environment that has ensued a number of modifications which will enable the stakeholders of the mother tongue literacy programme to continue to engage with it amidst the socio-political changes.

What are the Implications of these Modifications on the Future of the Mother Tongue Literacy Programme?

As I have suggested in section 4.2.5, modifications may necessitate the stakeholders of the literacy programme to consider aspects that they may not have been conversant with before the socio-political changes. In that regard, the mother tongue literacy programme could make use of humanistic and constructivist perspectives to incorporate these modifications into the curriculum. This could ensure the increased relevancy of the programme in the context of socio-political changes. The mother tongue literacy programme which operated in Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen and Weh appeared to not be responding to the real needs of their learners in the context of the socio-political changes, although, as with other programmes, there might be ways in which the efficacy of the programme can be improved. Although my research suggests that modifications to the mother tongue literacy programme could be required to produce better outcomes in the context of the socio-political changes, it would not be true to expect that these modifications will bring a revolution in the learning opportunities provided by the mother tongue literacy programme. As I

showed in chapter 4, many people in my research had firm views about the impact of the socio-political changes on the mother tongue literacy programme. However, considering the history of mother tongue literacy in Cameroon that I presented in chapter 2 (See section 2.5.2), the development and promotion of Cameroonian languages in informal learning and non-formal literacy programmes have been mostly conducted in unofficial circumstances and this accounts for why it took more than four decades of efforts by researchers to make the various Cameroonian languages as tools for social mobility. With this long history, it would be unwise for the providers of the mother tongue literacy programme to have extravagant expectations about the impact of modifications on the mother tongue literacy programme. In the same way, the socio-political changes influenced the mother tongue literacy programme beyond the control of the programme providers, there are other possible factors beyond their control which will influence people's participation in the mother tongue literacy programme using the different opportunities suggested by the modifications.

Even with the modifications suggested in this research, it remains true that the social context is not static and so it is not likely that the modifications will bring about a revolutionary change to the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme. For example, the modifications cannot improve the quality of the internet, or radically change people's attitudes towards acquiring and using android devices.

Many of my participants considered the socio-political changes as a valuable tool for the development of critical awareness for the provider of the mother tongue literacy programme operating in the context of the socio-political changes. Nevertheless, the literacy programme providers will also need to engage specialists who can handle the learning needs and the

psychosocial needs of the learners who have been traumatized by the socio-political environment. Along with others who view literacy from a constructivist or a humanistic perspective, I consider that literacy programmes which equip people to accomplish literacy tasks, without neglecting the humanization of the learners would produce human beings who are not stereotypical but who have developed a personality to promote noble values (Firdaus & Mariyat, 2017; Freire, 2015). Besides the literacy provisions, literacy programme providers should also consider adopting strategies that could help address the real needs of the learners and the community as a whole. For instance, literacy learners can also work in the framework of functional literacy to identify either health, psychosocial or financial needs and include aspects of income-generating activities, lessons on health and hygiene, human rights and agriculture in the curriculum of the programme. Such programmes would require the input and expertise of various resource persons from the local area.

For the particular programme in the socio-political context, I consider that the most easily implemented strategy would be to consider some of the basic needs that have been identified so that this could inform the design and implementation of a literacy programme in the future. Such a programme will greatly depend on the collaboration among various organisations and stakeholders who are conversant with the realities of the socio-political context.

Closing comments

Lastly, I would like to note that it has been a significant privilege for me to have the opportunity to carry on this research. I am very grateful to the many people in Cameroon, CABTAL, and particularly in the Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen, and Weh communities who made it possible for me to conduct this research.

I have learned a lot about the general context of literacy, about implementing a literacy programme in a particular socio-political context of the Northwest region of Cameroon and about how the socio-political changes have impacted the mother tongue literacy programme. My research unravelled more than I expected, especially how the socio-political changes have had a positive influence on the mother tongue literacy programme. I believe that this degree of deep description justified my research approach. Above all, I now feel that I understand the relevance of using a constructivist and humanistic view in implementing literacy programmes in a socio-political context.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Data Collection tool

Section 1: Interviewees

Depending on the nature of the socio-political atmosphere and the availability of interviewees, the researcher will interview different individuals separately, or identify a cross-sectional focus group to answer the interview questions together.

For each interview question, the researcher will take notes or record the answers which will later be interpreted and classified under different themes.

In addition to a considerable amount of informal contact with many people from the four (4) language communities, the researcher will conduct semi-structured interviews with the following people during field research.

A. Literacy Learners from the different language communities

The people in this group will be those attending literacy classes in the area of study. I will indicate the location of the class and the language in which literacy is being taught. These learners will be interviewed after prior arrangements with them and the literacy teachers. When interviewing individuals, they will be asked to give their ages but during focus groups, because of ethical reasons, the ages given will be approximate, being my estimations or those provided by the literacy teacher or my research assistant.

B. Literacy Teachers

I will also interview many Literacy teachers teaching in different language communities.

The people in this group will be those teaching literacy classes in the area of study. I will indicate the location of the class and the language in which literacy is being taught. These teachers will be interviewed after prior arrangements with them

through phone calls or the literacy programme facilitator. All of the teachers will be interviewed individually and when interviewing them, they will be asked to give their ages.

C. Literacy Programme Facilitators

In addition to literacy learners and teachers, I will also interview several CABTAL colleagues who are involved in the literacy programme operating in the Babanki, Nkwen, Manko and Weh Communities. I will send them an e-mail or call them to make arrangements for the interviews. These colleagues could either be interviewed through a face to face contact or through zoom.

Section 2 Introduction:

We are researching the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme operating in Babanki, Mankon, Nkwen and Weh Communities. Through this research we intend to examine and establish:

1) the impact of the Socio-political changes on literacy outcomes. 2) The impact of the Socio-political changes on the learners and teachers 3) The impact of the socio-political changes on literacy programme facilitators.

Thank you for giving us your consent through the Informed Consent form that you filled out.

We will not share your answers with other people without your permission.

Your participation

As you voluntarily participate in this research, you will be asked to do the following:

- *Answer different interview questions whenever you can during this research

- *Take part in a one-on-one interview with the researcher during this study

*Take part in a focus group discussion with the researcher and other participants during this study

What are some Potential risks and benefits as you participate in this study?

No risks are envisaged. By taking part in this study, you will play an important role in providing an in-depth understanding of how the socio-political changes have affected the mother tongue literacy programme and how the programme could be improved in the context of the socio-political changes.

Confidentiality

Any information obtained in connection with this study that may identify you will be kept strictly confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Participation and withdrawal

Section 3. Participants personal data

Please answer the following questions about yourself.

1. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female.
2. What is your mother tongue? _____
3. How long have you been involved in the mother tongue literacy programme? 1 to 2 years ☐ 3 to 5 years ☐ 6 to 8 years ☐ ☐ More than 8 years
4. Have you lived in the North West Region for more than 1 year?
☐ ☐ Yes ☐ No

Section 4. Students' focus group discussion questions

1. What comes to your mind when you think about the 'Socio-political changes?

2. How much importance do you attach to learning the mother tongue?
3. What are the advantages or drawbacks of learning to read and write your language in the context of the socio-political changes?
4. How do you feel about discussing things relating to how the socio-political changes have affected your learning in this literacy programme?
5. How was the mother tongue literacy programme before the changes?
6. What aspects of the Mother tongue literacy programme have been affected by the socio-political changes?
7. Do you have any advice for literacy teachers and literacy programme facilitators regarding some changes to be made to the literacy programme in the context of the changes?
8. How do you think an understanding of the impact of the socio-political changes on the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme will help to improve the literacy programme?

Section 5. Students' interview questions

1. How do you view the Mother tongue literacy programme?
 - i. What is taught in the mother tongue literacy classes?
 - ii. Did you encounter any problems with the programme because of the Socio-political changes?
 - iii. Is the Mother-tongue literacy programme needed during the socio-political changes?
 - iv. How was the mother tongue literacy programme before the socio-political changes?

2. What is your opinion about the mother tongue literacy programme in the context of the socio-political changes?
 - i. Do you find it useful in the socio-political context?
 - ii. Is what is being taught different from what was taught in the mother-tongue literacy classes you had before the socio-political changes?
 - iii. What is new in the mother tongue literacy programme?
 - iv. Why do you consider it new?
 - v. What other changes would you suggest to enable the mother tongue literacy programme to operate in the context of the socio-political changes?
 - vi. Is there anything else that you would like to share about the mother tongue literacy programme and the socio-political changes?

Section 6. Literacy Teachers' interview questions

1. How has the mother tongue literacy programme changed?
 - i. What has changed in the curriculum because of the socio-political changes?
 - ii. What has changed in terms of teaching methods because of the socio-political changes?
 - iii. What challenges have you encountered as a mother tongue literacy teacher because of the socio-political changes?
 - iv. Is it worth it to continue to teach the mother tongue during the socio-political changes?
 - v. In what areas will you need help to teach better in the context of the socio-political changes?

2. What is your opinion about the survival of the mother tongue literacy programme in the context of the socio-political changes?
 - i. If you were asked to suggest changes to the current mother tongue literacy programme what will you suggest?
 - ii. What has been your worst experience as a literacy teacher because of the socio-political changes?
 - iii. What are some new insights that you have had as a mother tongue literacy teacher because of the socio-political changes?
 - iv. Which other ideas could help to improve the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme as it operates in the context of the socio-political changes?
 - v. Is there anything else that you would like to share about the mother tongue literacy programme and the socio-political changes?

Section 7. Literacy Programme Facilitators Interview Questions

1. What is your perspective of the Mother tongue literacy programme?
 - i. How have the socio-political changes affected the outcomes of the mother tongue literacy programme?
 - ii. What are the fluctuations in enrolment because of the socio-political changes?
 - iii. What challenges have you encountered as you facilitate the mother tongue literacy programme in the context of the socio-political changes?
 - iv. What changes should be made for the mother tongue literacy programme to continue to be relevant in the context of the socio-political changes?

- v. What lessons have you learnt about implementing literacy in the context of socio-political changes?
2. What is your opinion about the sustainability of the mother tongue literacy programme in the context of the socio-political changes?
- i. How can the mother tongue literacy programme be made more relevant in the socio-political context?
 - ii. What changes should be made in terms of strategies regarding the implementation of the mother tongue literacy programme in the context of the socio-political changes?
 - iii. In addition to the teaching, which other components will make the mother tongue literacy programme more attractive and relevant in the context of the socio-political changes?
 - iv. Why do you suggest these components?
 - v. What other changes would you suggest to enable the mother tongue literacy programme to be sustainable in the context of the socio-political changes?
 - vi. Is there anything else that you would like to share about your experience of facilitating the mother tongue literacy programme and in the context of the socio-political changes?

Appendix B: List of participants during data collection

No	Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Mother tongue	Role	Duration in the Project
01	LL1	Female	60 years	Babanki	Literacy Learner	8 Years+
02	LL2	Female	25 years	Babanki	Literacy Learner	7 Years+
03	LT23	Male	52 years	Babanki	Literacy Teacher	8 Years+
04	LL34	Male	55 years	Babanki	Literacy Learner	8 Years+
05	LL5	Female	38 years	Babanki	Literacy Learner	8 Years +
06	LL4	Male	30 years	Babanki	Literacy Learner	7 Years +
07	LL3	Female	18 Years	Babanki	Literacy Learner	8 years +
08	LT14	Male	27 Years	Babanki	Literacy Teacher	7 Years +
09	LL8	Female	18 years	Babanki	Literacy learner	3 Years +
10	LL7	Female	18 Years	Babanki	Literacy Learner	4 Years
11	LL6	Female	41 Years	Babanki	Literacy Learner	8 Years +
12	LL9	Male	31 Years	Babanki	Literacy Learner	4 Years+
13	LL10	Female	26 Years	Babanki	Literacy Learner	8 Years
14	LL11	Male	29 Years	Babanki	Literacy Learner	7 Years +
15	LT10	Male	33 Years	Babanki	Literacy Teacher	8 Years +
16	LT13	Male	47 Years	Babanki	Literacy Teacher	8 Years +
17	LT15	Female	65 Years	Babanki	Literacy Teacher	8 Years +
18	LL12	Female	27 Years	Babanki	Literacy Learner	7 Years
19	LT11	Male	61 Years	Babanki	Literacy Teacher	8 Years +
20	LT12	Female	43 Years	Babanki	Literacy Teacher	8 Years +
21	LL13	Male	35 Years	Babanki	Literacy Learner	6 Years
22	LL33	Female	32 Years	Babanki	Literacy Learner	7 Years +
23	LL35	Female	28 Years	Babanki	Literacy Learner	5 Years
24	LT24	Female	43 Years	Babanki	Literacy Teacher	8 Years +
25	LL36	Female	31 Years	Babanki	Literacy Learner	5 Years
26	LL37	Female	37 Years	Babanki	Literacy Learner	6 Years
27	LL38	Female	40 Years	Babanki	Literacy Learner	7 Years
28	LT16	Male	40 Years	Babanki	Literacy Teacher	8 Years +
29	LT1	Female	43 Years	Nkwen	Literacy Teacher	4 Years +
30	LT2	Male	50 Years	Nkwen	Literacy Teacher	4 Years +
31	LT3	Male	48 Years	Nkwen	Literacy Teacher	4 Years +
32	LT4	Male	44 Years	Nkwen	Literacy Teacher	4 Years
33	LT5	Female	43 Years	Nkwen	Literacy Teacher	4 Years
34	LT6	Female	46 Years	Nkwen	Literacy Teacher	4 Years
35	LT7	Male	42 Years	Nkwen	Literacy Teacher	4 Years
36	LT8	Male	52 Years	Nkwen	Literacy Teacher	4 Years
37	LT18	Female	45 Years	Nkwen	Literacy Teacher	3 Years
38	LL17	Female	38 Years	Nkwen	Literacy Learner	2 Years

39	LL30	Male	44 Years	Nkwen	Literacy Learner	3 Years
40	LL18	Male	45 Years	Nkwen	Literacy Learner	2 Years
41	LL19	Female	36 Years	Nkwen	Literacy Learner	3 Years
42	LL20	Female	56 Years	Nkwen	Literacy Learner	2 Years
43	LL21	Male	45 Years	Nkwen	Literacy Learner	3 Years
44	LL22	Female	46 Years	Nkwen	Literacy Learner	3 Years
45	LL23	Female	41 Years	Nkwen	Literacy Learner	3 Years
46	LL24	Male	34 Years	Nkwen	Literacy Learner	2 Years
47	LL25	Female	43 Years	Nkwen	Literacy Learner	3 Years
48	LL26	Female	32 Years	Nkwen	Literacy Learner	3 Years
49	LL27	Male	35 Years	Nkwen	Literacy Learner	2 Years
50	LL28	Female	30 Years	Nkwen	Literacy Learner	3 Years
51	LL29	Female	29 Years	Nkwen	Literacy Learner	2 Years
52	LL31	Male	34 Years	Nkwen	Literacy Learner	3 Years
53	LL32	Male	26 Years	Nkwen	Literacy Learner	2 Years
54	LT9	Male	53 Years	Mankon	Literacy Teacher	7 Years
55	LT19	Male	48 Years	Mankon	Literacy Teacher	6 Years
56	LT20	Female	49 Years	Mankon	Literacy Teacher	7 Years
57	LT21	Male	48 Years	Mankon	Literacy Teacher	8 Years
58	LT22	Male	67 Years	Mankon	Literacy Teacher	8 Years +
59	LL50	Female	24 Years	Mankon	Literacy Learner	4 Years
60	LL51	Male	36 Years	Mankon	Literacy Learner	5 Years
61	LL52	Female	33 Years	Mankon	Literacy Learner	4 Years
62	LL53	Male	28 Years	Mankon	Literacy Learner	3 Years
63	LL54	Female	40 Years	Mankon	Literacy Learner	4 Years
64	LL55	Female	42 Years	Mankon	Literacy Learner	4 Years
65	LL56	Female	29 Years	Mankon	Literacy Learner	4 Years
66	LL57	Male	23 Years	Mankon	Literacy Learner	4 Years
67	LL58	Female	45 Years	Mankon	Literacy Learner	3 Years
68	LL59	Female	30 Years	Mankon	Literacy Learner	3 Years
69	LL60	Male	38 Years	Mankon	Literacy Learner	4 Years
70	LL61	Female	50 Years	Mankon	Literacy Learner	4 Years
71	LL62	Female	47 Years	Mankon	Literacy Learner	4 Years
72	LL63	Female	26 Years	Mankon	Literacy Learner	4 Years
73	LL45	Male	30 Years	Weh	Literacy Learner	3 Years
74	LL44	Female	24 Years	Weh	Literacy Learner	3 Years
75	LL43	Female	27 Years	Weh	Literacy Learner	3 Years
76	LL42	Female	40 Years	Weh	Literacy Learner	4 Years
77	LL41	Female	31 Years	Weh	Literacy Learner	3 Years
78	LL40	Male	50 Years	Weh	Literacy Learner	3 Years
79	LL39	Male	35 Years	Weh	Literacy Learner	3 Years
80	LL14	Male	45 Years	Weh	Literacy Learner	3 Years
81	LL15	Female	39 Years	Weh	Literacy Learner	4 Years

82	LL16	Female	41 Years	Weh	Literacy Learner	4 Years
83	LL46	Male	43 Years	Weh	Literacy Learner	3 Years
84	LL47	Female	36 Years	Weh	Literacy Learner	3 Years
85	LL48	Female	28 Years	Weh	Literacy Learner	3 Years
86	LL49	Female	29 Years	Weh	Literacy Learner	3 Years
87	LT25	Female	34 Years	Weh	Literacy Teacher	8 Years
88	LT26	Female	31 Years	Weh	Literacy Teacher	8 Years
89	LT27	Female	32 Years	Weh	Literacy Teacher	8 Years +
90	LT17	Male	40 Years	Weh	Literacy Teacher	8 Years +
91	LPF4	Male	41 Years	Limbum	Literacy. Prog. F.	8 Years +
92	LPF3	Male	46 Years	Moghamo	Literacy. Prog. F.	8 Years +
93	LPF6	Female	32 Years	Mungarka	Literacy. Prog. F.	3 Years
94	LPF7	Male	44 Years	Shupamen	Literacy. Prog. F.	3 Years
95	LPF1	Male	40 Years	Mbembe	Literacy. Prog. F.	8 Years +
96	LPF2	Male	52 Years	Babanki	Literacy. Prog. F.	8 Years+
97	LPF10	Male	40 Years	Awing	Literacy. Prog. F.	3 Years
98	LPF9	Male	35 Years	Oku	Literacy. Prog. F.	3 Years
99	LPF5	Male	46 Years	Oku	Literacy. Prog. F.	3 Years
100	LPF8	Male	38 Years	Kom	Literacy. Prog. F.	3 Years