TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF THE INTEGRATED APPROACH TO LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE LUGANDA LANGUAGE CLASSROOM IN UGANDA

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study set out to examine how teachers experience the implementation of the integrated approach to language teaching in the Luganda language classroom in selected ordinary level secondary schools in the Kampala district of Uganda. The study was positioned within an interpretive paradigm and employed a phenomenological approach in its intention to uncover the lived experiences and common hidden meanings that participants attached to the phenomenon. Purposeful sampling was used to identify 30 teachers from 15 schools and 3 inspectors of school curricula who participated in the study. Data generation strategies included personal interviews which were analyzed according to transcendental phenomenological data analysis methods such as bracketing, horizontalization, clustering into themes, textual description, structural description and textual-structural essence of the study.

The findings emerging from the study indicate that teachers were positively predisposed towards the integrated approach in a Luganda language classroom and, as such, they perceived it as a basis for teaching language content and literacy practices collectively through various interactive strategies. The findings also indicate that while teachers are aware of what learners could achieve in an integrated Luganda language classroom they are hampered by challenges in the implementation process which stem from the teachers, the education system, the learners, and the integrated approach itself.

KEY WORDS: Integrated approach; Communicative competence; Language; literacy practices; Cognitive constructivist theory; Luganda language; Luganda language classroom;

1. Introduction

The adoption and implementation of the integrated approach in a Luganda language classroom was a result of the failure of the traditional techniques of teaching indigenous languages in Ugandan schools to improve learners' communicative language levels, such as their syntactic and grammatical levels, as well as their communicative competences (Luganda Teachers Association (LTA), 2008). The traditional approaches, such as psycholinguistic, grammar-translation and the direct approaches were described as lacking an experiential instructional approach which integrates language knowledge and literacy practices, there by denying learners the opportunity of acquiring meaningful and authentic communication practices. Traditional approaches further emphasize a linguistic system rather than a social practice where learners are not meaningfully engaged in active and interactive activities, hence retarding their communication and literacy practices development (Norton 2013). Luganda language is one of the few Ugandan languages which form part of the school curriculum at lower secondary level (Grade 8- Grade 11)which is taught with the aim of developing learners' expression of emotions and thoughts, personal identity, as well as the acquisition of practical communicative practices and competences (NCDC 2008).

Despite studying the Luganda language for 4 years through traditional approaches, literature confirms that learners were unable to successfully develop their communicative competences or to acquire the desirable language practices (Masaazi 2004; LTA 2008). Thus, the recent adoption of the integrated approach in Luganda language classrooms has provided a platform for teachers to engage learners in active and interactive learning where language knowledge, multiple literacy practices and competences can be enhanced holistically in the classroom. This study aims to analyze the teachers' perceptions of the integrated approach in a Luganda language classroom in terms of their theoretical assumptions and misconceptions about this approach as well as the actual classroom practices.

2. Theoretical framework

The study was framed within the constructivist theory of learning which conceptualizes learning as an outcome of learners' social interactions (Clive &Kosnik, 2006:1; David & Kimberly, 2013:11). Learners are believed to have lively abilities to think, analyze and reconstruct their own knowledge if the learning environment provides opportunities for active learning. Baiba (2013:583) argues that constructivist learning is built on strong assumptions which shifts learning from mere instruction of the teacher to active and purposeful self-constructed learning by the learners. The constructivist theories of learning emerged from the early work of John Dewey (1859-1952), Jean Piaget (1896-1980), Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) and later Jerome Brunner (1966).

Cognitive constructivist theory of learning underscores learners' conscious abilities (Hebb, 2003:33). Thus, the cognitive constructivist theory of learning recognizes learners as creating knowledge and educators as the facilitators of knowledge through cognitive training, peer tutoring and cooperative learning activities (Mordechai, 2009:42; Susan, 2006:79). This is achieved through an active, constructive, supportive and collaborative learning environment. The essence of this theory therefore, relies upon meaningful learning which depends on the learners' previous experiences and their current mental abilities guided by an active and social learning environment which enable them to reconstruct their own knowledge.

According to Megel (1998:11), cognitive constructivist theory of learning is grounded on assumed processes behind the behaviour of learners during the learning process. This means that such processes occur inside the learner's mind consciously depending on the prevailing circumstances. The theory further places greater emphasis on how learners think, understand and know (Asiae University, 2012:107). The way learners think influence their behaviour and understanding, which is determined by their previous experiences and external world.

Similarly, Karagiorgi and Symeou (2005:19) assert that cognitive constructivist learning occurs after learners have internalized, reflected and understood their experiences and thus reconstructed their new knowledge. Such intellectual transformation occurs when learners reconcile formal instructional experiences with their existing knowledge, with the cultural and social contexts in which ideas occur, and with a host of other influences that serve to mediate understanding (Mordechai, 2009:39). Guided by such scholarly assertions, the integrated approach in Luganda language learning and teaching should enable learners to uphold experiences that require them to retrieve their previous learning outcomes and be able to relate them to the current experiences so that new knowledge is reconstructed. This can only be achieved when learning is organized in social and interactive activities where teachers encourage learners to use their mental processes to make sense of the subject matter and to also be exposed to multiple sources of information which afford them an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding. Moreover, there are several academic studies which acknowledge such activities like problem-based activities, peer dialogues and task-based activities to be useful in orienting learners towards independent knowledge construction (Marlowe & Page, 2005:24; Tugba& Mustafa, 2013:1438).

3. Literature review

3.1 Integrated approach to language learning and teaching

Recent research findings in language teaching and learning recognize the integrated approach as an active, interactive and learner-centered language and literacy practices approach which draws

on the communicative language approach (Richards & Rogers 2014; Ling 2012; Moghadam &Reza 2011). Basically, the integrated approach shares the theoretical assumptions, instructional processes and meaning-making in language learning with the communicative language approach though they differ since the integrated approach focuses more on the use of texts in the classroom and the integration of the four literacy practices as a whole. The integrated approach perceives literacy learning as an interconnected process that combines the four skills collectively, and learners are regarded as active sociocultural agents and creators of knowledge in a particular classroom context. Ideally, this reflects real communication in authentic contexts.

Literature further recognizes a growing body of research findings which claim the influence of theories that relate language learning and literacy to the integrated approach in classroom contexts. These include the socio-psycholinguistic theory which bridges the cognitive and linguistic activities in a social context (Bridge 2011), the socio-cognitive theory of learning which recognizes the holistic model of learning where learners use their social conceptual experiences and language knowledge to engage in mental dialogue (Wang 2011), and humanistic and constructivist theories of learning which recognize the integrated approach as authentic, personalized, self-directed and collaborative (Richards & Rogers 2001; Illeris 2009; Çekiç 2010). These theoretical foundations, however, collectively claim the centrality of learners' experiences and activities relevant to their lives and needs, as well as authentic materials that can be used to enhance language practices.

Studies depict the integrated approach as an effective approach to develop learners' communicative competences, which includes both knowledge about the language and knowledge about how to use the language appropriately in communicative situations (Jing 2006; Kate, 2011). According to Akram& Malik (2010)the integrated approach exposes learners to authentic language by involving them in activities that are meaningful and interesting through the adoption of both content-based and task-oriented instruction. Integrating the four literacy practices in the classroom, would mean that learners acquire language proficiency and at the same time are prepared to use the language in practical situations. Jing (2006) stresses that since literacy practices complement each other in real communication the integration of these practices within classroom contexts could lead to the students' all-round development of communicative competences.

Other studies relate the integrated approach to; learners' receptive and productive vocabulary with more words and wider stylistic choices (Dalton-Puffer 2011; Lo & Murphy 2010), enhanced achievement in vocabulary development and retention (Mengeska 2010), the use of authentic materials which exposes learners to the real life language (Arslan 2008; Berardo 2006), and multiple literacy practices development (Oxford 2001). Thus, the integrated approach in the language classroom is categorized as a catalyst for transformation in language learning where

learners are empowered to strategically acquire the language knowledge as well as literacy. Jing (2006) states that the approach focuses on experiences and activities that are relevant to learners' lives and needs; it is related to critical thinking since it is activity-based, and not only involves the integration of one or more practices, but also highlights connections between language and the way we think, feel and act.

However, the implementation of the integrated approach in a Luganda language classroom has been termed unsatisfactory mainly due to limited or no concrete knowledge and expertise, teaching resources and the nature of the teaching syllabus (LTA 2008). Mulumba (2005) states that with the above challenges, many learners of Luganda have achieved limited success in terms of communicative competences, knowledge about the language and literacy practices. Thus, it is deemed necessary that appropriate steps be taken in order to enhance the Luganda language approaches. Such steps must provide a comprehensive and holistic process that will enable both teachers and learners to recognize their collegial and experiential roles in the classroom context which facilitate the acquisition of language and literacy practices. Richards & Rogers (2001) describe learners in an integrated language classroom as the ones taking their own decisions and becoming independent creators of knowledge, while the teacher becomes a facilitator and resource person rather than being an expert in conveying knowledge that Freire described as the banking system.

4. Research Methodology

This qualitative study was conducted by adopting the interpretative paradigm which assumes that knowledge is socially constructed (Mertens 2005). The aim for situating this study within the aforementioned paradigm was to gain an understanding of varied and multiple interpretations of the teachers' perceptions of the integrated approach in a Luganda language classroom. A transcendental phenomenological strategy which aligns with qualitative research was adopted to seek reality from individual teachers' narratives of their experiences and feelings, which produced in-depth descriptions of the integrated approach. Thus, the study examined teachers' lived experiences, perceptions, and feelings relating to the integrated approach (Grbich 2013).

A total of 17 teachers from S1 to S4 (grade 8 – grade 11) were purposively selected (depending on their knowledge of the integrated approach) from 15 secondary schools in the Kampala district of Uganda to participate in this study.After collecting data through phenomenological in-depth interviews with teachers who had experienced the phenomena, the data were analyzed by following Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological data analysis procedures. The general procedures for preparing and analyzing the data included; thedescription of personal experiences, making statements from in-depth interviews, converting significant statements into meaningful

themes, interpretation of 'what' and 'how' of the problem and presenting the essence of the study in the form of themes and categories.

The process of coding was done inductively with the focus on open, axial and selective coding. This led to the identification of themes and categories that emerged from the 'rich thick' interviews conducted. The process of open coding involved reading through the data several times and the creation of tentative labels for the chunks of data summarizing what was happening. Examples of participants' words were recorded and properties for each of the codes were established. Axial coding entailed identifying relationships among the open codes to establish the connections among the codes. The selective coding process involved identifying the core variable that included all the data. The transcripts were re-read and any data that related to the core variable identified was selectively coded. The themes and categories emerging from this rigorous process of coding are tabulated and discussed below and the use of direct quotes from interview transcripts served to expatiate on themes and categories.

5. Findings

This study focused on teachers' perceptions of the integrated approach in a Luganda language classroom in selected secondary schools in the Kampala district of Uganda. Based on interview transcripts, four major themes emerged: namely, basis of integrating literacy practices, understanding language content and literacy practices collectively, and as an activity-based learning and motivational instrument. The table below provides an outline of the themes and categories emerging from the themes.

Table: 1. Themes and categories emerged from the teachers' perceptions on the use of the integrated approach

Themes	Categories
• *Basis of integrating literacy practices*	- *Enhancing communicative competence* - *Individualized practice* - *Delivering examinable content*
• *Understanding content & language practice collectively*	- *Learning as an outcome of experiential activity* - *Functional language use*
• *As an activity-based learning*	- *Active and interactive knowledge creation* - *Peer learning* - *Discovery learning*

• *Motivational instrument*	- *Selecting the language*
	- *Personal involvement*
	- *Motivating literary texts*
	- *Learning new things*

From the data analysis, teachers' perceptions and varied experiences, teachers acknowledge a positive common stance that the integrated approach focuses on learners' experiences, ability and knowledge to contribute to their own learning. In the following section, the teachers' perceptions of the integrated approach in a Luganda language classroom are presented and supported by specific quotes from interview transcripts.

5.1 Basis of integrating literacy practices

Teachers perceive the integrated approach in a language classroom as a way of integrating literacy practices simultaneously for the purpose of enhancing communicative practices, individualized language practice, as well as for delivering the examinable content. Their understanding is attached to interactive and collaborative activities where learning is facilitated and the learner is engaged in completing tasks. Thus, their views on the basis for integrating literacy practices are presented as; enhancing communicative practices, individualized practice and delivering the examinable content.

5.1.1 Enhancing communicative practices

Teachers' supported the use of readers in early classes as a basis for integrating literacy practices. They claim that they engage learners in active reading, writing, speaking and listening as a way of improving their potential to cope with the language challenges during a later stage of learning. This claim is articulated by the responses below:

Matteos: I use the integrated approach to relate the language practices which make up proper communication and involve learners as a way of contributing to their learning at the future stage.

Kikomeko: They know that this is their learning; they have learnt to be active participants in reading, writing and other language practices.

The above views further imply that classroom engagement and the knowledge of reading, writing, speaking and listening practices are perceived and used by the teachers to enhance learners' competences; thereby leading to a better understanding of the language in context.

5.1.2 Individualized practice

Teachers' perceptions classify the approach in lenses of learning by doing. They pointed out that they encourage and emphasize speaking, listening, writing and reading based on individual practice in the classroom. Their learners are involved in individualized oral and written practice in the classroom by using the chalkboard and other resources. This kind of learning enables the learners to correct their mistakes and learn from each other even in the absence of the teacher. This is illustrated in the quotes below.

Ssebududde: With the integrated approach we are graced to give our learners
a chance to practice their learning potential when they become
teachers of their own, teachers of their fellow learners as well as
our teachers.

Markos: I have continuously emphasized individualized effort and practice
in my class as a way of checking on their literacy practices.

However, one teacher cautions on perceiving integration in terms of individualized literacy practices. In his viewpoint, learning of that nature can only be beneficial when the teacher is ready to provide room for practice in the classroom.

Thus he advised:

Kako: For each language practice introduced in the classroom,
let them participate, practice and demonstrate their understanding.

From his recommendation it could be deduced that one of the best ways of acquiring language practices is through situations where learners are afforded opportunities to engage in active literacy practices and by learning in authentic situations. Therefore, it is imperative that learners are encouraged and guided on how to link new knowledge to prior knowledge and experiences by engaging them in situations or activities which enable them to participate in real communicative situations. However, the teachers' quotes below indicate that under many circumstances teachers knowingly or unknowingly provide no or limited opportunities for learners to express their knowledge in the language classroom, to engage in communicative tasks individually or in groups, and also for practicing the interrelated language concepts.

Nansu: I don't normally engage my learners in such interactive or
collaborative activities, but I think they can work in a language
classroom.

Ntamu: We can use it in a Luganda classroom, but where do I get
enough time for that?

The above teachers' statements justify the existing situation in the language classroom where the learner is restricted from learning by doing. Learners need to learn and develop a sense of responsibility for their own language development. Denying a learner an opportunity of demonstrating his or her knowledge, for example, by writing notes on his or her own rather than routinely copying from the board, means that rote learning is promoted. Therefore, as the art of teaching languages for communicative purposes, the teacher should recognize the interdependence of the four language practices and make a concerted effort to implement strategies that will enable the learners to learn through practice.

5.1.3 Delivering examinable content

Some teachers perceive integrated literacy practices in the form of the examinable content. Their argument is that throughout the ordinary level classes, literacy practices such as listening, reading, speaking and writing are not emphasized and examined as such. As a result, they integrate these practices for the purpose of helping them to deliver examinable content. This means that teachers integrate literacy practices in the form of a coaching style as a way of passing examinations and avoiding examination traps based on literacy practices. This is reflected by the following responses:

Nteza: Much as these practices are not emphasized in our syllabus,
I have always taught my learners the basics which can help
them to write and pass the final exams.

Kati: If you constantly give them everything, their reading and
writing may not necessarily improve, but they eventually
pass the exams.

Some teachers seem not to be bothered about the literacy competences that learners acquire through active classroom interaction. Their focus is more on examinable content and the memorization of knowledge. In their views, passing an examination proves that the learner has acquired the necessary communicative competences. Such a perception is demonstrated by this response:

Nansu: Passing an exam is an indicator of understanding literacy
practices because questions involve reading and writing.

Teachers' responses above suggest that little attention is paid to the enhancement of literacy practices in a classroom mainly due to the nature of the Luganda language syllabus which does not recognize and promote the teaching and learning of these practices as the emphasis is on language content. Thus, there is a need to incorporate literacy practices in the syllabus as a way

of directing the teachers' instructional strategies towards the enhancement of these communicative competences.

5.2 Understanding language content and literacy practices collectively

Teachers' views on the use of the integrated approach recognize the interdependence between language content and literacy practices. Their perceptions acknowledge the interconnection of various language aspects through experiential and functional language activities for better language learning and acquisition of literacy practices. Thus, they perceive learning of this nature to be meaningful since knowledge construction is an integrative process and is authentic; it correlates to the real world tasks or contexts where the learner is expected to use it. Two issues on this interdependency emerged: learning as an outcome of experiential activity and the functional language use.

5.2.1 Learning as an outcome of experiential activity

Many teachers argue that they use the integrated approach as an activity-based learning process which engages learners in experiential language learning processes and varied literacy practices in the classroom. According to them, it is the facilitative role in the classroom which mediates the wholesome interplay of various literacy practices in the process of learning language concepts in the classroom such as grammar. Thus, they perceive activity-based integration as a process which leads to better learning and the acquisition of the language content, literacy practices and sociolinguistics collectively.

The quotes below justify the above assertions:

Kako: The approach relates many aspects of the language such as grammar, culture, vocabulary and literacy practices within one lesson.

Babikako: It makes learning an experiential activity in which learners have to participate and learn by doing. It further underpins the meaning of practices because it suggests involvement of learners in activities that will give them the necessary practice for both language content and literacy practices development.

Additionally, one teacher perceives learning as an outcome of experiential activity in terms of a collective incorporation of the content, literacy practices, methodology and sociolinguistics in

the classroom environment. In her opinion, better language learning, and the acquisition of various aspects of the language, is an outcome of the interactive activities of the teacher and learners in the classroom.

She presents this view as follows:

Zizinga: We can look at integration for better learning as an outcome
of the teacher's initiative to put together methods, skills, teaching
materials and language content in the classroom.

Her idea is connected to the ability of the teacher to understand the meaning and use of the integrated approach in the classroom. According to her, the teacher, who understands the meaning of the integrated approach, should be able to use other materials to deliver the prerequisite content using the four literacy practices.

5.2.2 Functional language use

Teachers' views in this study refer to the power of the collective presentation of language content and literacy practices to appropriately develop a learner's functional competences required in real world contexts. Their perceptions are distilled in three ways: Firstly, the aspects relate to what a teacher teaches in real life situations as highlighted by one teacher as follows:

Katolo: The approach encourages learners to think and, at the same
time, exposes them to reality outside the classroom setting
where knowledge and communication competences would
be applied.

Secondly, teachers not only value the learner's ability to pass exams, but also acknowledge the role of the integrated approach to benefit learners who may fail to attain the promotional grades to acquire other related abilities, such as reasoning. This is articulated as follows by one of the participants:

Kalondoozi: Some learners may not attain the necessary grades to be
promoted to another level but because of the nature of classroom
engagement, knowingly or unknowingly they learn other things
which can benefit them in life such as socialization and
independent thinking.

Lastly, teachers perceive integration as a functional language use where learning involves authentic materials and illustrations to analyze the sociolinguistic parameters of language and recognize the socially functional language within a socio-cultural context while using the four literacy practices. Teachers value the prospects of this engagement in forming the learner's independent knowledge as one teacher states:

Kikomeko: The future of our learners holds different opportunities; therefore integration of reading, writing, speaking and listening with the language content will form a great avenue for that.

Teachers' perspectives appeal to language learning activities which are relevant, interesting and authentic to learners' everyday lives, provide opportunities for interaction and practice; and learners encounter and learn what language entails and how it functions in real life communication.

5.3 As an activity-based learning

Teachers reported that they use the integrated approach as activity-based learning where learners actively and interactively engage in the language learning process, and take responsibility for their knowledge construction. Teachers' views correspondingly indicate that through the use of the integrated approach, learners are engaged in active, peer and discovery learning where they are not passively absorbing information from the teacher. Learners share knowledge, experiences and ideas through collaborative reading, writing, discussion and problem solving activities. They additionally pointed out that, it is through the integrated approach that learners contextualize and engage in process-oriented language learning where each learner is prompted to use the language cognitively, and thereby develop reasoning and thinking abilities. The teacher's statement below summarizes their perception:

Jjuliko: I use the integrated approach as a basis of instilling the spirit of learning for understanding especially when I use learning experiences which require them to participate by doing and reflecting on their learning.

Three major aspects were identified from teachers' views on the integrated approach as activity-based learning; active and interactive knowledge creation, peer learning and discovery learning.

5.3.1 Active and interactive knowledge creation

Teachers' responses on active and interactive knowledge creation are presented in three dimensions: firstly, initiative taking and active involvement. Teachers substantiate learners' contributions to their language learning through initiative-taking and active involvement. Teachers claim that they facilitate learners' experiences, beliefs and assumptions about the nature of language learning, and guide the explicit awareness and understanding of what is required of them. The statements below justify their claim:

Seka: I normally tell my learners that you benefit from learning more than any other person, therefore you should take up a big role in the classroom activities.

Kako: It is their learning, they know it now. I have guided and created opportunities for active interaction which I believe they benefit a lot from.

Secondly, teachers stated that the integration of learners' experiences and reflections through classroom activities bridge the theoretical and practical conceptualizations of language learning. According to them, language learning of this nature is both experiential and engaging intellectually and emotionally, which allows learners to create new knowledge and understandings as one teacher claims:

Zizinga: When a learner participates in any learning activity he or she understands, remembers easily and eventually multiplicatively creates new ideas.

Lastly, teachers acknowledge the learners' personal identity, social abilities and attitudes to collaboratively engage in meaningful classroom learning. In their view, this is the true meaning of language learning, because what is done in the classroom is shared by the teacher and the learners in a mutually symbiotic relationship which leads to shared understanding and meaning making.

Seka: When you use the traditional approaches to language learning, you make an assumption that the learner doesn't know anything at all, yet learning means active and collaborative engagement in classroom activities where classroom activities are shared between the teacher and the learner. This is learning to me.

Teachers' perceptions above recognize learners as resourceful individualsin an integrated language classroom, and situate the teacher in a facilitative position where he or she works collaboratively to achieve learners' communicative competences.

5.3.2 Peer learning

Teacher's views recognize the integrated approach as an innovative learning experience which allows for reciprocal learning; where learners mutually benefit and are involved in the sharing of knowledge, ideas and experiences in the language classroom. Their perceptions suggest that a teacher does not solely retain the role of teaching in the classroom, but rather a shared activity which involves the teacher and the learner. In addition, teachers noted that learners learn a great deal from others by participating in collaborative activities. This can be demonstrated in their responses below:

Luzze: When we enter the classroom, learners look at us from
different directions, some learn from us while others will
never but peer learning offers them an opportunity to learn
from each other.

Babikako: I have seen my learners teaching one another.
To me, I classify it as effective learning because
they further discover and develop other related skills
such as organizing and planning of learning activities for
themselves, giving and receiving feedback from one
another, and also evaluating their own learning.

Another teacher perceives the integrated approach through peer learning as a cooperative effort between the learner, other learners and the teacher. According to her, the integrated approach is a conscious interactive situation where learners communicate their ideas or experiences using integrated language practices. Therefore, learners take personal responsibility for their own learning, and learning becomes a cooperative effort between the teacher and the learner where each partner is equally valued.

Nanjalaze: I look at a learner as a person who can teach him or herself,
the fellow learners as well as the teacher in the classroom.
The integrated approach has allowed me recognize and
encourage this kind of collegiality and cooperation in the
classroom.

The teacher's argument is centered on the dialogic interventions they make in the process of learning as a way of stimulating learners to explore and improve their language knowledge and literacy practices.

5.3.3 Discovery learning

Teachers stated that discovery learning is an outcome of integrated learning activities which promote learners' own understanding and ability to rememberlanguage concepts. Teachers argue that the integrated approach allows them to provide a rich variety of language activities designed for learners to cross-examine, analyze and practices the necessary language concepts. Through active participation in integrated language activities, such as pair work, role play, dialogue, group and class discussions, learners develop more language competences and understanding. They thus perceive integration through discovery as 'trial and error' in language learning as highlighted in the following excerpts:

Kati: Learners are permitted to discover through trial and error,
practice or experiment and thus be able to come
up with their own understanding.

Kikomeko: I have witnessed a lot of discoveries, analyses, questioning
and innovative learning I have never thought of in my instruction
especially when I engage them in activities which require
their full participation.

The above claims suggest that discovery learning in an integrated language classroom is more active than passive; it promotes process-oriented learning where learners have the opportunity to build on the existing knowledge and thus promote deeper understanding of that knowledge. This means that when learners are afforded opportunities to explore and engage in problem-solving activities, or experiences, they ultimately create, integrate and generalize knowledge, and they are able to establish a broader application of language practices to other communication situations.

5.4 Motivational instrument

Teachers' perceptions were further classified as motivational to both teachers and learners. This motivation is blended by the nature of collaborative and cooperative learning activities where teachers and learners are engaged and benefit in sharing knowledge. Teachers maintain that the collegiality and engagement established in cooperative learning activities, as well as motivating literary texts in the classroom, compel learners to creatively engage inand enhance their learning practices, thus making it their own. Accordingly, teachers perceive motivation in four perspectives; selecting the language, personal involvement, motivating literary texts and learning new things.

5.4.1 Selecting the language

Teachers perceived and coined motivation particularly in an integrated language classroom as *'wanting to select Luganda'.* The Luganda language in the central region of Uganda is classified and competes favorably with several other languages, such as Kiswahili, French and Arabic. Teachers contend that the nature of cooperative learning activities enables learners to feel as if they are missing something, and they are highly motivated to select and learn Luganda because they feel free to express themselves. This means that apart from selecting Luganda on academic grounds, learners are motivated to learn the language because of the exciting and engaging activities.

Kako: This is an optional subject, the more these learners are
motivated and involved in learning, the more they will be
in position to choose Luganda as their language option.

Katolo: I have always allowed learners, who do not offer Luganda,
to attend my class because they enjoy the exciting learning
activities but my learners benefit a lot from this interaction.

With teachers support and encouragement in cooperative learning situations, as mentioned above, learners become actively involved; they interact and share experiences. This enhances their motivation, and also enables them to seek learning outcomes that are beneficial to all learners in the classroom. Accordingly, it can be argued that learners need ample opportunity to engage and interact with each other in the classroom as a way of developing their language practices.

5.4.2 Personal involvement

Teachers' responses suggest that the integrated approach engages learners in activities which make them think actively about their learning, hence making it their own. Teachers additionally contend that learning of this nature is encouraging and motivating, because it values the learner's input as one teacher states:

Matteos: Learners enjoy the lesson because I share the classroom
activities with them which makes them believe that
they are obliged to participate in these activities.

The teacher's statement means that integration creates opportunities for learners' views based on their experiences, which compels them to work and think about their learning. As an outcome, there is willingness and effort on their part to come to class.

5.4.3 Motivating literary texts

Respondents perceive Luganda language learning through the integrated approach as a product of motivating literary texts. Teachers claim that literary texts highlight enjoyment and therefore they perceive it as functional language learning where learners are motivated to express their ideas, feelings and attitudes. This means that learners are able to explore their study and practice linguistic functions through literary texts.

One teacher expressed this motivation as follows:

Zizinga: The motivational nature of these literary texts is a big factor;
                they encourage learners to demand and acquire language
                 knowledge when used in the classroom.

Teachers' views above acknowledge and describe the role of literary texts as a pedagogical tool in an integrated language classroom as authentic, motivational and engaging. It is thus vital for Luganda teachers to be mindful of the competence levels of their learners, and accordingly develop appropriate literary texts which will enhance their communicative competences, language practices, as well as developing appropriate linguistic knowledge altogether in the classroom.

5.5 Learning new things

Teachers perceive integration as an incentive to learn new things in the classroom. They say that collegiality and engagement established in the classroom as a result of integrated learning activities enable them to continuously encounter and learn new concepts or ideas which are discovered in the classroom. The quote below illustrates the teachers' perception:

Markos: The major benefit for me as a teacher is that it's interesting and
                worth learning a new thing in every classroom I do facilitate.

The above evidence suggests that teachers' perceptions build on the notion that the integrated approach is flexible; it motivates teachers and supports their professional development through interaction in the language learning context. Learning of this nature is experiential and at the same time beneficial to the teachers to reconceptualize their existing practices and knowledge, as well as developing their own professional practices.

6. Discussion of findings

Generally, teachers reported positive perceptions and varied experiences on the integrated approach in the context of the Luganda language classroom in four dimensions. Firstly, teachers perceive the integrated approach in a language classroom as a way of integrating literacy practices simultaneously for the purpose of enhancing communicative practices, encouraging

learning by doing, as well as delivering the examinable content. Secondly, teachers' views recognize the interdependence between language content and literacy practices where the acquisition of various language aspects is an outcome of experiential and functional language activities. Thirdly, the integrated approach is perceived to be activity-based learning where learners actively and interactively engage in the language learning process, and take responsibility for their knowledge construction. Teachers' views correspondingly indicate that this is achieved when learners are engaged in active, peer and discovery learning where they are not passively absorbing information from the teacher. Finally, teachers' perceptions are classified as motivational to both teachers and learners created by the collegiality and engagement established in cooperative learning activities, as well as through the motivating literary texts.

In view of several conceptualizations, and varied meanings teachers attach to the use of the integrated approach in a Luganda language classroom, there is a need to reflect on teachers' positive perceptions of the integrated approach as a basis for language teaching. The analysis of their lived experiences, and the associated clarifications, demonstrate the aim of the integrated approach; hence developing learners' communicative competences. It also exemplifies an activity for learning the language knowledge through interaction as a tool for arousing learners' interests, as well as a way of balancing the language content and literacy practices in the classroom. The overall argument is that communication in the language classroom is an end and means of learning the language content as well as literacy practices. Accepting interactive language activities as the core of the integrated language classroom implies that learning a language is a function of social and meaningful classroom interactions. Such perceptions are informed by sociocultural and cognitive based language activities (Richards & Rogers 2001) and activity-based learning processes which emphasis experiential activities (Youb 2008). Consequently, the significance of teachers' perceptions of the language classroom would depend on the quality of classroom interactions and how teachers and learners recognize their collegial roles which are positioned in cognitive constructivists' processes. The constructivists' understanding recognizes and situates the learner's ability to construct knowledge through integrated based activities (David & Kimberly 2013).

Despite accepting the integrated approach as a practical teaching approach through the varied perceptions mentioned above, our findings reveal that some teachers remain confused when and how such perceptions are translated into classroom practice. This implies that the teachers' skills in reflective practice need to be developed so that they are better equipped to examine how best the integrated approach to language learning could be implemented in their own unique classroom contexts.

Although the findings demonstrated some discrepancies between what teachers say and their practice, which is likely to confuse learners, an effort to improve teachers' self-awareness is paramount in this respect. Thus, any intervention should focus on improving teachers' self-awareness and envisaging understanding their beliefs or perceptions, as well as constantly monitoring them during their classroom interaction. Specifically, Berado (2006) argued that teachers' accurate and adequate knowledge of the integrated approach facilitates content selection which meets the standards of exploitability, variability, readability and presentation that are important for learning in an integrated language classroom. In the Ugandan context, Mulumba (2005) described the implementation of the integrated approach in a Luganda language classroom as 'vague' due to limited or no concrete knowledge or expertise by the teachers.

The enhancement of the four language practices simultaneously in an integrated classroom can be interpreted as ongoing supported experiences where a variety of activities afford learners an opportunity to acquire both oral and written language practices. Literature correspondingly acknowledges the enhancement of literacy practices through engaging learners in tasks that require the oral and written word as essential for life and work (Purcell-Gates, Duke & Martineau, 2007:26) and the role of social environment which engages learners in experiential, critical and problem-solving tasks (Dale & Emery, 2010). This means that essential and meaningful tasks in an integrated language classroom originate from the sociocultural environment of the learners. Thus, when teachers continuously engage learners in communicative tasks which are linked to their sociocultural environment in a collaborative way as highlighted above, learners gradually acquire desirable literacy practices.

The most significant recommendation for low proficiency levels amongst the learners of Luganda rests on the teachers' ability to adopt inclusive integrated language learning activities in planning and the instructional process which support the diverse learner background (Ling, 2012). This kind of learning is perceived as a way of repositioning language learning from a decontextualized learning perspective to an actively engaging one, thereby supporting learners with learning difficulties to engage in meaning-making. From this viewpoint, the role of the teacher is regarded as providing a learning context in which every learner is able to learn by doing and eventually progress (Richards & Rogers, 2001). In addition, the theoretical positioning of the integrated approach to language learning, which underlines the cognitive constructivists' perspective, provides a basis upon which inclusive practices are built; knowledge is socially constructed (Mertens, 2005; Mordechai, 2009; Susan, 2006). Thus, the enhancement of language as an outcome of learning based on a set of social practices in a language classroom requires the deepening of knowledge construction processes to flexibly respond to specific contexts of learning.

Findings emerging from this study recommend the need for Luganda teachers to adjust their instructional activities if the integrated approach is to be fully implemented in the Luganda language classroom. Rather than focusing on traditional instructional procedures which promote the routine note-taking and memorization of knowledge, teachers need to gradually focus their teaching towards motivating learners to improve their communicative competence through collaborative learning activities. Thus, for Luganda learners to become self-motivated independent learners, teachers need to provide positive feedback in the classroom which supports learners' beliefs, avail opportunities for learners' success in the form of tasks which promote their understanding, assist them to find meaning and value in the classroom activities they engage in, create an interactive atmosphere which is open and positive to learners, and develop trust amongst the learners so that they feel valued.

7. Conclusion

The findings emerging from this study based on the teachers' perceptions of the integrated approach in a Luganda language classroom indicate that they are largely positively predisposed to its implementation. The general view is that the range of language activities and resources contribute positively and meaningfully towards the effective acquisition ofliteracy practices within classroom contexts.

The integration of literacy practices in the curriculum framework provided learners with freedom and control over their learning, and served to develop a sense of responsibility, which made their learning relevant and authentic. These learning activities recognize a teacher as a reflective practitioner, consultant, facilitator, resource person and researcher of what happens in a language classroom depending on the particular classroom contexts, as opposed to being an instructor. Teachers' critical reflection on language learning encourages learners to further understand teachers' beliefs and perceptions in the process of enhancing their communicative competences. Although variations in the teachers' perceptions and conceptualizations existed, these variations can serve as a basis for developing activities that meet specific learner needs. On the whole, teachers' perceptions in this regard are important for understanding and improving the instructional process; they guide the teacher to adopt a teaching strategy which accommodates their daily language teaching challenges, influence classroom activities, and, in turn, guide language learners' learning environments which contribute to achieving desirable communicative competences.

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