

# Reading for Meaning: One thing lacking?

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# Much is being done – but we're not 'cracking the code'

- Graded readers
- CAPS curriculum African language inadequacies being addressed
- Lesson plans
- Ongoing coaching (for some at least)
- DBE Workbooks
- Na'ibali reading campaign

# Resources are not really the problem

See LTSM audit of schools in Ruth Mompati District in the North West

<b>Reading Books in FP</b>	<b>School A (least well organised)</b>	<b>School B (well organised)</b>	<b>School C (moderate organisation)</b>
<b>Lesson plans</b>	No lesson plans	Create own lesson plans for a fortnightly period. HOD checks them.	Following NECT Lesson Plans. Grade 3 EFAL, and Grades 1 and 2 HL.
<b>DBE workbooks</b>	All FP classes	All FP classes	All FP classes
<b>EFAL Big Books</b>	DBE EFAL big books, as well as Shuter, Marumo, Cambridge Little Library	Oxford Successful English, Juta, Macmillan	DBE EFAL big books, as well as Heineman Spot On, Oxford Headstart and Oxford Successful English
<b>Setswana Big Books</b>	Molteno, Macmillan	Not in evidence	Cambridge Little Library
<b>Setswana little books</b>	Molteno, Marumo, Macmillan (in one class 21 different titles)	Molteno, Marumo, Macmillan, Kagiso	Vula Bula (Zenex), Cambridge, PRAESA, Kagiso, Molteno, MML Dumelang
<b>English little books</b>	Macmillan, Shuter (Cub series), Marumo	Oxford, Day by Day, Macmillan, Marumo, and many older titles	Cambridge, Kagiso, Oxford, Mapep, Juta

# Grade 3 class, Ruth Mompoti District – what is lacking?



WEEK 11: FRIDAY WRITING (15 minutes)	
WRITING FRAME:	Something that makes me scared is ... I feel scared because ... When I feel scared ... Then ...
TASK:	SHARING
ACTIVITY:	<p><b>Modeling:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain that today, we will SHARE our work</li> <li>2. Use MODELLING to show learners how to SHARE. Read your paragraph out loud to the class.</li> <li>3. Ask learners if they want to ask you any questions about your writing</li> <li>4. Ask 2-3 learners to come share their paragraphs out loud with the class.</li> <li>5. After each learner reads, ask the class if they would like to ask the learner who has shared any questions about their paragraphs.</li> <li>6. Explain that learners will now TURN AND TALK and read their paragraph to a partner.</li> </ol> <p><b>Oral Instructions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Remind learners that WRITERS READ WHAT THEY WRITE</li> <li>2. Explain that today we will read our PUBLISHED paragraphs!</li> <li>3. Instruct learners to TURN AND TALK and read to a partner.</li> <li>4. Walk around as learners are talking.</li> <li>5. Listen to learners read and ask learners questions about their writing.</li> <li>6. If there is extra time, instruct learners to read to a DIFFERENT partner.</li> </ol> <p>HANG LEARNER PUBLISHED DRAFTS ON THE WALL AT LEARNER EYE LEVEL!</p>
WEEK 11: FRIDAY: GROUP GUIDED READING and THEME BOOKS (15 minutes)	
GROUP GUIDED READING (SMALL GROUP)	
GROUP:	GROUP 5
TEXT:	DBE Workbook 1, page 36
SIGHT WORDS:	find, road, square, how, small
THEME BOOK (WHOLE CLASS)	
FRONT COVER:	Learners must make a front cover for their theme book. The front cover should show that the theme is: Things that scare us.
WORDS:	Learners will use the THEME words...

## TERM ONE GRADE 3

Think out the box

## WEEK 12

"People who refer to out-of-the-box see the box ... People who don't know the box even exists are the innovative thinkers."

- Lisa Goldenberg

‘What factors influence the ability of education participants to convert educational resources into capabilities?’ (Baxen 2014:100).



# Survey of early reading books in 11 SSA countries - materials in 200 languages

40 languages have only one title each, 42 languages have between two and five titles, and 50 languages have between six and 20 titles.

The three languages with the largest number of published titles also have relatively large speaker populations: Kiswahili (808 titles for an estimated 100 million speakers across several countries), Chichewa/Nyanja (509 titles for an estimated 10 million speakers in Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique), and Amharic (366 titles for an estimated 26 million speakers in Ethiopia).

(RTI International 2016: 5)

# This is where the African Storybook comes in - [www.africanstorybook.org](http://www.africanstorybook.org)

African Storybook

HELP AND NOTES

READ MAKE USE



Search for storybooks

158

LANGUAGES

1041

STORYBOOKS

4683

TRANSLATIONS



## Vision

Open access to picture storybooks in the languages of Africa  
For children's literacy, enjoyment and imagination.

## New stories

Storybooks approved by ASb



# An alternative publishing model



Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)

A website of storybooks for early reading [www.africanstorybook.org](http://www.africanstorybook.org)

Where you can READ stories, TRANSLATE stories, ADAPT stories, and CREATE stories

From 2014 to date:

- 1033 unique storybooks, 5199 translated storybooks
- In 160 of the languages of Africa



# African Storybooks in SA languages (549 English ASb approved)



141  
isiXhosa

209  
isiZulu

117  
Setswana

99  
Sepedi

72  
SiSwati

48  
Tshivenda

45  
Xitsonga

95  
isiNdebele

60  
Sesotho

168  
Afrikaans

# ASb's main achievement 2013 to 2017

## An African initiative

almost all storybooks written by the African communities that use the storybooks (individuals in a range of countries, community libraries, teacher colleges, schools)



# Story development workshops

## Bookshelf



■ Cross-section of writers, translators, makers and British Council officials at the Story Making West Africa workshop.

It's one thing to know how to write, it's entirely another to think, talk, and laugh in a child's voice. What does it take really, to create stories for children?

### When African Storybook came to Abuja

Nashant Brown

**D**ay was March 11 and I was in a taxi bound for Ben Hami Station in Asokoro, Abuja. There I was to meet with nineteen other writers and five illustrators. Mission: to create stories for children in English and an indigenous language. I was excited, and understandably so.

**The workshop**  
Earlier, I had tried to pack as light a luggage as possible. A small travelling bag had my clothes and other things. My backpack, dear ancient companion, had my laptop, notebook, pens and several other items.

The application that invited my participation at the writing residency had been an interesting one. It was a workshop called Story Making West Africa, sponsored by the British Council in collaboration with African Storybook. I was asked questions that took me back to two books my mum had bought for my seventh birthday. One was bright red, about a baby elephant who liked to bath. The other was almost an antique, who loved to dance. I will remember the central characters of these two books. Baby elephant learned to keep clean the hard way and little antelope had to learn to be patient for the party to begin.

On my first day at the workshop I discovered how privileged I was. About a thousand applications had been received and twenty-five of us had called through. Two wonderful success stories: South Africa's Lisa Jeffrey-Ginsley and Kenya's Dianne Wapukhaka, both from African Storybook, turned, and

guided us till the very end. **Learning and writing.**

One of the first things we learned at Story Making West Africa was that we certainly couldn't write for ourselves (Aha, that one word would have to fit into different levels for children. Hard as some of us tried, it was just difficult not to think about that at the creating process. But our tutors were patient. While epiphanies showed us how African Storybook's web-site functioned, Jeffrey-Ginsley distilled, in our work, I mean, I had never written with an editor at hand to give me

immediate feedback. This was the case here.

After putting finishing touches to our rough work, we read aloud, one writer to the other, and it was interesting hearing how awkward some words were and how punctuations were missing. We sometimes instantly found reasons to pause and make corrections, or loved our own handwriting or typed stories. Was it ever going to be perfect?

**Reading aloud**  
By Wednesday, we were all set. Continued on page 38

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■ Mohammed read in English, French and Fulfulde

# Methods of delivery

Digital projection (offline or online)

OR Print



*Kibera Library  
Nairobi*

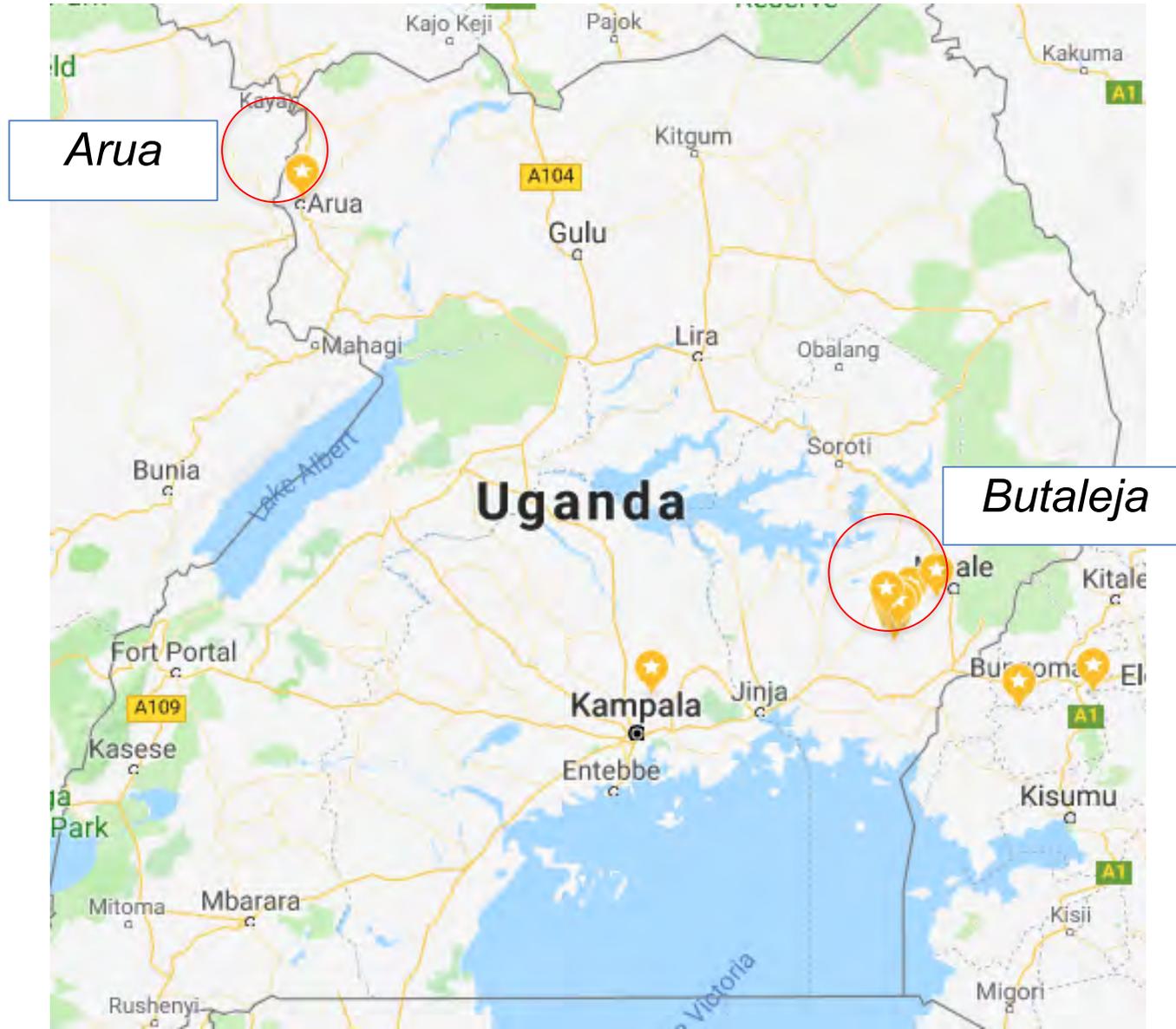


*Lolupe School,  
Turkana*

Ugandan Languages	# ASb books(Aug-18)
Acholi	22
Aringati	20
Ateso	55
Dhopadhola	65
Kakwa	8
Kinywarwanda (Uganda)	10
Kumam	13
Leblango	7
Lhukonzo	10
Luganda	271
<b>Lugbarati</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>Lugbarati (official)</b>	<b>54</b>
Lugwere	18
Lukenye	2
Lumasaaba	100
<b>Lunyole</b>	<b>155</b>
Lusamia	8
Lusoga	143
Ngakarimojong	1
Rufumbira	21
Rukiga	28
Runyankore	102
Runyoro	19
Rutooro	45
Sabinyi	11

African Storybook has been able to make a huge difference to the availability of titles in UGANDAN local languages, including not only the 12 languages recognised by the national reading programmes (eg the RTI School Health and Reading Programme in 2012 to 2017), but other smaller languages as well – a total of 25 languages.

# African Storybook: Addressing the shortage of local language books, but also how they are used



# Lunyole teachers in Butaleja district

*We were not trained to teach reading and writing in Lunyole yet we are now forced to teach these skills in the mother tongue ... They tell us instead to make our level best and yet there are no textbooks, not trained, so we just gamble.*

(Andrea Mudodi, Ugandan Primary 1 teacher. In Norton & Tembe - in press:1)

African Storybook addressed this – with a start of 80 or more Lunyole storybooks, translated through the Lunyole Language Board.

But materials are not enough. Teachers have to use them.

# Small scale research: African Storybook

- Decided to work with 6 teachers and a principal from two schools in the Butaleja district – meeting once or twice a week for a year to discuss how to use African Storybooks in class.

The original question,

*‘Could professional development activities based on ASb stories in Lunyole be productive for literacy teaching and learning?’*

was modified in discussion with the teachers to become

*‘Could group reading and discussion of ASb stories in Lunyole lead to increased teacher competence and confidence in reading and writing in Lunyole and to greater use of Lunyole in the classroom?’* (Tembe and Reed, 2016:5)

# Languaging in Lunyole

Reading a simple story together led to lots of discussion.  
For example, *hifanani* or *hifananyi*?

How to use the word *hifananyi* to generate further words beginning with *hi* in a word list: *Higalamu* (It is wide), *Himaali* (It is black), *Hihosa* (It is white) and *Hirando* (It is red)



Hino hifananyi hya  
mago gange.

# Languaging around the Lunyole alphabet

- Neither *x* nor *q* is used in Lunyole.
- Lunyole uses a long-tailed *ŋ*.
- Words with a *v* or *z* as first letter are borrowed (e.g. *vumbula* from Luganda).
- *b* is the only consonant that can be doubled (plosive *bb*).
- The consonant before any word ending in a vowel must be *r* (e.g. *muliro*).
- In Lunyole, repetition of a vowel affects meaning: *Baasaala* (I was born), *Basaala* (They produce).



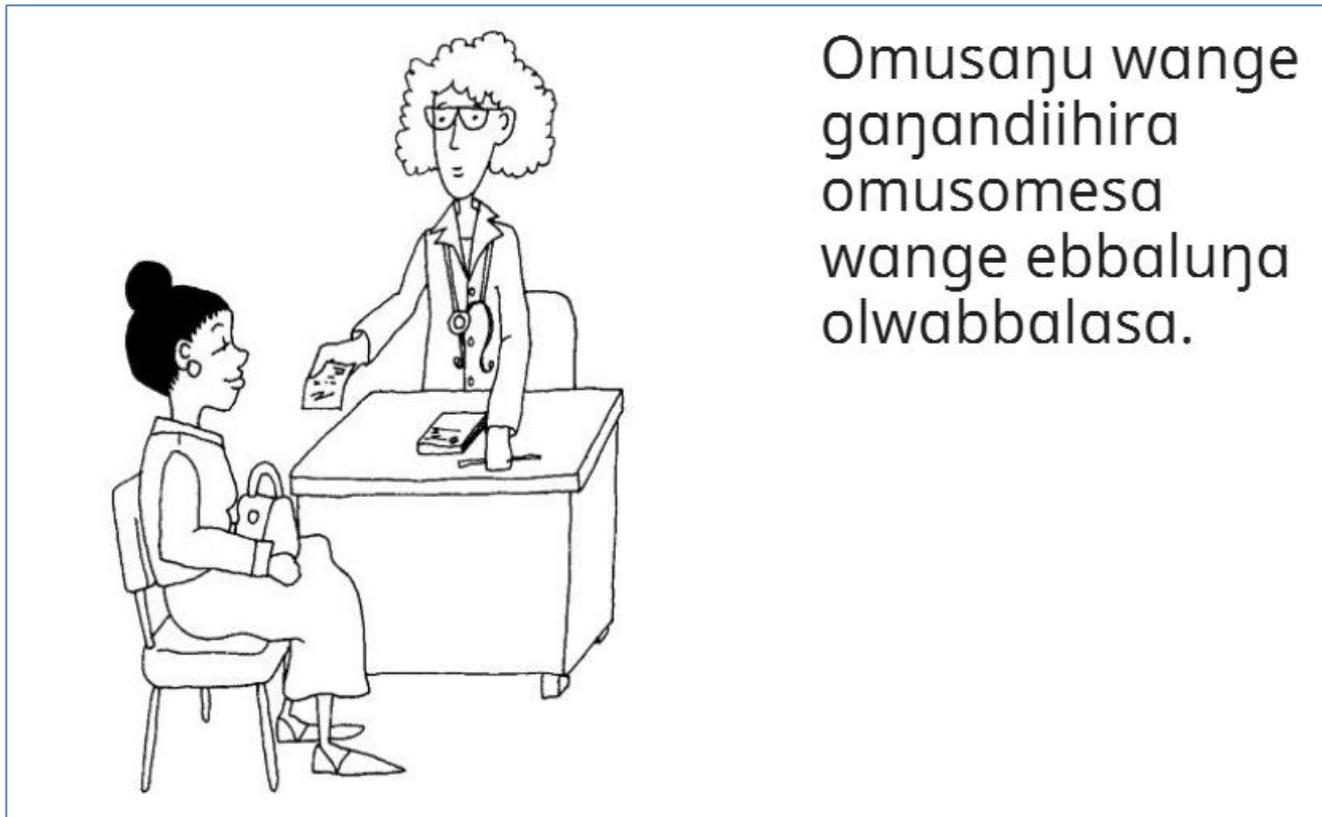
Gunyiya.

3

*Page from a storybooks,  
Omuliro (Fire)*

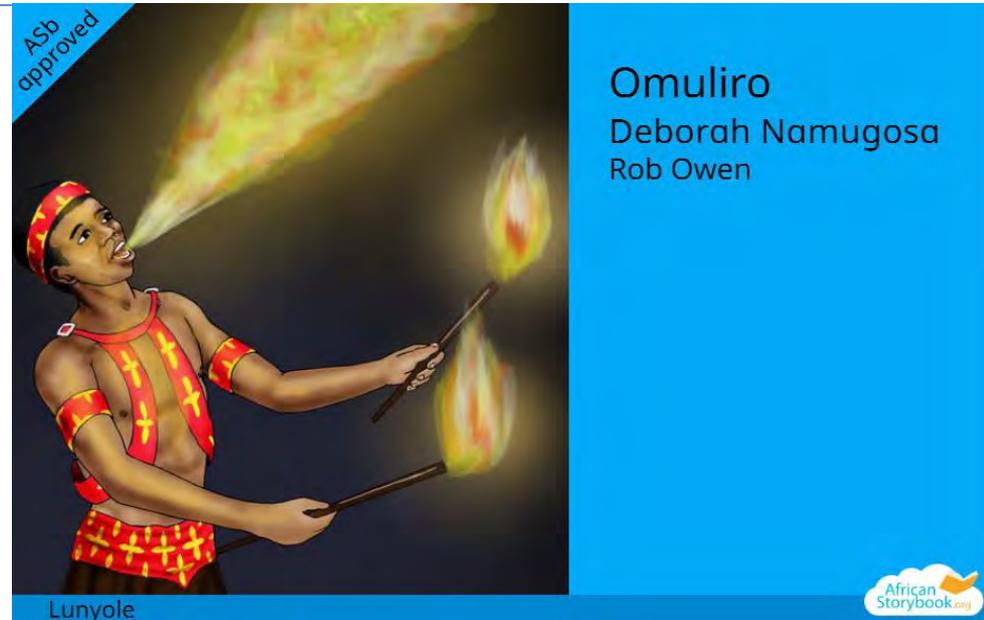
# Languaging about thematic vocabulary

- Example: *omugangi* which means *nurse* or *doctor* or even a *load*.



# Languaging in a collaborative writing exercise

Each teacher drafted a version in Lunyole of the same story and then shared it with the group. Ideas, words and phrases from these individual stories were then selected for one group story, the first version of which was written on flip chart paper by the coordinator in response to dictation from the teachers. As a group they then decided on improvements to the storyline, grammar, vocabulary and spelling.



*Now available in Arabic,  
Somali, Zande, Samburu, as  
well as Ugandan languages of  
Dhophadola and Lusoga*

# And the story-making continued after our project ended



## Buttons

Nahyuha Sarah

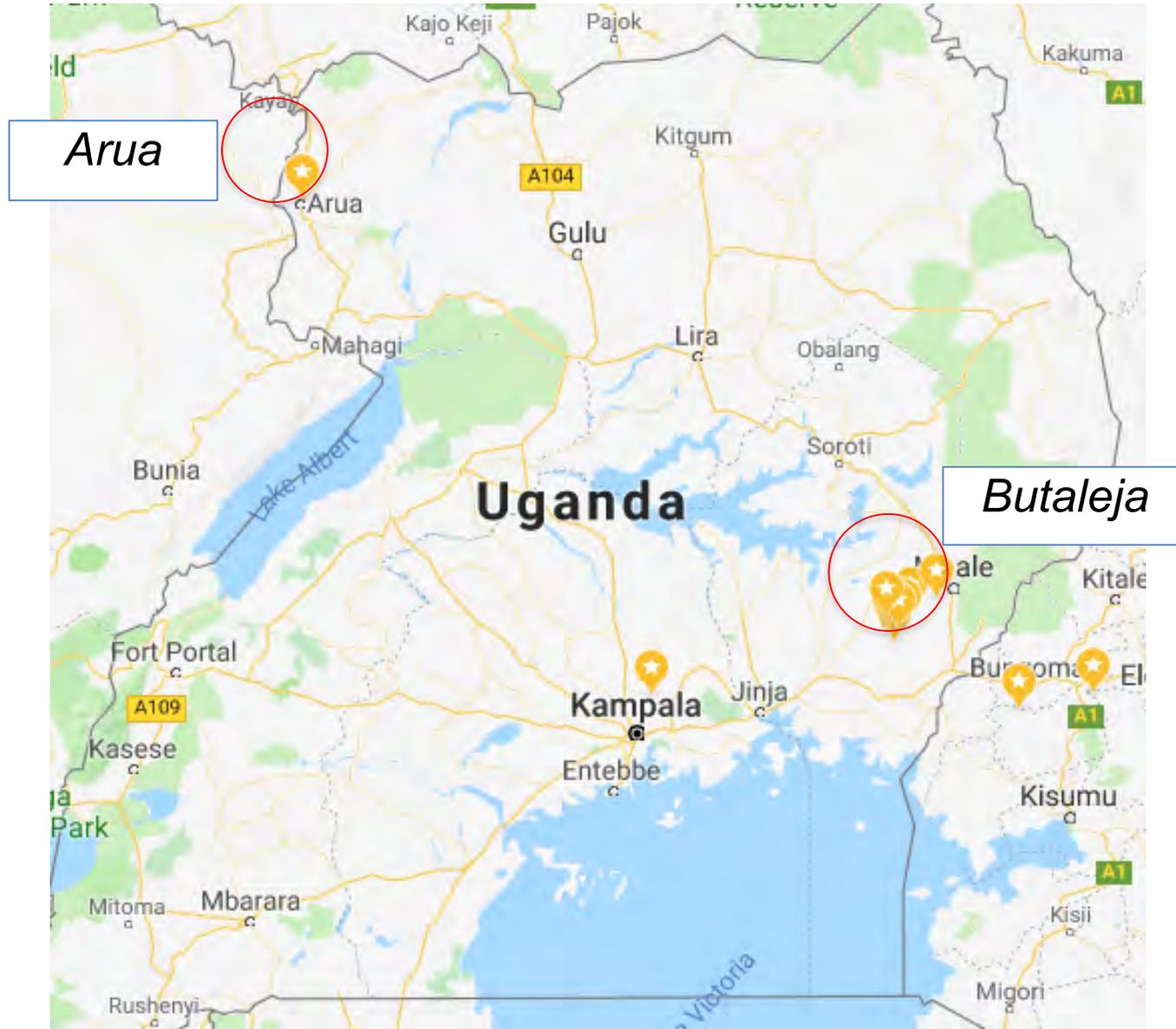
Wiehan de Jager

English

# Comments from the Butaleja teachers

- 'I'm learning how to write the grammar'.
- 'Workshops have helped me to learn how to teach in the literacy hour'.
- 'I can write a story in mother tongue, considering the age level of classes'.
- 'Children are now participating actively in my lessons'.
- 'I used to contest teaching in the mother tongue but now I'm interested'.
- 'The time is not enough for professional development'.
- 'The lack of support from the Department of Education is disappointing'.
- 'I need more books in Lunyole'.
- 'I'm disappointed that I still can't create rhymes and tongue twisters'.

# African Storybook: Addressing the shortage of local language books, but also how they are used



# Findings from Stranger-Johannessen's PhD study of African Storybook in Arua (2015 – 2017)

- Because the books are narratives there can be natural language learning, 'new words every day'.
- Because the books are local, teachers and learners feel empowered to engage and interpret what they read. They read for meaning – 'hermeneutic empowerment'.
- Because the stories are picture storybooks, meaning can be made from the pictures as well.
- Several of the stories also enabled teachers to challenge traditional gender roles. For example, a story created by a South African, *Andiswa soccer star*, enabled productive discussions of the fact that girls can play soccer too.
- Teachers were excited to be able not only to consume the material that was given to them, but also to contribute their own.

(Stranger-Johannessen & Norton 2017: 51ff)

# Theorising the effects

All groups have contributions to make to curriculum (Comber)

- *The assumption that all students are capable of researching how language works, that all cultural groups have significant contributions to make to understandings of literate practices and that all texts should be subject to question is central to 'curriculum justice' for all (Comber 2016:5).*

Importance of igniting **teacher agency** – not something people **have**, but something they **do** (Priestly et al 2012). Agency

- *denotes a 'quality' of the engagement of actors with temporal- relational-context-for-action, not a quality of the actors themselves. Viewing agency in such terms helps us to understand how humans are able to be reflexive and creative, acting counter to societal constraints, but also how individuals are enabled and constrained by their social and material environments.*

# Theorising the effects – the notion of investment (rather than motivation)

*The Modern Language Journal*, 101, Supplement 2017

FIGURE 1

Darvin and Norton's (2015) Model of Investment.

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Investment is not just about the individual, but is 'co-constructed by learners, teachers and community practices, in the context of shifting relations of power' (Darvin and Norton 2015).

## Contexts in which investment is likely to be high

*Investment is enhanced when the pedagogical practices of the teacher increase the range of identities available to language learners, whether face-to-face, digital, or online.*

*To affirm learners' complex identities, classroom practices need to draw from and legitimize learners' cultural capital – their prior knowledge and experience - while seeking to better understand and affirm learners' imagined identities.*

Stranger-Johannessen and Norton, 2017

# So what is needed?

I propose that what is needed is a concerted effort to stimulate the investment of teachers in African language reading teaching.

- We need to recognise the language and cultural capital our teachers have and give them opportunities to build on this capital to extend their existing identities – as story makers, contributors to the curriculum and digital citizens.

## So what is needed?

- We need to create spaces for teachers to explore the patterns and nuances of living varieties of African languages.
- We need to encourage teachers to use dictionaries and lesson plans as guides and supports, rather than as rules to be followed mindlessly.
- We need to stop complaining that teachers don't have agency, and rather create opportunities for them to practise agency.

## References

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Thank you!