ENGLISH-ONLY INSTRUCTION: A COMPARATIVE CASE-STUDY OF A RURAL AND AN URBAN PUBLIC BASIC SCHOOL IN GHANA

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By

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Raymond Karikari Owusu, candidate for the degree of Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction, has presented a thesis titled, *English-only instruction: A comparative case-study of a rural and an urban basic school in Ghana*, in an oral examination held on March 13, 2017. The following committee members have found the thesis acceptable in form and content, and that the candidate demonstrated satisfactory knowledge of the subject material.

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Abstract

This study takes a critical look at ‘English-only’ medium of instruction in Ghana. Like many African countries, Ghana has multiple languages. Davis and Agbenyega (2012) estimate that Ghana has approximately 49 spoken languages and dialects. Local languages are used for everyday life in local communities. English is learned in school and spoken mainly in official places. English was used by British administration as the language of government, law, education and the national newspaper (Sey 1973) and remains the sole official language of Ghana today. This study draws on a historical overview of Ghanaian language-in-education policy (from 1961 Education Act to present). The comparative case study examined the effects of English-only instruction on students in two classrooms, one in rural Ghana and another in urban Ghana. The research questions are: 1) How do students whose mother tongue is not English respond to English-only instruction? and 2) What are the distinguishing effects of the policy on rural and urban students education and lives? The two elementary schools are located in an Akan language (Twi) region. Data sources include classroom observations (level of participation, instructional strategies, and classroom discourses of emerging bilinguals) and one-on-one interviews with teachers. Teachers were asked about the respective roles of English and Twi in their daily school activities. In light of differences in rural and urban community social, economic, and infrastructural circumstances, this study provides answers to the question of how one national language-in-education-policy affects students differently. Findings from the study show that the English-only medium of instruction gets negotiated and resisted by teachers. Teachers engage in code-switching, code-mixing and translation, and sometimes Twi
dominated lessons in the classroom. I conclude that English-only language policy in Ghana does not work equally for the students in both schools. Although students in the Urban School have challenges with the policy, students in the Rural School are comparatively more disadvantaged. I recommend bilingual education of English and Indigenous languages in Ghana to address linguistic imbalances in its education system. Policymakers should not lose sight of the fact that each community has unique socio-economic and linguistic circumstances and that a general language policy will not work for all. Lastly, I recommend that Ghana should redefine literacy learning and the education of the nation. Education and literacy should not be defined as only people who can read, write and communicate fluently in English. People who can exhibit the same skills and qualities in their mother tongue must be accorded the same recognition and should be allowed to play elite vital role in formal settings.
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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to all my children to inspire them to work hard academically to achieve more than I have achieved.
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CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

I have had long years of schooling partly due to my added goal to have solid grounding in English as my second language. At every point in my education, I have realized that I would have to improve my English in order to advance to the highest level in Ghana or any other place. Why has learning and improving English become such a determining factor in my quest and other peoples’ quest to succeed in life? The idea of the importance of learning English both forms and informs my research questions. 1. How do students whose mother tongue is not English language respond to English only instruction? 2. What are the distinguishing effects of the policy on rural and urban students? My research grows out of the experiences I have had as a teacher of English as second language speakers and also as an English language learner myself. I begin this thesis by recounting some of my lived experiences that help to demonstrate the central role the English language has played in my life.

I was born and raised in a small village in Ghana. I lived with my mother in the village until I joined my father in an urban community when I was eleven years old. Although my mother was an elementary school graduate, she could not read or write English. Likewise, all members of my family (both nuclear and extended) were in the same circumstance as my mother which meant that I had no access to English at home. The only place for me to learn English was in school. I learned to read English in school but I didn’t understand what I read, however, I was very proficient in Twi, my mother tongue (both oral and written). I used Twi for the literacy practices that were important to me at that time. Letters that I wrote to my father were all in Twi. I became one of the readers of Twi scripture in church when I was in primary 4 (grade 4 in the Canadian context). In spite of
my Twi literacy abilities, I was preoccupied with the fact that no member of my family could read, write, or speak English. My worries deepened when it was becoming clear that I was also going to end up as the rest of my family members. I kept telling myself that if I were able to read and interpret any letters written in English that came to the family (extended family), my schooling would be worthwhile.

To ensure that this humble ambition became a reality, I began a journey in search of English proficiency. I ended up in my father’s urban town in 1990, where I completed the rest of my junior high education. As I entered my new classroom, I realized that communication among the students was not in Twi but in English. Although not every student could speak English, those who could not remained quiet in class just to avoid the consequences of not speaking English. Because I could not utter any English words in response when they attacked me, my new classmates used English to bully and intimidate me most of the time. I was also worried and confused in class because I did not understand lessons delivered by teachers, which were completely in English. My new English surroundings were a great trial, but I worked hard to overcome the challenge.

Once I began to write simple sentences and speak simple English, I soon determined that the English spoken by my classmates to intimidate me was not so good. As my confidence in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing English grew, I realized I could achieve more than what I initially imagined. My pursuit for English intensified. In all this, I didn’t lose proficiency in my mother tongue. In the national examination at junior high level, I scored grade 1 (highest grade) and grade 3 in Twi and English respectively. At the time, I wondered how my Twi-dominant friends in my former school performed in
the same exam. I was very glad for this remarkable achievement within two years of schooling in an urban school. As a result, I gained admission into senior high school.

The expectation in high school was to perform very well in English to gain admission into a post-secondary institution. Apart from elective subjects, English, mathematics, and general science were the three main subjects required for admission into post-secondary institutions. Yet again, I had to boost my pace to acquire English to succeed. When I thought everything was going well for me in school, I didn’t know that I was neglecting the development of my mother tongue Twi. Consequently, I obtained the lowest level grades in both English and Twi in the final of national examination. My poor performance in Twi could be attributed to the fact that though the language was examinable, it was not a requirement for gaining admission into tertiary institution. As such, I did not study Twi with the same intensity or purpose that I used for my English studies. Despite my weak performance in English, I progressed to tertiary institution because between 1993 and 1997 the pass rate in English for students in a newly introduced three-year high school program was very low. The lowest level grade obtained was accepted by all Ghanaian universities at that time.

After high school, I pursued a three-year teacher education program. When I completed teacher education, coincidentally, I was stationed at one of the deprived communities in the same region I lived in. I taught mathematics and pre-technical skill (practical and applied arts in Canadian context) in the school. The situation in the school was similar to my hometown where I began my elementary education. The school had scored zero percent in final national examinations over the years. This meant those students could not progress to high school. Because of this barrier, those students’ chances of
joining the elite in society were curtailed. The prevailing situation in that school was that the students did not have the proficiency in English to write and pass the national examination to guarantee their progress to the next level of the education ladder. All national and examination questions in all the subjects offered apart from a Ghanaian language were/are set and answered in English. At that point in my life I began to reflect more deeply on this teaching experience as well as my own relationship to English. I came to the conclusion then that I had gone through a sort of cycle that had landed me back at where I began my struggles. I wondered why after years of encountering the same experiences in my early years of schooling the situation remained the same and even worse. I felt it was a waste of resources (both human and material) for a teacher to teach in a language students do not understand, and for them to fail in examination, only to become school dropouts. I had been looking for an opportunity to change the way things are done. I have provided the foregoing anecdotes as prelude to my study to show how deeply my past experiences are reflected in this study. It has also helped inform the theoretical standpoint of this study.

**Overview of history of Ghanaian language in education policy and practices**

In order to understand the focus and purpose of my study as well as my childhood experiences, it’s necessary to begin with an overview of Ghanaian language-in-education policy, both past and present. Ghana was a British colony from early 19th century until 1957 (Owu-Ewie, 2006). Until the colonialists introduced the formal form of education pre-colonial education in Ghana was conducted in the traditional form, using Indigenous languages. Before the arrival of the British, the Portuguese, Dutch, and Danes had already established occupation along the coastal parts of the then Gold Coast (now Ghana). As a
result of being a British colony in the past, English language continues to be widely spoken in Ghana. Adika (2012) explains English became the language of trade, education, governance, and a cross ethnic lingua franca under British rule. According to Adika, the development of English in Ghana began when the British started to train Ghanaians as interpreters and later opened formal schools through the missionaries. This means that the British people were highly focused on economic gains in Ghana rather than on empowering the people through education for all. Ghana gained independence from Britain in 1957. With the inception of formal education in Ghana, which paved the way for the use of English language as the medium of instruction, the native languages became “inadequate” as a teaching media (Bamgbose, 2000; Owu-Ewie, 2006). Poor attitudes to Ghanaian languages in education are not attributable to only colonial government but post-colonial governments as well.

Today, English has become the sole official language of Ghana, despite the fact that another 49 languages and dialects are spoken across the country (Davis & Agbenyega, 2012). Nine of the languages which have been approved to be studied in schools of spoken communities have written literature (Opoku-Amankwa, 2012). The nine languages are Akan, Dagaare/Wale, Dagbane, Dangme, Ewe, Ga, Gonja, Kasem and Nzema. Five of the languages, namely Akan, Dagbane, Ewe, Ga, and Nzema are spoken on national radio and television (Ansah, 2008). Like many African countries, Ghana has multiple languages making Ghana a multilingual country. Every ethnic group speaks their local dialect in their communities. Due to interethnic marriages and migration, it is also common to identify certain communities as multilingual. English, the official language, is used in schools as the medium of instruction and other official places. Considering the numerous local
languages spoken in the country by various ethnic groups, the English language therefore serves as the lingua franca. In Ghana, English is often perceived as being a language that can be used to unify the people. Davis and Agbenyega (2012) attribute this position to the fact that the country could plunge itself into social and political disintegration if any government chose one local language as the official language. As a result of the multilingual nature of Ghana, English is widely used in both official and unofficial places depending on which part of the country you find yourself and with whom you speak.

The point that English plays the role of a neutral language because of the multilingual and multiethnic situation in Ghana and other African countries is not supported by experts gathered at an intergovernmental conference on language policy held in Zimbabwe. During the conference, experts gathered came out with interesting proposals for implementation across Africa. Among other things, the experts concluded that:

The multiplicity of languages in Africa was not a bug bear but a source of enrichment. Thus, the ideal policy should enable the African people to maintain their ethnic identity through the local language or mother tongue, while at the same time they should be allowed to integrate into the national community through the predominant language or through one of the major national languages, while they still interacted with the rest of the world through a language of wider or international communication. (Chimhundu, 2002, p. 11)

It is therefore erroneous to suggest that since most African countries, including Ghana are multilingual and multiethnic it is imperative to adopt a foreign language as a language of unity. Those who claim a foreign language (in this case English) should be used as unifying
as well as for global purposes would only succeed in undermining national identity and extinction of Indigenous languages.

Most former British colonies who adopted English as their official language have remained under-developed because the language of education and the education system are foreign to the socio-cultural heritage of the people. Critical voices and empirical evidence are undoubtedly required to address what I consider to be social injustice. Thankfully, the issue has become a major topic for discussion currently in Ghana after the present Minister of Education hinted of plans of her ministry to implement the use of local language as medium of instruction in schools. I hope to add my critical voice to the ongoing debate through this study.

Like any other country, Ghana has a history of educational reforms, dating back from the colonial era to present. Some of the basis for the reforms is to ensure that the education sector is structured along current local and international demands and, of course, modern trends of development. For instance, in 1974 Ghana reverted to a former policy of using Ghanaian language as the medium of instruction at the lower primary level (Davis & Agbenyega, 2012). English was studied as a subject at that level. This policy was aimed at giving currency to the use of local languages. However, in 2002 there was a dramatic turn to the implementation of an English-only language policy in education. The new language policy came into being, as usual, after a new government took over in 2000. According to the policy, the medium of instruction from primary one (grade 1) should be English, with a Ghanaian language studied as compulsory subject up to senior secondary (high school) (Ameyaw-Akumfi, 2002, as cited in Owu-Ewie, 2006). The Minister of Education, Prof. Ameyaw-Akumfi provided eight reasons why there should be English-only instruction at
all levels of education in Ghana. I discuss some of the reasons here but the rest can be found in appendix 1.

Among the reasons, the Minister stated that teachers abused the former policy that encouraged the use of Ghanaian languages as medium of instruction from primary one (grade one) to primary three (grade three). The policy was abused because teachers resorted to using only Ghanaian language when they were supposed to use English. The Minister also went on to say that after completion of high school, students are unable to construct good sentences, read properly and speak proficiently in English. Another reason given was that it is difficult to teach in a Ghanaian language in urban communities because of their multicultural nature. This particular reason is contradictory to the same language policy because the policy does not discourage the use of Ghanaian languages in schools. It only emphasizes the use of English as medium of instruction and a Ghanaian language studied as a course up to senior high level. The point I want to make here is that schools, whether they are located in multilingual or monolingual communities teach a particular Ghanaian language. Ghanaian languages studied in schools are among the nine officially approved local languages and must be commonly spoken in the community the school is located. The point that there are no teaching materials for Indigenous languages does not resonate with me. I believe that if the same amount of effort that is put into developing English language is extended to Ghanaian languages, the above challenges could be addressed. There is, rather, a lack of political will on the part of successive governments. If after political independence we continue to undermine our Indigenous languages based on the aforementioned grounds, then little can be said about our claim to a sovereign country. As to whether or not the above reasons are justifiable remains to be investigated through
empirical studies. I raise my own disagreement with some of the reasons cited but further subject my opinion to painstaking critical determination through this study. Discussions over the use of English or local languages crop up after every change of administration in Ghana. Language policy in education in Ghana has therefore not been consistent.

The most recent educational reform happened in 2007. Unlike in 2002 where the changes were specific to language for education in Ghana, the 2007 policy document was a complete reform of the entire education sector. This reform also touched on the language for instruction. The report states “the medium of instruction in Kindergarten and Lower Primary will be a Ghanaian language and English, where necessary” (p. 2). My search did not cite any new document that replaces the 2007 education reform. I therefore consider the 2007 reform to be the current as of the time of this study. Changes effected over the years in Ghana were aimed at fine-tuning its educational system, particularly the language policy. The 2007 reform did not completely annul the use of English-only for instruction at all levels of education. Rather, it made it open for educators to adopt the best medium of instruction under the prevailing circumstances. While this seems commendable because of flexibility in the implementation process, teaching kindergarten students with English-only can be seen as not effective. It is not their mother tongue so they will struggle if the necessary resources are not in place.

We can see from the overview of Ghanaian language policies that educational reforms are short-lived. Judging from the year interval between 2002 and 2007 reforms, one can conclude that policies in education implemented in Ghana do not get well tested before they are replaced. As discussions on challenges in education sector rages on, new reforms become a possibility.
Overview of current media discussions over English instruction in Ghana

In the process of organizing my thoughts and ideas to conduct this M.Ed. research, discussions in the media ensued as a result of a statement made by Professor Jane Naana Opoku-Agyemang, Minister of Education (former Vice Chancellor of University of Cape Coast) during a forum held on 16th October, 2015 at the University of Ghana. The issue again gained headline prominence in Ghanaian media, notably Joy FM, a popular radio station in Accra. On this station, as well as on their online blog My Joy Online, there have been extensive discussions of educational language policy. The Minister in this instance has opened up another opportunity for debate and has also provided reasons for change in language of instruction.

The Minister stated that “very soon Ghana would change the use of English as medium of instruction in school” (Essel, 2015). The Minister is of the view that Ghanaian students struggle in school because they are taught in a language they don’t understand. This, according to her, has affected the development of the country. She cited Korea as an example of the countries that used to be economically at the same level as Ghana but has far advanced due to the use of local language in educating their people. Conversely, Korea has in recent years focused on huge investment in the development of English in the country. The Minister further indicated that “in order for Africa to end poverty, it must focus on quality, relevant education delivered in the right medium” (Essel, 2015). She is of the view that once the country removes English as the medium of instruction, “there would be change.” Change here, to my understanding, refers to economic development leading to prosperity. The Minister’s statement received support from a number of educationists. For instance, during another radio discussion, Mr. Michael Nsowah (former
Director General of Ghana Education Service (GES), supported the Minister’s decision by indicating that “research has proven that children are able to learn faster when they are taught in language they play with” (My Joy Online, 2015). The basis for arguing for a new language policy in Ghana by the Minister has not only received support, but has encouraged other educationists to add their voices.

For instance, Issah Baffoe and Anthony Kwaku Amoah (an educationist and public relations officer respectively at the headquarters of GES) wrote an article that was published on 30th October, 2015 by My Joy Online about the use of Ghanaian language as medium of instruction in schools. In the post, the authors provide a chronological history of the language policy of education. They contend that it is through fluency and control over one’s own language that a society can build the foundation for removing poverty and ignorance since native languages can best explain the customs, culture and traditions of a country. The authors further add that Ghana Education Service (GES), through the support of USAID, has rolled out an intervention program known as National Literacy Accelerated Program (NALAP) at grades 1-3 to address literacy problems of pupils. If Ghana is facing literacy problems among students, then it is time to reconsider the language of instruction. What these current media discussions tell us is that the 2007 reform on language policy falls short of addressing fundamental problems regarding the choice of an appropriate language of instruction. The educationists who contributed to the discussions seek to proffer the utilization of Indigenous languages in Ghana for instruction.

Unfortunately, the Minister who proposed use of local languages for instruction has exited office a little over a year of coming out with the idea of change of language of instruction to local languages. This happened as a result of a change of government after
general elections in Ghana on December 7, 2016. As happens usually in every change of government in Ghana, the new Minister has a contradictory idea to that of his predecessor. In an answer to a vetting committee on whether Ghanaian languages should be used as medium of instruction, the Minister-designate stated that English should be maintained as medium of instruction. Among the reasons given by the Minister-designate was that English has provided Ghanaians competitive global advantage. Incidentally, the current party in power introduced the English-only language policy in 2002.

**Overview of sociolinguistic situation in Ghana**
This section deals with sociolinguistic situation in Ghana and how languages spoken in Ghana play out in the socio-economic space. Specifically, I will look at the various groups of languages spoken by the respective ethnic groups. As has already been in this chapter, Ghana, with a population of 24,658,823 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010) has 49 languages and dialects, making the country multilingual and multiethnic. I draw on Obeng (1997), Bodomo (1996) and Ansah (2008) analysis of linguistic situation of Ghana in this section. Ghana has been divided into ten administrative regions – Greater Accra, Ashanti, Central, Western, Eastern, Northern, Upper East, Upper West and Brong Ahafo regions. These regions do not necessarily correspond to ethnic and linguistic divisions in the country. Languages in Ghana can be identified under families and groups.

According to Obeng (1997) “…there are three major language families - Kwa, Gur and Mande - all belonging to Proto-Niger-Congo, in Ghana, which shows the extent to which Ghana is linguistically heterogeneous” (p. 64). Bodomo (1996) also divides Indigenous languages in Ghana into ten major groups. These groups are derived from the three major language families. The divisions do not necessarily reflect the number of
regions. The groups of languages according to Bodomo are: 1. The Akan group which comprises Agona, Akuapem Twi, Akyem, Asante Twi, Brong, Fante, Kwahu and Wasa. This group represents 47.5% of Ghana’s population (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010). 2. The Mabia group includes Dagbane, Dagaare, Gurenne, Kusaal, Mamprul, Buli, Waale, Talni, Birifor, Nanuni, Nabit, Konni and Hanga-Kamara. According to Bodomo, this group is located in Northern Ghana with a representation of 16% of national population. 3. The Gbe group representing Fon, Aja and Mina in neighboring Togo and Benin are largely Ewe within Ghana (some Ewe people are found in Togo). The Ewe people form 13.9% of the total population of Ghana (Ghana Statistical Services, 2010). 4. The Ga-Dangbe group comprising Ada, Shai and Krobo. Speakers of these languages represent 7.4% of the total population of Ghana (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010) 5. The Gurma group includes Konkomba, Moba and Bassari. They are found at the eastern sides of the Upper-East and Northern regions. According to Bodomo speakers of this language group have very few speakers. 6. The Guang group is made up of Gonja, Gichode, Nchumburu, Krachi, Nawuri, Nkonya, Cherepong, Awutu and Effutu. This language group can be found in various regions in Ghana such as the Northern, Brong-Ahafo, Volta, Central and Eastern regions. Speakers of this language group are estimated at 251,810 (Dakubu 1988, as cited in Bodomo). 7. The Nzema group which includes Nzema, Sehwi, Anyi (Aowin), Ahanta and Anufo (Chakosi) had 226,920 speakers from 1960 (Bodomo, 1996). The Grusi group comprises Kasem, Isaaleng, Chakali, Tampulma, Vagla and Mo. People who speak these languages are found in the Upper-East, Upper-West and Northern regions. There are over 177,266 speakers of this language group. 9. The Buem group which includes languages like Adele, Lelemi, Bowiri, Sekpele, Siwu, Santrokofi, Logba and Avatime. Northern part
of the Volta region is where these languages can be found. Bodomo puts speakers of this language group at less than 100,000. 10. The Nafaaran group comprising Nkuraeng, Nafaanra and Ntrubo-Chala. This language group is found to the western end of the Brong-Ahafo region, bordering Côte d'Ivoire. These do not number more than fifty thousand speakers. There are other West African languages such as the Chadic language, Hausa, and some Mande languages spoken in parts of Ghana (Bodomo, 1996).

It can be noticed from the above statistical synopsis that Akans are most predominant group in Ghana (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010) considering the greater percentage of speakers. Obeng (1997) and Ansah (2008) speculate that the Akan language group is spoken by 60% of Ghanaians as mother tongue and as a second language. The language is essential for trade and communication beyond its borders in Ghana (Ansah, 2008). For example, according to Ansah the Akan language is used for about 95% of programs on radio and television in non-Akan ethnic communities. This shows the economic and commercial value of the Akan language in Ghana. The Akan language by all indication is the fastest growing indigenous language in Ghana. Speakers (natives) of the Akan language have over the years held high economic and political positions in Ghana (Ansah, 2008). Based on the evidence provided here, one would not to be wrong to conclude that among the language groups, Akan is the one which is national in character in terms of speakers and geographical presence in Ghana. Nonetheless, each of the other languages though with relatively smaller speakers are in no doubt very powerful and popular among speakers.

Obeng (1997) asserts English, Akan, and Hausa are the major lingua franca in Ghana. As far as I know no literature has been produced on the Hausa language. It is also
neither learned nor taught in school like English and Akan. However, Hausa has become a popular language in Ghana because of its cross-border and inter-ethnic functions. I conclude that although English is used as the official language of Ghana for government and official businesses, there are other languages that have comparatively greater number of speakers who utilize the languages for economic and communicative functions. Ghana must therefore see its linguistic and ethnic diversity as an asset rather than a hindrance to national cohesion and peaceful coexistence.

**Statement of purpose**

Since my goal is to consider issues of power and equality potentially produced by current language policy on students, I approach this qualitative comparative case study using a critical perspective. My research may contribute to bringing about change and improvement to classroom learning situations of students. Giroux (1982) argues that critical theorists usually take advocacy position in different social action to ensure total transformation of societies (as cited in Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba 2011). This description mirrors the position I take in my research.

The current language policy of Ghana, which seeks to equip students with speaking and writing skills in English, actually undermines the mother tongue of learners. Lack of serious planning to develop Ghanaian languages is not helpful. Since Ghana attained independence in 1957, the country’s educational system has been structured to give more credence to Western knowledge. The education system produces graduates to earn wage employment, gain prestige and occupy positions but pays little attention to Indigenous knowledge that people bring with them to school (Adjei, 2007). The current language in education policy in Ghana reinforces English hegemony. The role played by English in
Ghana where Indigenous languages are undermined can only be described as extension of Western imperialism (linguistic imperialism). Education is supposed to bring social change and development. Social change also requires development of Indigenous knowledge, culture and languages. But the continual production of students of Ghanaian schools who are further alienated from their culture, knowledge, values, and worldviews (Adjei, 2007) is detrimental to the country’s true national identity. Once I began graduate studies in Canada, I determined that a study into this phenomenon could be one of the ways to bring change, hence this study.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the use of English as a medium of instruction, especially at the lower level of education in Ghana using a comparative case study of a rural and an urban setting. My study is guided by two research questions. First, how do students whose mother tongue is not English language respond to English only instruction? Second, what are the distinguishing effects of the policy on rural and urban students? Eisenhardt (1989) notes that in comparative research, two or more units must be studied to identify similarities and differences between units. This can take place using one or multiple organizations, groups, or social situations (Stewart, 2014). In light of differences in rural and urban community social, economic, and infrastructural circumstances, this study provides insights into the question of how one national language-in education-policy affects students differently. I carefully observe students' level of participation, instructional strategies, and classroom discourses of emerging bilinguals. I also conduct interviews to obtain teachers’ experiences and views about the policy.

Prior to this study, my view was that the current language policy of Ghana does not offer suitable arrangement for students to achieve academic competency in their mother
tongue so as to gain the benefits of studying in the mother tongue. The policy undermines students’ rate and capacity of content acquisition in the classroom. For these reasons, my study comes at an opportune time; a time when critical voices are being raised over the English-only instruction. I critically examine the effects of the current language policy in education in Ghana and provide cogent suggestions for future policy alternatives to improve teaching and learning. This scholarly study contributes to the ongoing discussion and provides empirical evidence to enrich decision processes with Ghana’s language in education planning.

**Summary**

In this chapter, I have provided the rationale for this study. The rationale is empowered by my personal experiences as a teacher and also as an English learner. I followed it up with an overview of educational policies practiced in Ghana over the years. This provides an overview of how language policies and practices have evolved in the history of the country. I have also explained the purpose of this study in this chapter. Lastly, I have shared my researcher-subject positioning as far as this study is concerned, which is informed by a critical perspective.
CHAPTER TWO - Literature review

Introduction

This chapter examines studies about language in education in Ghana and other English-speaking African countries. No research study is conducted in a vacuum. It is important to conduct a literature review to obtain ideas and concepts in the field of educational policy and planning for discussion. This chapter is organized according to carefully selected themes relating to the use of English in school and outside school. These are: (1) Language in education policy and practice in African countries, (2) English and
schooling in Ghana, (3) Role of mother tongue in bilingual education, and (4) Negotiation and resistance to language policies in schools. In reviewing scholarly works about language policies and practices implemented in other African countries, I seek to understand what informs decisions of policy makers in African countries that were colonized by Britain. The countries whose language policies were examined are Zambia, Tanzania, South Africa, Namibia, Malawi, Burundi, Nigeria, and Kenya. All the countries were former British colonies. I find connections from the above countries with my study because like Ghana, they all have a history of choosing English over Indigenous languages. In addition, the countries are all multilingual and multi-ethnic.

On my review of literature about English language and schooling in Ghana, I seek to understand discourses in classrooms in Ghana under English instruction. I consider this theme important because the review provides information as to what happens in classrooms in Ghana under English medium of instruction. I looked at all available sources of literature about all the themes and extensively discuss the ideas related to the Ghanaian context. Furthermore, on the role mother tongue play in bilingual education I examined several scholarly studies that point out the influential role mother tongue plays in cognitive development of bilingual children. My study’s standpoint is critical of English as medium of instruction instead of learners’ mother tongue. I therefore find scholars whose works support mother tongue instruction as my base in the context of this study. In view of that, I find it imperative to make convincing arguments with their ideas in support of this study. Lastly, I provide scholarly literature about how language policies are negotiated and resisted in classrooms. The review helps understand classroom discourses and interpretation teachers put to official language policies.
I move my discussion to another step by looking at the theme below. The purpose of this sub-section is to examine literature about language policy in education in other countries in Africa. I consider this theme important because other post-colonial African countries also have history of changes to language in education policy worth considering. At this stage, I define language in education policy as an official policy that specifies which languages to include in the curriculum and which language(s) to use for teaching and learning. Reviewing literature on language policy in other African countries will inform comparisons.

**Language in education policy and practice in Ghana and other African countries**

In this section, I review scholarly literature in a comparative fashion to help me understand why and how languages in education policies have evolved in former British colonies. I will discuss mother tongue education in comparison with English education and how both of them have impacted on children’s education. This section will also look at differences and similarities in language policies across the countries.

Colonial and postcolonial language policies in African countries that were once colonized share similarities in one way or the other due mainly to political, cultural, and linguistic repertoire. For example, Heugh (2008) conducted a study on language policy and education in southern Africa countries. Heugh reports in her introduction that:

The use of mother tongue (L1) education for primary education to the mid twentieth century in most countries was replaced by English only (Zambia) or early-transition to English after independence in several countries. Tanzania, South Africa and Namibia for different political reasons, retained and extended the use of the African
languages, to the end of primary school. Malawi retained one local language as medium for four years. Political changes since the early 1990s, however, have resulted in a similarly diminished use of African languages, coupled with an accelerated transition to English medium in Namibia and South Africa (p. 355).

The above extract suggests that under colonial rule, local languages were used as medium at lower levels of education. It is surprising that after independence some countries quickly changed from language policies that existed during colonial rule. Motivations for learning both English and African languages have, over the years, been mixed. Heugh (2008) explains that during colonial rule, the missionaries who came to southern Africa realized the importance of African languages to their evangelical work and, therefore, encouraged mother tongue literacy in primary education. The religious missionaries took further steps to ensure that the bible was translated into African languages. As the missionary groups applied a policy that favoured the development of local languages to achieve their mission, African countries, on the other hand, adopted English in education after independence for other reasons.

English has been adopted for high status functions in postcolonial English-speaking African countries (Heugh, 2008; Mfum-Mensah, 2005). Mfum-Mensah (2005) studied the impact of colonial and postcolonial Ghanaian language policies on vernacular use in schools in two northern Ghanaian schools. In an interview with community members, parents, school children and school authorities Mfum-Mensah found that the interviewees held the position that English proficiency is largely a panacea for educational advancement and social mobility. The community members in particular indicated that it was the right time for their children to acquire English proficiency because according to them without
English their children would “remain at the periphery of the mainstream Ghanaian society” (p. 81). English, thus, serves as a tool for achieving success socially, politically, and economically.

One thing that is common in the language policies practiced in most of the southern African countries is that they all implement either English only education or African language only medium at lower primary. This practice brings to light the critical role of languages in children’s academic development in their early stages. Prinsloo (2007) points out that “… language of instruction can materially influence the cognitive development and academic success of students” (p. 29). Webb (2004) describes this as an empowerment issue. Apart from empowerment, mother tongue instruction helps to keep national identity (Anyidoho & Dakubu, 2008). Policy makers have been inconsistent with the reasons for enforcing either English only or African language only at the primary level of education. Whichever way one looks at it, the benefits of mother tongue instruction cannot be overemphasized.

In making a case for the interdependence of language, cognition and academic point of view, Heugh (2008) argues that “…studies show a correlation between students who are studying in the L2, English, and the lowest levels of achievement” (p. 362). Heugh adds that students who learn through their L1, Afrikaans and English, produce the highest levels of achievement. When evaluated most types of bilingual education programs indicate similarly positive outcomes during grades 1-3 (Thomas & Collier, 2002). Early exit programs have been blamed for students’ poor performance and decline of academic progress because students do not sufficiently develop strong foundations in literacy and numeracy. According to Heugh (2008) early exit program is the language model used in
South Africa and other countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Early exit program is an early switch from L1 to English (i.e. mother tongue instruction from primary 1–3 after which only English is used). This was the language policy practiced in early 1990s in South Africa. South Africa’s current language policy in education is not strictly adhered to. Contrary to the language in education policy in South Africa that requires the home language to be used throughout school, more than 80% of learners study in a second language, mainly English (Howie, Venter, Van Standen, & Van Gelder, 2007). In Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi there were concerns since the mid-1990s over low achievement in literacy and general education. This led to suggestions for a language policy that emphasizes the extension of use of African languages and ‘additive bilingual principles” in schools (Heugh, 2008). Rwanda, an East African country has implemented several reforms of its education sector over the years. Rwantabagu’s (2011) scholarly article provides a historical perspective of Rwanda’s education.

Rwantabagu (2011) studied the dilemma of language in education in African countries, with particular reference to Burundi. In the study, Rwantabagu provides important details of the history of language in education policy in Burundi. The history relates to, but is not limited to, the 1924 Phelps-Stokes Commission’s proposal on the adoption of local languages in education and the 1973 reform and Kirundisation program. According to Rwantabagu (2011) after the 1973 reform, Burundi practiced Indigenous language dominated language in education policy known as Kirundisation. The Kirundisation program was aimed at using Kirundi as language of instruction at the primary level and also one of the major subjects at the secondary level and teacher training institutions. The policy makers were of the view that by using mother tongue and concepts
children are familiar with, they would achieve success while educational wastage rate would be reduced (Rwantabagu, 2011). This brilliant policy practiced in Burundi could have been used as reference by other multilingual countries that place premium over English languages but undermine local languages.

However, the Kirundisation program was revised in 1987 by the then government because of a lack of commitment on the part of policy-makers and also concerns raised by parents. The roots of their concerns are typically as a result of the institutionalization of English as a path to success in society. As practiced in most post-colonial African countries, the Kirundisation program was operational in only the first four years of primary education (Rwantabagu, 2011). Language policies across most African countries have over the years undergone a number of revisions. In most cases, revisions take place to alter language policies that favour the development and use of Indigenous languages for instruction. Policy makers arguably occupy elite positions in the country. As a result educational policies are formulated based on the ideals and aspirations of the elite. The elite prefer to educate their children in the English language because that guarantees social mobility. Recognizing English as panacea for social mobility is one of the root causes of lack of commitment to promote mother tongue education. It is therefore not surprising to see Rwanda’s original Kirundisation program revised to the first four years of primary education. Like Rwantabagu (2011) whose study brings to focus the need for mother tongue education, Brock-Utne (2007) study examines similar case in South Africa.

In a comparative study of students’ writing competency in IsiXhosa and English in South Africa, Brock-Utne (2007) reports of students’ performance in IsiXhosa outweighing English in picture descriptive exercise. Brock-Utne found that grade 4
students wrote stories in English that were largely incomprehensible and often had no bearing with the pictures. On the other hand, students’ work in IsiXhosa made sense although they provided responses by describing the pictures rather than narrating in a story form. Brock-Utne further discovered that grade 7 students showed remarkable English proficiency, but the performance was below expectations compared to the student’s performance in IsiXhosa. The high performances exhibited by the students in IsiXhosa highlight students’ ability to skillfully perform tasks in their mother tongue. Brock-Utne’s comparative study was based on African language medium of instruction from grade 1 to grade 3 (formerly was grade 4) and English only from grade 4 onwards. Brock-Utne demonstrates in the study how students struggle with English, a language they hardly hear outside the school, but are forced to learn in school. Brock-Utne’s study is relevant to my study because it shows the advantages of learning through mother tongue. The study also shows that students make sense in presenting their ideas in their mother tongue than in English. My study looks at similar circumstances Ghanaian students find themselves in school. The Brock-Utne (2007) study has highlighted the importance for children to learn in their mother tongue. Makoe and McKinney (2014) also performed a similar study in South Africa.

Makoe and McKinney (2014) analyzed language practice in post-apartheid schooling in South Africa by conducting a comparative study of a primary school and a secondary school in urban South Africa. They are of the view that national policy in education in post-apartheid South Africa continues to marginalize local languages in spite of prevailing “pluralism and diversity.” Makoe and McKinney, conclude:
In a society still as deeply divided and unequal as South Africa, ideological practices such as the ones illustrated here continue to reproduce social stratification and racialised patterns of domination and subordination in education. This glaringly unequal positioning of resources (particularly in multilingual spaces where learners have linguistic repertoires including two or more languages), its powers of exclusion, its role in shaping what knowledge should count and not count serve to perpetuate linguistic discrimination. (p. 670)

The above conclusion illustrates a total disregard for local languages in South Africa over the years. The study tells us that English continues to dominate in post-apartheid South Africa in spite of the existence of other Indigenous languages that are even popular among their speakers. Looking at the history of South Africa, bilingual education could foster equality between English and Indigenous languages. My study acknowledges the contribution of bilingualism in children’s education. I believe that English has part of the history of post-colonial African countries. Therefore, as African countries continue to use English to bridge the gap in multilingual societies, they should not undermine local languages in the process. There should be conscious efforts at mutually deriving benefits from English and local languages.

In developing a language policy in education, one should not lose sight of prevailing circumstances. Prinsloo (2007) examines normative views of language in education policy in South Africa. Prinsloo argues that, although the Department of Education in South Africa recognizes the benefits of mother-tongue instruction, children are obliged to receive education in a second or even a third language. Language in education practices largely contributes to the problems in the education sector. The
problems include low pass rate, students drop-out and others which are partly attributed to wrong choices of medium of instruction (Prinsloo, 2007). Language policies must address the needs of everybody particularly their socio-economic circumstances. Prinsloo states that:

The socio-economic backgrounds or particular circumstances of students are very relevant here. They are also the reason why, in first world contexts, programmes such as the Canadian immersion programmes are so successful. English Canadian children are part of a high socio-economic, dominant language speaking community and enjoy ‘linguistic security’ (Genesee, 1998, p. 253) and social and psychological advantages entirely lacking in most minority contexts. In comfortable, middle-class Canadian homes children receive support for their first language and cognitive development from a print-rich, mentally stimulating environment. And the programmes are not ‘submersive’, since the first language continues to receive support throughout their schooling, which compensates quite adequately for the reduced use of the mother tongue for instruction purposes. (p. 31)

Indeed, language policies in many African countries are failing the countries because they don’t match the socio-economic needs of the students. Each community in a multilingual and multicultural society has their unique challenges in whatever form. Language policy generalizations about language policies must be discouraged in multilingual countries. It is a disincentive to say that learners should learn their mother tongue because that is the language of their ancestors and language of their culture (Banda, 2000). There should be a pragmatic outline of the cognitive and socio-economic benefits learners are expected to derive from mother tongue education in a language policy
document. Furthermore, all states in Africa must create opportunities for the mother tongue of every community to be relevant in their socio-economic agenda. Through those parents, learners and students would realize the need to be literate in their mother tongue. This particular review is connected to my study because my study seeks to demonstrate the importance of learners’ mother tongue in language policy planning and implementation.

Perhaps, in light of the dominant role English has played in sub-Saharan Africa (during both the colonial and postcolonial eras), “hybrid language and literature practices in the classroom” (Makoe & McKinney, 2014, p. 661) would be mutually benefiting language policy. According to Makoe and McKinney (2014), hybrid language is the use of both students’ mother tongue and English in the classroom. There are current research studies that support the productive use of mixed codes practices in multilingual classrooms to facilitate smooth learning (see Canagarajah 2011; Creese & Blackledge 2010; Makoe and McKinney 2009). Creese and Blackledge (2010) conducted a case study of language of instruction in complementary schools in the United Kingdom: Gujarati and Chinese; French and English. The authors in their study make a case against proponents of bilingual study who have argued that languages should be separated in the learning and teaching of languages in multilingual settings. The authors suggest, however, that monolingual instruction strategy in multilingual classrooms do not facilitate access to curriculum. They therefore advocate for teaching strategies for bilingual children that ensure use of two languages side by side. A flexible bilingual strategy in the classroom would ensure that students derive understanding of content learned from a familiar language and also learn English alongside.
Another country worth examining is Kenya. Like Ghana, Kenya is also a multilingual country colonized by the British. However, unlike Ghana, the country recognizes two major languages as official universal languages. Kiswahili is the national language while English is the official language. Muthwii (2004) provides some historical background information about language policies in Kenya in a scholarly journal article. According to Muthwii, Kiswahili as a national language is used across the country as a unifying language. On the other hand, English as an official language is used as a language of business, academics, and in social spaces. The language in education policy in Kenya specifies that the mother tongue of the child should be used for instruction at lower primary (grade 1 to 3). “English (which is also Kenya’s official language) and Kiswahili (the country’s national language) are taught as subjects at this stage of learning, but from Grades 4–8, English is adopted as the language of instruction in all schools” (Republic of Kenya, 1976) as cited in (Muthwii, 2004, p. 15). Kenya has utilized the diglossic situation in the country to ensure that English and Kiswahili are equally developed and applied in official discourses. The practice in Kenya can be viewed as trilingual education. The currency given to an Indigenous language in Kenya is what other post-colonial countries should emulate.

Students in Kenya study at least three languages in school, which comprise of students’ mother tongue and two other general languages. It is curious that Kiswahili, a national language, is relegated to the background for English to be used as medium of instruction after lower primary. Unlike other multilingual countries which think choosing one language over the others could create political and ethnic problems, Kenya has been successful in selecting Kiswahili as a national language. Kenya has been able to overcome
that perceived challenge because Kiswahili is widely spoken in the country and also in other neighbouring countries (Muthwii, 2004). However, Kenya’s language policy in education falls short of being a good example to other countries because it fails to promote Kiswahili for instruction in upper primary and beyond. Consequently, the practice has lent credence to the hegemonic status enjoyed by English language across former British colonies.

Malawi has a similar history of language policy to Kenya. Kamwendo (2008) examined the 1996 Ministry of Education language policy for Malawian children. The policy stated that standard 1-4 would be taught through their mother tongue. Kamwendo indicates that the policy was not implemented until after eight years where it was piloted. Kamwendo’s study highlights how policy makers in Africa, in most cases, pay lip service to any policy aimed at developing Indigenous languages. My study seeks to demonstrate the critical role of mother tongue education to inform policy makers. It is quite difficult to imagine why some post-colonial African countries do not extend equal attention to any policy that promotes mother tongue education.

Kamwendo (2008) also provides an interesting history of education policies implemented in Malawi over the years. According to Kamwendo, by law Malawi has both Chichewa (an Indigenous language) and English as national languages. In practice English is the language of schools and courts. The percentage of people in Malawi who spoke Chichewa in Malawi in 1964 was 76% (Matiki, 2001). “The 1998 census (National Statistical Office, 1998) found, Malawi had 13 languages, and Chichewa was the most widely used language of household communication, followed by Chiyao and Chitumbuka” (Kamwendo, 2008, p. 358). After independence from the British in 1964, the then
Malawian president decided to adopt Chichewa as a national language to bring cohesion and unity among the people (Kamwendo, 2008). I have problem with the design of this policy because it falls short of acknowledging the multilingual and multicultural nature of Malawi. Chichewa and English are now the official languages of Malawi and all other Indigenous languages remain useful in private functions and respective homes (Kamwendo & Kachiwanda, 2008). The situation in Malawi helps me make connections with Ghana. Although Ghana has English as its official language, there is a language (Akan) which is widely spoken across the country but for some reasons has not been given any ‘official recognition’ (for want of better words). As of 1980 where the population of Ghana was 14.5 million, Akan speakers made up 44% (Laitin, 1994). Estimated population of Ghana in 2016 is at about 28 million.

Kamwendo (2008) again reports language policy of Malawi indicates that Chichewa should be used as the medium of instruction from standard 1 to 4. English language takes over from standard 5 onwards (Kamwendo, 2008), giving English high status. In as much as I agree with the language policy in Malawi that seeks to develop an Indigenous language, I have problem with Chichewa being the language of instruction in places where Chichewa is not the language spoken by the people. This situation as I understand it is the same as using English for instruction, because both languages are unfamiliar to the students. The students in Malawi whose mother tongue is neither English nor Chichewa face a formidable task of learning through two unfamiliar languages. The language of instruction could significantly contribute to cognitive development and academic accomplishment of students (Prinsloo, 2007). Students’ transition from one unfamiliar language (Chichewa) to another (English) would adversely affect students’
academic success which would place them at disadvantage against their counterparts who are familiar with at least one of the languages for instruction.

Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa with a population of over 173 million people, is said to have 410 languages, with 397 of them being ‘minority’ languages spoken by 60 percent of the population (Chimhundu, 2002). According to section 3(4) of the (1989/1998) Nigerian National Policy on Education (as cited in Salami, 2008, p. 93) “government will see to it that the medium of instruction in the primary school is initially the mother-tongue or the language of the immediate community, and at a later stage, English” (p. 19). Salami (2008) examines language practices in a Nigerian primary school. This study found teachers have adopted an ‘unstructured’ bilingual practice contrary to the mother tongue education expected to be implemented. English is used as early as the first year of children’s education and in primary 4, where there should be transition to English, the mother tongue was still being used. The findings of Salami’s study highlight resistance posed by teachers to the official language of education. Teachers create their own policies in the classroom with disregard to official policy. Like the language policy in Ghana, the language policy in education in Nigeria emphasizes mother tongue instruction in all subjects except English from pre-primary to primary 3. From primary 4 the mother tongue becomes a subject while English, the official language is used as medium of instruction. In both countries, mother tongue is used as transitional language because they have no power.

Growing up, I have known Ghana and Nigeria as sister countries because they have a lot of things in common. Both countries are former British colonies, multilingual and multicultural. It is therefore not surprising that the two countries practice similar language policies in education.
Odey (2002) studied multilingualism and Indigenous language education in Nigeria. The author observes that mother tongue education in Nigeria is facing problems due to the fact that Nigeria’s urban and semi-urban communities are both multilingual and multicultural. Odey’s observation is similar to one of the reasons often used to justify the English-only language policy in Ghana. However, Salami’s (2008) study suggests otherwise. Salami (2008) found that teachers in Nigerian primary schools use mother tongue of the children even when teaching English because it makes both the students and teachers feel comfortable in the classroom. This means that teachers in Nigerian primary schools use mother tongue for teaching to encourage students’ participation. We can see from this paragraph that the prevailing situation in a classroom determines which language to use in the teaching and learning process. The onus lies on teachers to make teaching and learning take place under an appropriate medium.

Literature on language practices in other African countries has provided rich information about various programs that have been implemented since the colonial and postcolonial era. My review has highlighted mother tongue education vis-a-vis English education in post-colonial Africa countries. The review reveals challenges faced with implementation of mother tongue education and also benefits of using mother tongue for instruction. One form of language policy commonly practiced in most African countries is the use of mother tongue for instruction from primary one to primary three. After primary three, English is used as medium of instruction. Another key point identified was the suitability of bilingual education in multilingual societies instead of monolingual instruction. My view is that there should be continuous education in mother tongue in Africa at all levels to ensure that learners derive maximum benefits of learning through a
familiar language. At this point, I explore what happens in Ghanaian classrooms where, English is the medium of instruction. This leads me to a discussion on classroom practices in Ghanaian context in the next section.

**English and schooling in Ghana**

Some children in Ghana come to school with additional language(s) to their mother tongue. They come to school to learn English in addition to the languages they learned at home. For this reason, some scholars argue that English should be considered a second language in Ghana. For instance, in a discussion paper about the role of English in Ghana, Quarcoo (1994) makes a case against English being considered a second language in Ghana saying it is inappropriate to label English as a second language. Quarcoo refers to Joan Ure (1983) to support his point that the average Ghanaian speaks at least two local languages before English is learned. He describes these as the mother tongue and the language the neighbors speak if the person does not hail from the same linguistic group as the neighbors. Quarcoo believes Ghanaians may need English as an additional language for local communicative purposes. Looking at Quarcoo’s position, one can imagine the linguistic repertoire children bring to the classroom. This means some children acquire skills in learning a second language even before coming to school. However, the difference here is, languages children bring to school are learned in a natural communicative environment instead of an instructional form as English is learned. Learning English in instructed form has effects on children’s ability to comprehend and speak the language.

Opoku-Amankwa (2009) studied the effects of English-only language policy on pupils at the primary (elementary) level of education in Ghana. The case-study was performed in two different classrooms. Opoku-Amankwa reports that in one of the
classrooms observed, out of 74 students, only six students were considered *good* by the class teacher because, according to the teacher, they were the ones who were able to read fluently without the teacher’s assistance. This means that students who are unable to read and write in English would not find the classroom a comfortable place. Opoku-Amankwa (2009) as a result, argues that the use of English only in the classroom creates a feeling of anxiety among pupils which results in “lack of self-confidence, a feeling of inadequacy and the general low levels of self-esteem because of use of unfamiliar language” (p. 131). English appears to be irrelevant to the lived experiences of the students. What Opoku-Amankwa’s study tells us is that English-only language policy does not create conducive environment for students to participate in the teaching and learning process. Students are unable to get involved in classroom activities because they lack proficiency in the language of instruction. If this is the case, then one cannot guarantee effective teaching and learning. The situation as reported by Opoku-Amankwa in the long run could hamper cognitive, literacy and numeracy development of the students.

There is ample evidence to the effect that the majority of children in Ghanaian schools do not attain proper numeracy and literacy. For instance, Casely-Hayford and Hartwell (2010) provide results from a National Education Assessment (NEA) report in 2008 that shows that “In Ghana, 75% of sixth grades are not able to read and write in any language, and 90% do not achieve basic numeracy skills” (MOE, 2008). The above quotation was used by the authors in making an analysis of a program aimed at supplementing students’ education with mother tongue instruction at schools in the rural northern parts of Ghana. The program, known as *Education for Life*, is an initiative of a non-profit private organization to support children’s education with their mother tongue
(Casely-Hayford & Hartwell, 2010). An impact assessment by Casely-Hayford and Hartwell revealed that ‘complementary education program’ facilitates students’ rapid acquisition of basic literacy skills in their mother tongue compared with what formal state primary schools can achieve. These results indicate a failing language policy in Ghana. These findings suggest English-only education in a multilingual society does not work well for all children. It also illustrates how children’s mother tongue can make a difference in students’ education. What a successful language policy looks like is part of this research. Policymakers must ensure that curriculum is designed to meet the social and economic needs of the area or the target community (Casely-Hayford, 2000).

Edu-Buandoh and Otchere (2012) studied the motivation for Ghanaian students to choose to speak English inside and outside of school under the speak English only campaign in Ghanaian schools. The participants of their study were students selected from the junior high and senior high schools in two different regions of Ghana. They found that speaking a local language apart from English attracts punishment. Punishment meted out to students who violated the speak English-only included washing dining-hall plates, weeding, scrubbing, writing lines and wearing labels that say “I will not speak vernacular in school again” (Edu-Buandoh & Otchere, 2012, p. 307). Using punishment to enforce English speaking is oppressive and devalues the language and culture of the students. If students are allowed to express themselves naturally, they prefer using their mother tongue. The role played by English in Ghanaian schools can create different kinds of obstacles for students to negotiate their way, especially when the school environment is hostile to less proficient students.
Anyidoho and Dakubu (2008) argue that even though English is the official language of the country, it has not been made official that everybody must speak English and, in addition, there has not been any public advocate for English to symbolize Ghanaian identity. It is therefore difficult to understand why English has been imposed on Ghanaian learners to an extent that they get punished for speaking their mother tongue in school. If this phenomenon is allowed to continue it will likely contribute to local languages being used in limited ways and continue to reproduce social hierarchy. Anyidoho and Dakubu again report that almost all the legal documents from the colonial period to present did not recognize how Ghanaian languages could be used in national discourse. This situation confines Ghanaian languages usage to domestic, local, traditional, and non-literate entities. It also shows how as a nation Ghana has failed to recognize and preserve its national identity. As it stands now, the progress of students in Ghana, especially that of early learners, is being hampered because they are made to learn an unfamiliar language under coercion. They are not allowed to learn in a language that could promote understanding so as to grant them smooth passage throughout their entire education.

At this stage I would like to move to the next section which considers the role of mother tongue instruction in bilingual education. I examine how mother tongue instruction enhances bilingual education. There are a substantial number of studies cited to support the position that mother tongue is useful in facilitating acquisition of a second language. This section focuses on several studies that support mother tongue education in bilingual societies.
Mother tongue Education

Benefits of mother tongue in bilingual education

Any attempt to achieve education for all in postcolonial countries should consider mother tongue as a panacea. Studies have shown that mastery of the child’s first language enhances the learning of another language because the skills of speech, reading, and writing can be extended to learn the second language. For example, Cummins (2008) challenges the “two solitude” assumptions regarding second language medium of instruction in bilingual education. Cummins argues against assumptions that second or foreign language medium of instruction should be to a large extent, exclusively in the target language with no alternative consideration to the first language. According to Cummins there is little substantial research basis for strict monolingual instruction in a second language, when learners possess rich competence in their first language. The author believes learners stand to gain from two way transfer across languages when bilingual strategies are implemented in the classroom. The arguments made by Cummins remind educators to acknowledge learners’ resources in their mother tongue when teaching a second language. Bilingual education ensures that learners’ prior knowledge in their mother tongue facilitates learning of a second language (Cummins, 2000).

Benson (2002) discusses real and potential benefits of bilingual programmes in developing countries. Benson’s article examines examples of educational practices in Guinea-Bissau, Niger, Mozambique (all in Africa), and Bolivia (in South America). These countries are post-colonial countries which grapple with language policy in education. Benson included a South American country, Bolivia to make a case as to how geography also plays a part in language policy planning and implementation in post-colonial countries.
The author points out that the benefits of mother tongue in bilingual education in primary schooling include valorising the mother tongue, bridging the gap between home and school cultures, and raising student identity consciousness and self-esteem. Benson has provided very important ideas from different geographical areas. Benson’s analysis reveals that irrespective of geographical location, there are no differences in the experiences learners in postcolonial countries go through when it comes to bilingual education, with mother tongue playing an integral role.

There is a growing body of research that supports the relationship between overall cognitive development and bilingualism (Borich & Tombari, 1997). Borich and Tombari examined topics of development, learning, assessment, instruction and classroom management, and learner diversity to enable teachers to develop instructional strategies in the classroom. The authors assert that students with background of knowledge come to the classroom with rich knowledge, therefore teachers must recognize that and create an enabling environment for them to advance their knowledge. The evidence that the higher the level of bilingualism the better the level of cognitive attainment can only be achieved when the first language is maintained, the social climate is supportive and when second language speakers are not judged (Travers et al, as cited in Ndamba, 2008).

Relevance of mother tongue to children’s reading activities and other classroom tasks

Through mother tongue education, children develop reading readiness. For example, Şimşek and Alisinanoğlu (2009) examined the *Mother Tongue Activities Program* on the reading readiness level of preschool children in Turkey. They observed that “the reading readiness and general readiness levels of the group following Mother Tongue Activities Program were higher than those of the group that did not receive such
training” (p. 521). The effort required to learn a mother tongue is not as strenuous as learning a second language. It takes more time and commitment for children to acquire the vocabulary of an unfamiliar language than mother tongue. However difficult it is to learn a second language, being a bilingual speaker comes with immense cognitive benefits. Mother tongue contributes to levels of cognitive development in reading comprehension.

Laufer (1978) performed an experiment to compare the level of reading comprehension between students writing in their mother tongue (Hebrew) who are deprived the chance to be exposed to English through writing and found the same level of reading as their peers who write English throughout the course. Laufer observed that the two groups showed almost similar comprehension level in the final analysis but the average progress of students writing in Hebrew was comparatively better. Laufer adds that, writing in Hebrew ensured a better learning situation because students were relieved of the frustration of saying something wrong in English. Indeed, it is obvious that wherever English competes with an Indigenous language, English has the upper hand. Nonetheless, Laufer’s study suggests that regardless of the prominence countries give to English language instruction, learners will have a smooth learning process when lessons are delivered in their mother tongue. If learners could grasp concepts in their mother tongue more easily than in English, then encouraging this across all levels would contribute to the socio-economic advancement of a country.

The UNESCO Committee of 1953 indicates the usefulness of the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction because it promotes better understanding and allows children to express themselves. Learners who learn to acquire knowledge through a second language are less effective than those who learn through first language (Wallwork, 1985,
If as far back as 1953 a highly recognized body like UNESCO found the need for mother tongue instruction, why are some countries not encouraging their citizens to learn from their mother tongue? Judging from the positive influence mother tongue education is expected to have on children; there is the need for everyone to embrace any policy that supports mother tongue education.

In bilingual classrooms, there are sometimes a mixture of both mother tongue and English. Educators adopt strategies to use mother tongue to facilitate teaching and learning in English only classrooms. Mother tongue language for instruction is proven to facilitate children acquisition of concepts that enable them to easily acquire knowledge in a second or third language, and to further help in exposing them to the culture of their community (Muthwii 2004). Teachers in bilingual classrooms have responsibility to themselves and to their students as to how to facilitate teaching and learning by adopting appropriate strategies to achieve their objectives. Teachers face a dilemma between using an unfamiliar language officially prescribed by policy makers and students mother tongue which promotes understanding (Cummins, 2000).

**Attitudes of parents and students to mother tongue education**

In spite of the benefits expected to be derived from mother tongue instruction, if parents and students show little or no interest not much will be achieved. Ndamba (2008) argues that “the success of a mother tongue instruction policy depends on people’s attitudes towards the first language and English L2” (p. 176). The attitudes of parents and children influence the learning of mother tongue (Ngara, 1982). Ngara made the observation during a study in a school in Zimbabwe. Ngara concluded that students in Zimbabwe have negative attitudes towards African languages. Ngara’s findings bring into focus the
motivation for students and parents to invest in mother tongue education. Social reality influences students and parents’ attitudes to mother tongue education. If the system in place does not assure the public as to the benefits of mother tongue education, attitudes to first language would not be positive. Any policy to encourage mother tongue education must ensure that people who acquire mother tongue education are not marginalized. Some people pride themselves in speaking good English but fail to give the same attention to their mother tongue because of the elite role played by English in Ghanaian society.

**Negotiation and resistance to language policies in schools**

Educators have a role to play in language policy implementation. Studies point to the fact that language policies get interpreted based on standpoints of teachers. Garcia and Menken (2010) discuss the role of ‘educators as policymakers’ rather than just implementers of policies passed down to them by bureaucrats. They assert that “good educators do not blindly follow a prescribed text or march to an imposed language education policy but instead draw on their own knowledge and understandings in order to teach” (p. 258). The authors suggest that, classroom language use is socially and ideologically constructed, and ‘dynamically negotiated’ on regular basis regardless of an official language in place. What Garcia and Menken are suggesting is that in some societies teachers hold the key to making a language policy successful or not. In other words, policy makers would have their say and teachers would have their way. The interpretation that teachers give to a language policy is very crucial. Teachers end up to an extent departing from what is stated in an educational policy document. Educators therefore factor into their daily classroom activity, the social context, experiences, and beliefs to make sense of what they teach.
Language policies implemented in Ghana over the years have used a top down approach. One political regime after another has always determined which language policy is suitable for Ghanaians at any particular period. According to Heugh (2007) “countries with top-down decision making often attempt to implement one single educational language policy for all, with little regard for differences in terms of language attitudes and use, exposure to national and/or official languages, goals of schooling and so on” (as cited in Ambatchew, 2010, p. 207). Top-down approaches to language policy get resisted in schools by educators because they do not promote the socio-economic as well as academic well-being of students. The onus lies on field practitioners to ensure that policies passed down to them get negotiated to serve the best interest of students (Garcia & Menken, 2010).

Mohany, Panda and Pal (2010) focus on negotiations and resistances of national language policies that go on in Indian classrooms. They point out that teachers have latitude with which to negotiate in the classroom. According to them, “in the classroom reality of linguistic diversity and real-life multilingualism, the teachers negotiate the gap between what is handed over to them as state-prescribed teaching objective with respect to languages and what they experience and confront in the classroom” (p. 228). Teachers negotiate the gap for the purposes of sense making when necessary (Garcia and Menken, 2010). From the foregoing, it can be realized that policies formulated by policy makers, usually politicians, do not wholly address challenges in the classroom. In discharging their duties, educators negotiate the difficulties faced with by adopting measures that ensure that students benefit from what is presented to them. In the classroom, teachers decide which language to use and for that matter whether English should be used or not (Garcia &
Menken, 2010). This is another focus of my study. I seek to understand how teachers negotiate language policy in the classroom.

Prevailing circumstances of schools are not the same. It is for this reason that Ambatchew (2010) recommends that individual schools be allowed to adopt their own medium of instruction and possibly other media of instruction that suit student’s ability and desires of parents, as well as the availability of qualified educators and resources. Ambatchew presented a review of practices in implementing what is described as 1994 language policy in education in Ethiopia. According to Ambatchew, the language policy referred to prescribed that every language in Ethiopia becomes a medium of instruction. Ambatchew notes that although Ethiopia’s example is usually said to be perfect, teachers and administrators find ways to alter it at the school level. Ethiopia’s 1994 language policy is highly commendable, since it creates an opportunity for every student to learn in their mother tongue. It is in the same perspective of promoting mother tongue education that my study is directed to. Language policies must be designed to facilitate smooth knowledge acquisition rather than being a hindrance (Ambatchew, 2010).

It is important for policymakers to understand that actors in the education sector engage in constructive activity. Garcia and Menken (2010) state “language education policies are the joint product of the educators’ constructive activity, as well as the context in which this constructive is built” (p. 256). The above statement means that educators critically construct language policies in their day to day classroom activity to create an enabling environment for students to perform. By doing this, educators take into consideration the socio-cultural context and ideological framework within which they operate. Language policies must therefore be inclusive and all-embracing of relevant
actors. Garcia and Menken hence recommend change in ‘linearity of relationships’ that has existed over the years to ensure that educators take their rightful position in decision making processes of language policies.

**Summary**

I have discussed several issues relating to formulation and implementation of language policies in postcolonial Africa countries. Classroom interactions, practices, and challenges under English instruction in multilingual settings have also been discussed. I discussed that mother tongue is essential when teaching a second language. I have also presented how language policies are negotiated and resisted by educators. Educators negotiate language policy by taking into account the prevailing classroom situation. The review highlights that language policies passed on to educators are resisted. Teachers in some societies resist and negotiate official language policy by resorting to use of mother tongue to present lessons. I think that if teachers’ inputs are to a large extent factored in the formulation process of a language policy, embracing it wholly would not be a problem. Teachers are the implementers of language policy. Consequently, it is practically impossible for them to implement the policy as it is when the realities on the ground are not addressed in the policy document.
CHAPTER THREE: Methodology

Introduction

This is a comparative case study (Yin, 2013) of two school contexts in Ghana. The design of this research also draws on critical ethnography (Duta, 2014). My focus is to critically address the unfairness or injustice (Madison, 2005) in the Ghanaian language policy in education; therefore, I believe that aligning this comparative case study with a critical ethnography standpoint will be useful. Dutta asserts “a researcher working from a critical standpoint is likely to attend to inequalities and oppression, explicating the connections between structural inequalities and intimate suffering” (p. 92). It is on this standpoint and standpoint of power relations in education (Hadi-Tabassum, 2006) that I design my study.

Research questions

This is a comparative case study of two school contexts in Ghana. The research questions for my study are:

1. How do students whose mother tongue is not English language respond to English only instruction?
2. What are the distinguishing effects of the policy on rural and urban students?
Population/participants/sample

According to Mertens (2014) “sampling refers to the method used to select a given number of people (or things) from a population” (p. 324). Mertens advises that in selecting a sample the strategy applied has an effect on the quality of data and inferences the researcher make. The quality of data in this case refers to how representative the sample is, in relation to amount of data collected. With this in mind, my sample is purposively selected. Creswell (2014) states that purposive sampling is used in qualitative sampling to select participants or sites to help researchers to understand the problem and the research question. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) assert “purposive sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 77).

Participants of this study consisted of students and educators in two different primary (elementary) schools in Ghana. Six teachers from each school were selected using purposive sampling technique (Tongco, 2007). Tongco explains that purposive sampling requires the judgment of the researcher to select cases with a specific purpose in mind. The two schools were selected from rural and urban communities respectively. Rural and urban schools in Ghana operate under different conditions and circumstances. It was therefore imperative for comparative case study like this to include rural and urban school for a critical assessment of the language policy. It is imperative because the location of the two schools brings to question equal access to English inside and outside of the classroom and how that impact on students content acquisition. Hence, a comparative study of a rural and an urban school helps to expose unequal effects of English-only instruction in upper primary level of Ghanaian schools.
Students were included in the study because they are supposed to be the beneficiaries of the policy. Teachers, on the other hand, were chosen for the reason that they are the implementers of the language policy and curriculum. Students who were observed were in class 4 (grade 4). The ages of students range between seven and eight years. Class 4 is the transition point from Indigenous language instruction to English-only instruction under the current and previous language policies. It was therefore considered interesting to know how students respond to the current English-only policy at that stage. Again, data from teachers and students were crucial in understanding how language of instruction is negotiated in the classroom. The teachers were also vital to the study for their role as the interpreters and implementers of the language policy in the classroom.

I refer to the two schools with pseudonyms hence forth. For the rural school, I will use “Adom Rural Primary School” and “Asempa Urban Primary School” for the urban school. Both schools studied are located in Twi dominant communities. Adom Rural Primary School is located in a farming community where the inhabitants are mostly cocoa farmers. A sizeable number of the students live in hamlet dwellings located on their parents’ cocoa farms. There is no electricity there. Apart from that, the students walk long distances to attend school. Adom Rural Primary School has one pavilion-like structure with no windows and doors. On the other hand, Asempa Urban Primary School can be found in the heart of Kumasi, the second largest city of Ghana. Although the school is located in a Twi dominant community, most people are literate in English. The school has a nicely built one-storey building and an ICT centre with internet connection. The ICT facility is shared with a cluster of other schools. All the students live in close proximity to the school. As a result, walking to school is not a problem.
The participants for the proposed study were students in two respective primary (elementary) schools, where the students were mainly monolingual before coming to school. There were thirty-five students in class 4 of Asempa Urban Primary School and fifteen students of the same class at Adom Rural Primary School. Enrolment at Adom Rural Primary School is low because of the small size of the community. The class size for Asempa primary 4 is the standard class size in Ghana. All the six teachers who teach from grade 1 to 6 were purposively selected for one-on-one interviews to gather their opinions on implementation of the language policy.

Data collection

Data for this study was collected using observation and interviews. Data from observations and interviews were triangulated (Stake, 2010) with examination of official documents on education language policy in the country. Stake asserts that triangulation in social research “may make us more confident that we have the meaning right, or it may make us more confident that we need to examine differences to see important multiple meaning” (p. 124). By indicating that “we have the meaning right,” Stake is implying that researchers should gather enough information for the study to ensure that what is collect is can be relied upon. According to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2011) “triangulation is the process of using multiple methods, data collection strategies, and data sources to obtain a more complete picture of what is being studied and to cross-check information” (p. 377). The authors indicate that collecting data from multiple sources compensates for the weakness in relying on a single source. This study draws on data triangulation by Decrop, 1999 to obtain data from different sources. Decrop explains that “data triangulation involves the use of a variety of sources in a study” (p. 159). The author adds that there are
multiple types of documents such as textbooks, novels, promotional material, minutes of meetings, newspapers, letters, etc. available as data sources. Thus, observation, interview, and official documents were the three sources of data of the study. Official documents such as syllabus, and NALAP manual were provided by the school administration upon my request. I examined those documents in the school after at least each day’s classroom observation session. My examination helped me to understand whether what is stated in the manual is exactly what is practiced or not. But Stake cautions that “complete confirmation is not possible” (p. 125).

The table below shows the time frame within which data was collected. Asempa Urban Primary School represents the urban school while Adom Rural Primary School represents the rural school. Typically, a school in Ghana would not be named urban or rural but I have chosen these pseudonyms to make it easier to distinguish between the locations of the two schools. All the activities were carried out in 2016.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - (23rd May – 27th May)</td>
<td>Class observation/official document study</td>
<td>Asempa Urban Primary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - (30th May – 3rd June)</td>
<td>Class observation/official document study</td>
<td>Asempa Urban Primary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - (6th June – 10th June)</td>
<td>One-on-one interview/class observation</td>
<td>Asempa Urban Primary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - (13th June – 17th June)</td>
<td>Class observation</td>
<td>Adom Rural Primary School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The interviews were conducted using a one-on-one interview strategy to collect data. According to Heyl (2001), “researchers regularly devise non-participant research projects that center on a set of unstructured, in-depth interviews with key informants from a particular social milieu or with people from a variety of settings and backgrounds who have had certain kinds of experiences” (p. 368). An investigation into language use in the classroom requires that participants (teachers) genuinely provide their feelings and perspectives about the medium of instruction to enable the researcher to form an opinion. The data collected from the educators was very crucial to my study. The investigation sought to discover from teachers the challenges they go through with the language of education inside and outside of the classroom. Being the experts in the field, it was imperative to know their impression about the language policy and their suggestions as to the way forward.

Official letters for permission (see Appendix 2) were submitted to relevant authority of the two respective institutions where the studies were conducted for approval. Participants were also provided a consent letter (see Appendix 3) describing the purpose of the study, expectations of participants, and issues of confidentiality. This was to assure participants that their identity was confidential and no information relating to their participation will be released later. Since the students investigated were minors, consent
was sought from parents or guardians of the students. Assent letters (see Appendix 4) were
issued to each student participant in the urban school through the school authority to be
sent to their parents/guardians to approve of their participation. In the rural school, parents
were invited to the school and every detail of the study and its implication were explained
to them before they agreed to their children’s participation. This became possible because
of the small size of the community and a day earmarked for rest (no farming) in the
community. Approval from Research Ethics Board (REB) of the University of Regina was
obtained before embarking on the study (see Appendix 5).

There were eight semi-structured interview questions (see Appendix 6). The
interview questions were informed by the review of literature in chapter two. The lengths
of the interviews were between fifteen and twenty minutes. Each interviewee answered the
same questions. But there were further probing questions based on the responses provided
by the interviewee. I made audio recordings of the interviews which were transcribed
thoroughly to obtain a rich database for analysis.

I also applied observation as one of my data collection techniques. This data
collection technique was applied to gather field notes from the teaching and learning
environment. The observation was conducted during a classroom lesson. I sat in the
classroom each time to make notes about what I observed from the teachers and students.
My role was to only observe and write what I saw. The information that was recorded
includes students’ level of participation in lesson, teacher strategies, and my perception of
the English-only instruction on students’ literacy. Information recorded from the
observations provided clarification and substance to the interview transcripts and were also
used for comparison with findings from other research studies. As much as possible, steps were taken to record sufficient amount of data.

**Data analysis**

Merriam (1988) recommends ongoing analysis of data collected. According to Merriam, “…one runs the risk of ending up with data that are confused, repetitious, and overwhelming in the sheer volume of material that needs to be processed” (p. 124) when the analysis is delayed. With this in mind, I carried out daily analysis of all my daily class observations to identify major ideas and kept record of them. Following that, I transcribed the interviews before beginning analysis (Stewart, 2014). This was, to a large extent to reduce, simplify, consolidate, and organize the ideas into more easily manageable concepts and categories (Merriam, 1988). In transcribing the interview, units were generated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988). Merriam (1988) observes that “a unit can be a phrase, a sentence, a paragraph” (p. 132). Merriam suggests that each unit of information can be recorded on a separate ‘index card’ after which each number is coded in line with the “categories ranging from situational factors (who, what, when, where) to categories representing emerging themes or concepts” (p. 132).

In analyzing the transcriptions of interviews in this study, thorough examination of each sentence or group of sentences was carried out and labeled with descriptive codes. According to Stake (2010), “coding is sorting all data sets according to topics, themes, and issues important to the study. Coding of data is for interpretation and storage more than for organizing the final report” (p. 151). Some of the coded sentences were classroom practices and students’ experiences over English-only instruction, code-switching from English to Twi, translation practices in the classroom, diminished students participation, challenges
over English reading comprehension, adherence to English-only policy, and mode of enforcing English speaking and English for global interaction.

As comparative case study, it was expected that themes would emerge in the form of differences and similarities. Themes that emerged included: negotiation and resistance to language policy, students’ participation in English only instruction, English pronunciation difficulty, inhibition of students’ access to knowledge and content under English only instruction, code mixing, as well as English translation. I draw on one of the case studies analysis techniques recommended by Yin (2013) for this study. Yin suggests “cross-case synthesis” (p. 164) technique for a case study that involves at least two cases. He further suggests the formation of “word tables” to display categories of individual cases for comparison. In applying this technique, I identified key themes emerging from the analysis of each interview transcript and displayed them as two separate word documents to pave way for comparison across cases. I continued with qualitative analysis of the category of themes in the entire word documents. I wanted to construct more categories and develop more themes. However, the categories of themes that I wanted to construct seemed to be duplications of earlier ones. Merriam (1988) advises the number of categories should be manageable. She adds that “the fewer the categories, the greater the level of abstraction” (p. 135). Next was to provide argumentative (Yin, 2013) presentation of my interpretation of the contents of the word table examined. My arguments will be guided by the conceptual framework (critical theorists’ perspective) upon which this study has been design.

In analyzing field observations, I tried as much as possible to reduce and organize data into manageable components. For analysis of my field notes, I drew on a combination
of two of the five techniques proposed by Yin (2013) for case studies. According to Yin, the five techniques he proposes are not mutually exclusive and that they can be applied in any combination. Consequently, I applied ‘explanation building’ and ‘cross-case synthesis’ techniques to analyze the observations from the two sites (urban and rural school). “One goal of a study in multiple sites is to engage in explanation that describes each individual case, knowing that the details of the respective sites vary” (Yin, 2010, p.148). Yin advances the goal of explanation building technique is to “analyze the case study data by building an explanation about the case” (p. 147). He added that in most cases the explanation is done in narration form. In applying the two techniques to my analysis, I first provided narration of the phenomena observed and explained any themes that were established. This was followed by a comparison of cases across sites for similar and contrasting themes. Second, the themes were compared with participants’ perspectives over issues discussed in the interviews. This was followed by drawing conclusions through comparison of themes emerging from the interviews and observation, looking at similarities and differences.

The stage of conclusion drawing will dwell on the themes emerging from the analysis of the various interview transcripts and record of the similarities and differences coming from comparison across cases. I seek to generate propositions out of the emerging themes.

**Summary**

I have provided detail information about my participants, how they were selected, how data was collected and the steps taken to analyze the data. The chapter also contains the two research questions of the study. I also provided detail information about the two
schools selected for the study to help readers understand why each of them was used for the study. Besides, the chapter contains information relating to the period within which the study was conducted. There is also information about the number of interview questions responded to by the interviewee as well as the time frame within which interviews were conducted. The next chapter contains findings from field work and discussions with related literature.
CHAPTER FOUR: Findings/Discussions

Introduction

This chapter is a comparative discussion of my data from the field work in the two schools. The discussions and analysis explore the transcribed field data, classroom observations and official documents including syllabi and National Literacy Accelerated Program (NALAP) manual. This discussion is presented under the themes (1) classroom practices and students’ experiences with English-only instruction (2) modes of enforcing English speaking; (3) adherence/resistance to English-only policy and (4) English for inter-ethnic and global interaction. The discussion demonstrates the impact of English-only instruction in the teaching and learning processes in the respective schools and how English-only instruction affects students differently.

In the excerpts shared in this discussion, I use pseudonyms to represent all my participants and use Owusu to refer to myself. Pseudonyms of participants are associated with statements taken from the interview transcripts. I also provide the classroom names for easy identification. Extracts taken from the interviews are produced exactly the way they were recorded in Twi. In every case, translation from Twi to English is provided. The experiences discussed by the teachers in the interview excerpt refer to any of the classes they were teaching at the time of the study. Because every teacher can be assigned any class to teach at any point, each teacher might have at least taught one or two different
classes in the school. In terms of the proficiency of the teachers, they speak fluent Ghanaian English.

I continue this introduction section with a description of my initial experiences in the two schools prior to commencement of my study. By sharing those anecdotes, readers will be better able to understand the research contexts. The two schools in which I conducted my study are located in the Ashanti region of Ghana, where I am a native. I began my study at Asempa Urban Primary School. I arrived at the school on a Monday morning before the start of lessons. Upon my arrival, the head teacher (principal) of the school introduced me to all the teachers and explained the purpose of my visit to the school. All the teachers in the school were very glad to meet me, especially when they realized that I was returning for my research two years after leaving Ghana to continue my education. They were happy to see me because, for financial reasons, it is not common in Ghana for teachers to travel abroad on their own for further studies. They were therefore eager to know more about my experiences. Throughout my time at the school, every teacher cooperated with me and accorded me the necessary assistance. The teachers expressed their readiness to take part in the study by willingly completing the consent forms. The duration of the study in that school was three weeks.

I began my study in the school at 8:00 AM and finished at 2:00 PM every day. The class I observed had 35 students and was handled by only the class teacher. The class teacher taught all seven subjects offered to the students. My first day in the classroom, all the students in the classroom stood up when they saw me and greeted me with, “Good morning sir.” I, in turn, responded: “Good morning class! How are you doing?” This gesture is a normal practice by Ghanaian students. The students were already aware that I
was going to conduct a study in their class because they had earlier sent an invitation to their parents to come and complete assent forms in the school. The class teacher, Mr. Akoto (pseudonym) who was standing beside me asked me to introduce myself to the students. I introduce myself first in English and later in Twi.

After the introduction, I explained details of the assent form in both English and Twi before the students completed the forms. The students became a little familiar with me after this exercise. In the course of the three weeks of study in the class, I became part of the class. I was referred to as “Sir” in the same way they called their class teacher. I developed a good rapport with students. Because of the good rapport, the students reported cases of bullying and intimidation against one another to me, whenever their teacher was briefly out of the classroom. The students usually communicated with me in Twi. On the other hand, my interactions with the class teacher to a large extent were in English.

Let me contrast my days of research at Asempa Urban Primary School with that of Adom Rural Primary School. The reception I received from Adom Rural Primary School was not different from the urban school. The teachers in the school willingly completed the consent forms after the head teacher had introduced me. The teachers told me the school authority informed them of my visit to the school so they were looking forward to seeing me. They were also glad to see me travel all the way from Canada to their school for a study. After I finished with the teachers, I met with the students in the class I observed. When I entered the class, I exchanged greetings with the students before the teacher led me to introduce myself. Some of the students were aware of the location of Canada. Others also had no idea of Canada. They heard of Canada for the first time as a result of my visit.
After the introduction, I began to guide the students to complete assent letters. I realized after reading and explaining the contents of students’ letter of assent in both English and Twi, that none of the students had any knowledge of a signature. What I mean is that the students had not been introduced to the concept of signing their names on official documents because providing signatures to documents do not form part of the daily activities of the students at that level. A few of them could also not write their names without looking it up from their exercise books. As a result of this mismatch between my expectation and their regular literacy practices, I decided to switch to their initials. Students’ initials also became an issue because it was something they were hearing of for the first time. This initial experience gave me an early idea of the situation in the school. I was surprised to see students struggle to write their official names in English after two years of kindergarten and three years of primary education. The experience gave me an impression that these students have different experiences compared to their counterparts in urban centers. I make this conclusion because the similar first day exercise with the students at Asempra Urban Primary School went fairly smoothly. The observations helped me appreciate the students’ different experiences with English literacy.

**Classroom Practices and students’ experiences over English-only instruction**

*Code-switching from English to Twi in the classroom*

Interactions between teachers and students show interesting similarities in both schools. Data from my observation revealed switching from English to Twi and sometimes mixing the two languages in lessons. I begin with a mathematics lesson I observed at Asempra Urban Primary School, where the class teacher was teaching the topic fractions. The example I am going to share is important because of two reasons. First, contrary to the
policy of English-only instruction, the teacher and students were engaging in code-switching. Second, according to the 2002 language policy, mathematics is considered to be technical and local languages are deemed inadequate for teaching that subject. The extract below shows an interaction between a teacher (Akoto) and a student (Adwoa) at Asempa Urban Primary School:

\[ \frac{2}{4} \text{ aseε ne sɛn wɔ fraction mu?} \]

**Translation:** What does \( \frac{2}{4} \) stand for in fraction?

\[ \text{Ṣe nnipa nnan rekyɛ ađee mmieヌ a obiara benyɛ sɛn?} \]

**Translation:** If four people shares two kinds of an item, how much would each of them get?

The above extract contradicts one of the reasons for the English-only language policy in 2002 which states that native languages are inadequate for teaching math. On the contrary, interactions in the classroom highlight how useful mother tongue is to teachers and students. The most interesting thing here is that mathematics, science and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) are subjects that have been described as technical, with terminologies that are missing in native language vocabularies. Yet, the teacher and the students were using the local language to learn the concepts of fractions. Admittedly, apart from numbers and alphabets in the Twi language there were no symbols to represent some concepts in mathematics. But, for the most part during the lesson students contributed meaningfully in their mother tongue. Some of the students responded to the teacher’s questions in long sentences using Twi but used short mathematical answers to respond in English.
The student’s show of understanding of the mathematical concept in Twi suggests that it could be less difficult and more beneficial to the students’ learning to teach students math with a language familiar to them. In this case, it is the medium of instruction that makes it difficult for students to appreciate mathematics. Mathematics itself is a ‘language’ that comes with its own problems and difficulty. Therefore, using an unfamiliar language (English) to teach another unfamiliar language (mathematics) compounds the problem. In this context, the students’ mother tongue should be used for instruction, which is what the teacher sought to do. Students were able to express themselves fully using their mother tongue despite the fact that they mixed both English and Twi due to a lack of some mathematical terminologies in Twi. In this instance, mixed codes were productively used to facilitate smooth teaching and learning. Classroom interaction manifests the usefulness of applying both a mother tongue and English to facilitate teaching and learning. Students’ participation in this lesson was quite remarkable. This happened in large part because students had the opportunity to express themselves in their mother tongue.

Similarly, code-switching and code-mixing were also common in all the lessons I observed at Adom Rural Primary School. I found that, even in the English lesson, the teacher made good use of the students’ mother tongue. The teacher’s use of Twi in an English lesson highlights the usefulness of Twi in classroom discussion. It also raises issues as to how teachers interpret educational policies. I support my arguments in this paragraph with an observation from the English lesson. I use the pseudonym, Osei to refer to the teacher who teaches the class. In this lesson, Osei begins by assuring learners that he is going to read in English and translate into Twi so that they can understand. Osei reads a passage about types of stoves from the students’ textbook. Speaking English, Osei provides
examples of different types of stoves but the students were only familiar with one of them, the particular stove used in their homes. Some key points emerged in the course of reading. Using Twi to verify comprehension, Osei wants to know if the students understand these words:

**Osei:** Se ye ka ‘advantage’ a asee ne se? (Said in Twi)

*Translation: What is the meaning of the word ‘advantage’?*

No student is able to respond to the teacher’s question. Osei has no option other than to provide the meaning of the word in Twi. He goes on to ask for the meaning of ‘disadvantage.’ Osei is hopeful that students would be able to see a connection between the two words. But the students have difficulty in making connections with the two words.

I was expecting this English class to be delivered in English but apart from the reading from the textbook by the teacher, everything else was in Twi. The students did not get the opportunity to read the passage, meaning that only the teacher used English. In the same lesson, Osei asked the students to provide the meaning of the word ‘expensive’ in Twi. After waiting for a while without a response, the teacher decided to put the word in context by coming up with the following sentences in English.

**Osei:**

2. *The book is expensive.*

Students attempted to respond, however, none of them was able to give the correct meaning of the word in Twi. The lesson then entered the evaluation stage. Below is how the interaction between the teacher and the students ensued:

**Osei:** What makes cooking pots black? This question is translated into Twi by Osei as:
εδεν na εμα nkyɛnsem a ye de noa aduane ho ye tuntum?

Students:  Enwusie (smoke). This is chorus response.

Osei:  So how can you say ‘enwusie’ in English?

There were no students who could say ‘enwusie’ in English. The teacher therefore said it to them in English. Osei continued the discussion with this question:

Osei:  Why do some families not use modern cookers?

In this case the teacher is expecting the students to use the word ‘expensive’ to respond to the above question. No students are able to construct a sentence in English or Twi to respond to this question.

The teacher had indicated earlier in the lesson that students were going to read the passage after all reading and translations were done by him. I was curious to see how the students were going to read the passage but that did not happen. I therefore posed the following question to the teacher after the lesson.

Owusu:  You indicated in your introduction of the lesson that students were going to read the passage but that did not happen, why?

Osei:  It was because of time factor. Also it is difficult for the students to read English. But for L1 they are able to read small small.

In this last interview Osei indicated that, the students are not able to read English but they can read Twi, although not to expectation. Data presented above from the two schools reveals the challenges teachers face in implementing the policy of using English-only to teach emerging bilingual students. The above data highlight interactions that occur between teacher and students in English lessons. It is not surprising that the teacher in Adom Rural Primary School resorted to teaching with Twi in the English lesson. The teacher was fully
aware of linguistic difficulties of the students so had to devise means to ensure that content of the lesson was understood by the students. The teacher implemented the best strategy because the students’ reading, speaking and writing skills in English had not yet developed to the expected level. Using English only to teach students in this circumstance would mean no teaching and learning could occur.

The two teachers in these particular instances had to choose between English-only instruction and imparting knowledge to students in a language they understand. In Ghana, teaching is usually performed in discussion (child-centred) involving teacher and students. The English lesson taught by the teacher in Adom Rural Primary School became teacher-centred because students lacked linguistic competence in the language of instruction as well as the topic which was under discussion. Furthermore, the content of the passages read were not familiar to the students. For instance, modern stoves discussed in the passage cannot be found in the homes of students. The students therefore found themselves learning an unfamiliar language as well as unfamiliar cultural content. Consequently, the students were far removed from their culture, knowledge, values, and worldviews (Adjei, 2007). Students’ distance from their culture, knowledge, and worldviews, together with their inability to comprehend and speak English hindered their participation in the lesson.

The data from the two respective schools suggest that the English-only language policy is not working well for the students. This policy puts teachers in a dilemma as to which language to apply in the classroom. Under the circumstances, teachers have to code-switch between English and the students’ mother tongue. Code-switching sometimes does not work so the teachers speak Twi throughout lessons to encourage students’ participation. Perhaps Makoe and McKinney’s (2014) concept of hybrid language and literature practices
could be adopted by teachers under this circumstance. A hybrid and literature practice is the use of students’ mother tongue and English in the classroom at the same time. Through hybrid language and literature practices, the students could create a balance between enforcement of the language policy and teaching for understanding through the mother tongue of students. It is the future of the students that should inform the kind of classroom practices adopted by teachers rather than doing just anything to satisfy policymakers and external supervisors. The excerpts from the two schools have highlighted different English literacy levels. On the whole, students in Asempa Urban Primary School exhibited some level of English literacy compared to the students in Adom Rural Primary School.

Translation practices in an English-only classroom

Apart from code-switching, teachers also engage in translation of English text to Twi. Translation was performed by teachers in both schools on several occasions to demystify lessons and examinations presented in English. Students in both rural and urban schools provide wrong responses to questions (exercises) because they lack understanding of the English language. Students struggling to complete exercises are daily occurrences. Translation is not recommended in the teaching syllabus for both schools. Yet, teachers engage in translation of English texts to Twi due to the students’ limited resources in decoding English texts. My review of the teaching syllabus revealed that students in upper primary must possess all four English literacy skills necessary for English instruction. Upper primary begins from Primary 4 to Primary 6. One of the objectives of the syllabus is that students must attain high proficiency in English to help them to study other subjects as well as in the study of English at higher levels.
However, teachers have adopted translation practices based on reasons as shared in the following excerpts from the interviews with each of the Primary 5 teachers from the two respective schools. I present extracts from the interview with Serwaa of Asempa Urban School first, followed by that of Afriyie in Adom Rural School.

**Owusu:** *So what can you say about students’ performances in exercises?*

**Serwaa:** *If you give questions to them they write what is on the board without responses. So it is up to the teacher to read one after the other, the questions in Twi before they would be able to do it. When it comes to examination, it appears you haven’t taught anything.*

**Owusu:** *So what do you do when you realize that students do not understand the questions?*

**Afriyie:** *I do explain in Twi. I change everything to Twi because if I leave everything in English I will see the questions unanswered. So they are unable to express themselves. But as for Twi they are very good, both oral and written.*

The above interactions with the two teachers highlight similar experiences that students in both schools encounter during class exercises and examinations. The extracts show that students perform poorly in tests if texts written in English are not explained in Twi. The teachers in both instances created an opportunity for the students to exhibit their intellectual capabilities by translating test items. If students in class 5 in the two schools
are unable to independently read and understand English exercises and examinations then, the objectives upon which the class syllabus was designed is problematic. It also means that curriculum designed for the students is inappropriate. Curriculum and policy designers usually use well-endowed schools such as private schools as reference, forgetting that several factors affect acquisition of English as a second language. Generalizations of language policy contribute to why the policy is not working well for all students in Ghana. Policy makers should be cognizant of socio-economic backgrounds or particular circumstances of students when formulating language policy. Prinsloo’s (2007) study mirrors my findings. Prinsloo recommends that language policies should consider the socio-economic situation of communities when designing a policy. The extracts have revealed that students who perform unsatisfactorily in tests are not necessarily academically weak. The problem is their inability to properly translate texts from English to Twi.

Moreover, reading consists of decoding and comprehension. Some students exhibited signs of decoding but had difficulty in comprehending what they read in English. My observation of an English reading comprehension class at Asempa Urban Primary School showed that the majority of the students exhibited very good decoding skills. One problem I observed was that students provided wrong answers to the comprehension questions posed by the teacher. Although some of the students could read very fluently (based on the expectation at their level), questions from the reading book, their answers largely did not match with the question. This could be attributed to students’ difficulty in translating the questions so as to provide correct responses. The fact that students are capable of decoding texts orally in English does not guarantee fair understanding of the
text read. This means that the students have developed decoding skills but are yet to acquire comprehension because of their limited knowledge in English vocabulary and cultural knowledge of English.

**Diminished Students’ Participation under English-only Instruction**

Participation in lessons through English was dependent largely on the linguistic resources a student possesses. Students’ participation in class dwindled when they were required to speak with long sentences in English. This lack of participation was not because the students were not willing to participate in the lesson but that they had limited English proficiency resources to speak in long sentences. I observed limited student participation in most of the lessons in the two schools. I analyze interactions between students and their teacher that occurred during a citizenship education lesson at Asempa Urban Primary School. In this lesson, the teacher by way of introduction wanted to refresh students’ memories on an earlier topic learned. The teacher posed this question to the whole class in English:

**Akoto:** Define law; what is law?

**Students:** Law is... (Those were the two English words students who attempted to answer could utter. The correct answer never came).

**Akoto:** Okay state the types of by-laws you know.

The students hurriedly raise their hands and respond correctly to the teacher’s question in English by saying “good sanitation, stealing, etc.” My deduction from this particular instance is that the students had idea about what “law” means but lacked the particular English vocabulary to define the term. The students do not possess enough vocabulary in
English to provide a response that required a long sentence. It was not because the students didn't know the meaning of the word “law”. They knew, but were not able to articulate their ideas in the way the teacher expected them to. My observation of limited English literacy resources among the students is shared by the Opoku-Amankwa (2009) study. The Opoku-Amankwa study in Ghanaian elementary school revealed that students expressed feelings of inadequacy and anxiety in participating in an English-only class. Nonetheless, some of the students could understand the question posed in English and could provide one or two word responses instead of long sentences. In my study, the teacher noticed that the students could not express themselves in English so he started explaining in the Twi language and later switched to English.

Eventually, the definition of law was provided by the teacher in English. I noticed that the students do not have adequate English words to express themselves in long sentences. This means that the students’ speaking proficiency does not match up to the standard expected of them. As a result, using English only for instruction meant the students do not have full access to the curriculum. The strategy used by the teacher was to ensure that the students could participate and contribute meaningfully in whichever language. The teacher sought to encourage participation and understanding of content delivered.

Similar observations were made at Adom Rural Primary School. Although I saw that students had been struggling with English throughout my observation, there were few instances that they were able to contribute in lessons with one or two English word responses. For instance, in a natural science class, the teacher by way of introduction asked the students to define ‘force.’ I noticed that only one student’s hand was up to respond. The
response given was; “a push or pull of an object.” It was the correct response. Interestingly, when the teacher asked the students to state the types of force, half of the class raised their hands. I noticed that the expected responses were just two words. That is, “frictional force,” or “gravitational force.” I observed that students had difficulty in responding in full or long sentences to questions posed by the teacher. The students were, however, capable of providing short responses in English.

In terms of student participation under this sub-section, data from the two schools demonstrates that the level of English proficiency required by students to accomplish tasks in English is inadequate. Although to some extent, students understood what the teachers said in class, they were limited in forming sentences with English. The students in this case have challenges that are not addressed by the English-only language policy. If a language policy fails to address unique challenges of individual schools, that policy would create an unequal learning environment inimical to academic progression of already disadvantaged groups in society. Unfortunately, students are not judged by the knowledge they exhibit in the classroom because they are unable to properly communicate in the language of instruction. While teachers teach content, in a particular subject, they also emphasize English at the same time. The data presented here show similar problems the students in both schools face with English. Comparatively, the students in both schools manage to participate in English when their contribution is not expected to be provided in long sentences.

**English language reading comprehension challenges**

I have separated this discussion from the translation practices discussed earlier because English comprehension is a major component in the national teaching syllabus for
primary schools. Reading comprehension is challenging for the students in both schools. English reading comprehension forms one part of the sections outlined in the English syllabus. The aim of the syllabus is to ensure that students acquire reading comprehension skills in English. However, that is not entirely the case in Asempa Urban Primary School. Students in Asempa Urban Primary School read English passages but do not understand what they read. The extract below is a personal experience shared by Haruna, a Primary 6 teacher:

**Owusu:** What are some important issues that we did not talk about that you want to put across?

**Haruna:** The only thing I want to add is some of the children are able to read passage but they don’t understand what they read.

The extract above shows that the students at Primary 6 have attained reading competence because they are able to decode English texts. However, the students cannot comprehend texts because of their limited vocabulary resources in English. The students possibly experience cultural referencing challenges as they read. Cultural referencing is possible because English passages written in contexts that are distant from readers’ experiences would be difficult for students to follow and understand. It is curious to see students who have acquired decoding skills in English but struggle to comprehend texts. This problem could be interpreted in different ways. One reason could be that English is learned in school, and that English speaking does not form part of most of the communications students make in school and out of school. If students speak English on daily basis in their community, they would be able to comprehend texts that are decoded. It is difficult for students to understand a language when it is learned in instructed form, more so, when it
is taught by non-native speakers. English is acquired in most parts of Ghana in school because it is not the language spoken at home or informal settings. The fact that these students could only read English by decoding suggests that speaking and comprehension skills are less emphasized in the language learning process. In other words, the students lack speaking and comprehension resources. I argue here that a student who is capable of speaking a language understands what is read if the vocabulary and context are familiar. Reading becomes an additional skill to speaking skills.

In a similar instance, I asked Osei an Adom Urban Primary School class 4 teacher, why the students do not understand English. The following excerpt was obtained from my interview with Osei:

**Owusu:** *So what can you tell me about students’ level of the English language proficiency (both oral and written) as set out in the syllabus at any level you teach? What might have accounted for that?*

**Osei:** *When you ask them to read after you, they are able to. When they come to school the next day and you ask them to read, they can’t. I would say their level of English proficiency is not what is set out in the syllabus”.*

The above extract highlights the inability of Primary 4 students at Adom Rural Primary School to decode English passages. While students in Asempra Urban Primary School could decode the English passage they had difficulty with comprehension, students in Adom Rural Primary School cannot read on their own. The fact that students can only repeat the words of their teacher means they have not mastered the vocabularies of English.
The students cannot recognize vocabularies learned the previous day when they meet the same vocabularies the next day. It can be deduced here that students almost lose every word (new or old) practiced with the teacher as soon as lessons are over. The students lose almost every vocabulary learned because they do not practice the words multiple times. It also means that the teacher does not plan lessons to give opportunities for the students to learn new vocabularies by memorizing them. As a result of poor reading strategies the teacher adopts, the students in the Adom Rural Primary lack two major reading skills: decoding and comprehension. The students cannot decode because when reading after their teachers, they could be repeating sounds of the vocabularies without necessarily recognizing the vocabularies. This happens because the students are not familiar with the new vocabularies. In such situation, where lies the fate of the English-only instruction and the future of the students in terms of advancing through examinations produced in English. The consequences are that students cannot read and respond in English so they will fail in examination and their progression to higher level of education will become impossible. These are high stake consequences and the current language policy sets these students up for failure.

Mode of enforcing English speaking

The environment in which students in both schools learn and speak English contributes to the success or otherwise of the English-only policy. Teachers apply all manner of strategies to enforce English speaking. Teachers use punishment to ensure that students learn and speak English. Although corporal punishment is still present in Ghanaian schools, the severity as it used to be in the past (when I was a student in primary school) is less. Punishment takes the form of canning, cleaning of classrooms, kneeling down and
raising the two hands. Students in both Adom Rural Primary School and Asempa Urban Primary School refuse to speak when the English-only policy is enforced. Madam Afriyie, a teacher at Adom Rural Primary 5, shared an experience in this extract from our interview:

**Owusu:** What do you think are the good and bad sides of English only language policy for students? In this case I am referring to using English only for teaching.

**Afriyie:** One day I told the students that this week nobody should speak Twi. That week even some of the students didn’t speak throughout the week, but the child has a problem but he won’t talk. For him to speak Twi to be beaten (punished by teacher), he would keep the problem to himself.

The above statement made by the teacher highlights the consequence of students’ inability of to communicate in English. In this case, by denying the students at Adom Rural Primary School the opportunity to communicate in their mother tongue, this means that no learning can take place. In an attempt to enforce English speaking at Adom Rural Primary School, the teacher ended up denying some students the opportunity to take part in interactions in the school. The threat to punish for speaking Twi was also an infringement on the right of the students to speak. Schools should be institutions that create opportunities for students to advance their knowledge rather than being sites of intimidation. The moment it becomes clear to students that they can only learn a language under coercion, their enthusiasm and sense of appreciating the language is potentially jeopardized. Students must be encouraged to learn a language rather than being coerced. More importantly, they must understand why there is the need for an additional language.
Students should be motivated to learn instead of being coerced through intimidation and punishment.

Similarly, Haruna, a primary 6 teacher at Asempa Urban Primary School shared his experiences about how English speaking is enforced in his class. The following is an excerpt from our interaction:

**Owusu:** What can you tell me about students’ level of the English proficiency (both oral and written) as set out in the syllabus at any level you teach? What might have accounted for that?

**Haruna:** It is good. Because I force them to speak English they are good. And sometimes I use punishment.

The excerpt above shows that the students learn to speak English because if they don’t, their teacher punishes them. The teacher is happy that he has been successful with the use of punishment to enforce English speaking. It could be that the students in Asempa Urban Primary 6 have sufficient English vocabularies. I have not found any research study that suggests that punishment is appropriate for ensuring that students learn English. Nonetheless, the teacher’s statement suggests that the students are good at English because punishment is productively applied in the classroom.

In conclusion, comparatively, the teachers in the respective schools apply punishment to enforce English speaking and, as a result, deny students the opportunity to speak. While some students in the rural school failed to speak because of punishment, students in urban class 6 spoke in English under threat of punishment. It is rather intriguing to understand why teachers in both schools consider punishment as remedy for a failing
policy. One can imagine the consequences of learning under duress. Edu-Buandoh and Otchere’s (2012) study supports the findings above. The authors report in their study that students in Ghana receive all sorts of punishment for speaking their mother tongue instead of English. The use of punishment to enforce English speaking is tantamount to imposing a language on students when they are not cognitively prepared to use the language.

**Adherence/Resistance to English-only policy**

Teachers in both schools do not strictly adhere to the English-only language policy. Teachers in both schools demonstrate their resistance to English-only instruction on daily basis. Teachers’ ideologies, standpoints, and personal experiences influence decisions they make in classroom as regards language of instruction. According to the teachers in both schools studied, students would not understand anything if they spoke English only. The teachers believe that lesson objectives cannot be achieved if they use English only. The frustrations experienced by teachers when implementing the English-only instruction is expressed by primary 5 teacher, Afriyie at a Adom Rural Primary School in the extract below:

**Owusu:** What do you think are the good and bad sides of English only language policy for students? In this case I am referring to using English only for teaching.

**Afriyie:** I observed in my first time in this school, looking through our curriculum I realized that upper primary we need to use English solely. So I decided to use English. I realized when I asked them “do you understand?” they said “yes madam.” But I gave them an exercise and none was able to score three
out of five. So I realized they didn’t understand everything I was teaching so I changed everything to solely Twi on that day. I realized five persons were able to score five out of five.

The extract highlights teachers’ resistance to the English-only policy when they realize it is practically impossible to teach effectively in English. The teacher helps students to learn and understand the content delivered by using Twi to teach. By so doing, the students are able to perform in class exercise. If the teacher had not resisted the English-only instruction, the result would be that students would perform poorly in class exercises and end of term examinations. When that happens, the students would be considered academically weak because they could not provide correct answers to questions produced in a language they do not understand.

However, when the teacher switched to students’ mother tongue they were able to produce correct responses to the questions. The use of mother tongue in this case became useful to the students in promoting understanding thereby ensuring that the students achieved lesson outcomes. The teacher realized the policy is inimical to the progress of the students, hence the adoption of mother teaching strategy. Classrooms in Ghana should be learning centres but not linguistic experimental laboratories where students’ English proficiency becomes the specimen tested. Teachers should not toil with the future of their students by simply implementing a policy that yields little results. It is better to adopt the best strategy to make students feel at home rather than merely teaching for the sake of teaching. Students under this policy should not be judged wrongly by their inability to speak and understand English. Instead, the knowledge they bring to school should be
embraced and developed. Students’ knowledge should not be abruptly substituted with ideas of unfamiliar language but should form the foundation for future advancement.

And yet, looking at the situation in Ghana, if the teacher uses only Twi for instruction, it will disadvantage the students in future, because English is required for academic progression. Academic success depends on English because according to the national teaching syllabus in upper primary, apart from a Ghanaian language all other subjects are taught in English. The resistance exhibited by the teacher is borne out of the prevailing circumstances in the classroom which the language policy fails to address. Garcia and Menken’s (2010) work on teachers’ negotiation and resistance to language policy corroborate my data. The authors’ study in an Ethiopian school reveals that official language policies get interpreted based on the experiences and ideologies of teachers. In light of this confusion over language use in this instance, I would go along with Makoe and McKinney’s (2014) hybrid language and literature practices in the classroom to deal with the situation. According to Makoe and McKinney hybrid language and literature practices is the use of students’ mother tongue and English in the classroom at the same time. This could save the teacher some time, when compared with code-switching that the teacher employs.

In Asempa Urban Primary School, the teachers also do not strictly adhere to the English-only instruction. For example, a lower primary two teacher, Agyeiwaa in the school had this to say in the excerpt below:

Owusu: What about if you are teaching with English only and the children don’t understand you? Have you encountered any
situation where you were teaching with English and didn’t get the children’s cooperation?

Agyeiwaa: Yes that one it is there because if you use the English language alone, you know some pupils they speak their local languages home. So you have to bring in the local language so they would understand you and answer questions.

The above excerpt evidences that the teacher negotiates the language policy by recognizing and validating students’ mother tongue. It is not surprising that lower primary students struggle to understand English because even their counterparts in upper primary encounter the same problem. As the teacher rightly put it, some of the students do not speak English at home so they find it difficult to participate in English lessons in school. The teacher acknowledges that some students come to school with no proficiency in English. It is very frustrating to teach in a language students are less familiar with. Guided by the principle of improvisation, every teacher will adopt a strategy suitable under the circumstance, even if it means violating the official arrangement put in place. By switching to Twi, the teacher was showing resistance to the official language. In the excerpt, the teacher shows knowledge of linguistic situations in the community where the school is located. It can be said that the teacher undermines the policy by negotiating it but, in actual fact, she teaches according to the experiences she had had over the years.

The data obtained from the two schools show that teachers resist and negotiate the use of English-only for instruction. All the teachers I interviewed indicated that students understand better when they teach in students’ mother tongue. The importance teachers
attach to mother tongue of students in the teaching and learning process influences their use of Twi for teaching in English-only classroom. The teachers in the rural school were emphatic that people in their community do not speak English.

**English for Inter-ethnic and Global Interaction**

Although the teachers in the respective schools underscore the importance of teaching with mother tongue, they do not discount the role played by English in Ghanaian society. For instance, the English syllabus for upper primary (primary 4 to 6) emphasizes the role English plays as the official language in national life in Ghana. It is stated explicitly in the document that the rationale for learning English in Ghana is that English is the language of government and administration, the language of commerce, the learned professions and the media. It adds that “success in education at all levels depends, to a very large extent, on the individual’s proficiency in the language.” That is the power of English in Ghana. Looking at the rationale for learning English at this lower level of education in Ghana, it is evident that English is being used as a benchmark for academic progression. Almost all the teachers I interviewed in both schools were of the view that there should be a blend of both students’ mother tongue and English.

Again, it is the view of teachers in both schools that considering the multilingual nature of Ghana, students need English in their lives. Their point is that when one travels to another part of the country where their mother tongue is not spoken, a common language is required for communication. Some teachers also indicated that, English is widely spoken globally so it is necessary for students to learn it for international communication. For the teachers, English is the common language in Ghana. The following is an extract from one of the interviews with Afriyie, a primary 5 teacher at Adom Rural Primary School:
Owusu: The next question is the current Minister of Education has indicated her readiness to change the existing policy to the use of local languages for instruction, what makes her idea so important now?

Afriyie: To me I don’t think it will help. Let’s take for instance you want to travel out of your country how can you talk to people with your dialect? But majority of people outside Ghana can understand you when you speak English. I went to SRC meeting in north where Twi is not spoken but I was able to communicate with them in English.

I asked the same question in my interview with Akoto, a Primary 4 teacher at Asempa Primary Urban School. Below is the response I received:

Owusu: The current Minister of Education has indicated her readiness to change the existing policy to the use of local languages for instruction, what makes her idea so important now?

Akoto: To the best of my knowledge I think it won’t help. The best thing is to combine the two languages when teaching or communicating with the children. Using only local language, though other countries are practicing that for example China, they use their language in everything they do. But in our country we don’t have one particular
language. We have different languages and people would be moving from one place to the other it would be very difficult.

The extracts from the interviews show that teachers in both schools have similar appreciation of the essence of learning English in Ghana. Both teachers acknowledge the role English plays in inter-ethnic communication. Although the teacher in the urban school recognizes gains made by China through one local language education, he believes the multilingual nature of Ghana does not allow the country to practice same. Also, the teacher at the rural school is of the view that English has high global currency. Therefore, Ghanaians need English for international purposes. The above opinions expressed by the teachers are in consonance with Mfum-Mensah’s (2005) study in the Northern region of Ghana. Participants in the study were of the opinion that English is the panacea for advancing well in society at large. The teacher in the rural school’s experiences with use of English in the Northern region agrees with one of the reasons cited for the 2002 English-only language policy in Ghana.

I do not dispute the fact that a common language should be available for inter-ethnic communication. But the point is that learners’ mother tongue should not be undermined when learning English. We should recognize that there is correlation between studying in English (L2) and lowest level of achievement of learners (Huegh, 2008). Besides, although English is the official language of Ghana, it has not officially been made mandatory that every Ghanaian should learn English (Anyidoho and Dakubu, 2008). It is therefore not entirely correct that English must be learned for inter-ethnic communication in Ghana. Other local languages in Ghana perform the function of inter-ethnic communication because they are also widely spoken.
Summary

In this chapter, I have reported my findings from the discourses in an English-only classroom environment of two distinctive multilingual rural and urban schools in the Ashanti region of Ghana. I touched on code-switching that happens in the teaching and learning processes. The data show that teachers code-switch between English and Twi to help students understand content delivered. I also discussed how difficult it is for students to construct long sentences in English. I have discussed that students in both schools are unable to participate in long sentences in English-only instruction. English comprehension challenges faced by students were also discussed. The study has shown that in the urban school, students are able to decode English texts but cannot comprehend. On the other hand, students in the rural school are able to read after their teacher but cannot decode nor comprehend. The chapter further reports of the use of punishment to enforce English speaking. While punishment seems to work for primary 6 students in the urban school, students in the rural school fail to speak at all when punishment is used to enforce English speaking. Findings from the two schools have provided some answers to my research questions. The next chapter will summarize and draw insights from the study.

CHAPTER FIVE: Summary/Conclusion/Implications

Introduction

This chapter provides a concise report of findings of the study obtained from the two schools. I seek to demonstrate how my findings answer the two research questions of this study. I consider it necessary to remind readers of the research questions in this chapter.
The two research questions are: 1. How do students whose mother tongue is not English language respond to English only instruction? 2. What are the distinguishing effects of the policy on rural and urban students? The chapter also contains recommendations for consideration by policymakers, teacher education, and further research. I provide details of significance and implications of the study to show how the study contributes to knowledge. I also present limitations that posed difficulties in the conduct of the study.

**Summary/Conclusion**

I answer the first research question of this study which sought to find out how students in both rural and urban school respond to English-only instruction with the following findings and conclusions. I observed that there is an overemphasis on English in Ghana. Overemphasis on English in post-colonial Ghana contributes to low literacy levels. Regardless of students’ proficiency in English in Ghana, if that student is unable to read, and write in English, that person is not considered literate. This situation creates inequality in a society where public formal spaces are dominated, dictated, and led by those who have superior command of English. As a result, English-only language instruction contributes to wastage of valuable human resources. Those who have rich knowledge in Indigenous languages, traditions and culture are relegated to the background. Furthermore, an overemphasis on English for education, formal administrative and official businesses in Ghana and other postcolonial Africa countries renders Indigenous languages inferior and underutilized. When Indigenous languages face these challenges, Ghana could face identity challenges among its people, due to current conscious or unconscious acculturated language practices.
Classroom discussions in English in the two schools studied do not encourage students’ participation. Students find it difficult to respond to questions posed in English. They respond in Twi to questions that were framed in English. Nonetheless, they are able to provide response to questions that do not require more than two English words. Teachers engage in code-switching between English and Twi, and code-mixing in the classroom. The teachers in both schools reported that when they speak English only in a lesson the students do not understand. The teachers also indicated that students are unable to achieve lesson outcomes when lessons are delivered in English only. They therefore apply a mixture of English and Twi productively to facilitate teaching and learning.

In addition, teachers in both schools translate English questions to Twi during class exercises and examinations. The teachers take this action to help students understand the questions so as to answer them correctly. Translation in the bilingual classroom plays a major role to create opportunities for students to present texts in L1 and L2. It will be useful for teachers in Ghana to engage in translation when necessary because this study has shown that teachers in both schools use translation productively. As teachers adopt measures to facilitate students’ understanding through their mother tongue, others also enforce English speaking through corporal punishment. Corporal punishment such as caning is meted out to students who communicate in Twi in the classroom. It is problematic to use punishment to enforce English speaking since almost all the students in the rural school cannot communicate in English. Students who are unable to speak English fluently remain silent in class even if they have ideas to contribute in class discussions.

Moreover, in reading comprehension, students in Asempra Urban Primary School have developed decoding skills in English. However, they are unable to comprehend
English texts. On the other hand, students at Adom Rural Primary School are unable to decode English texts. The students in that school are able to read after their teachers demonstrate but easily forget what they read after a couple of hours. The students have difficulty in retaining vocabulary because classroom teaching practices do not offer opportunity for students to practice new English words multiple times or in context. I conclude that, students’ linguistic resources in English in both rural and urban schools’ are inadequate to acquire knowledge and understand the content taught in English only. In this way, students struggle to contribute in English, accomplish tasks in English, as well as inhibited to exhibit their natural prowess in class. Lastly, it is an infringement on the rights of students to be compelled to speak English through punishment. Any attempt to use punishment to implement a language policy is an admission that the policy falls short of addressing the academic challenges of students.

The second question of this study is also addressed by the following findings and conclusions. The English-only language policy does not work equally for the students in both schools. Although students in the Asempa Urban School have challenges with the policy, students in the Adom Rural School are comparatively more disadvantaged. Unlike some students in Asempa Urban Primary School who can read, speak, and comprehend some English, almost all the students in Adom Rural Primary School do not possess those crucial skills for English-only instruction. The students’ inability to speak, read and comprehend English in Adom Rural Primary School means they do not perform as their counterparts in urban schools during district or national standardized examinations. An unequal playing field is created for every student to negotiate the path of education. As a result, general expectations of quality, quantity, and equality in terms of knowledge
expected to be acquired by students across the country will become a mirage. There is not
equality as it stands now in Ghana as regards quality education. Ghanaian students do not
have equal opportunity to advance because not every student has quality and equal access
to the official language of instruction. This situation hampers students’ social mobility as
most of the students cannot gain admission into secondary school.

Overall, this study has revealed challenges faced by students under English-only
instruction in the two respective classrooms I observed. While this study does not seek to
make generalizations, I believe the phenomenon observed is not peculiar to just the two
schools studied. My argument is based on assertion of Wallwork (1985) and Ngara (1982)
that students who learn in their mother tongue are more effective than those who study
through a second language. The English-only instruction policy is supposed to be practiced
across all the schools in Ghana, where English is not the first language of learners. Since
English is not the mother tongue of Ghanaian children, it is plausible to conclude that
students in Ghana, especially, those in upper primary learn in a language that does not
encourage effective teaching and learning.

**Recommendations and Implications**

To policymakers, I recommend that as a matter of necessity, Ghana must address
linguistic imbalances in its educational system to pave the way for Indigenous languages
to play an important role in the teaching and learning process. There should be a policy in
place that creates opportunities for students to have access to knowledge and content in
their mother tongue and English at the same time, until such a time that children can
confidently learn in English. Because this study shows that students at that stage do not possess the required English proficiency to learn under English-only instruction the practice of exiting mother tongue instruction after primary 3 should be discontinued. Instead, students should be trained to become bilingual in their mother tongue and English. Literacy in mother tongue and English should be provided equal attention.

In addition, in formulating educational language policy, policymakers should not lose sight of the fact that each community has unique socio-economic and linguistic circumstances and that a general language policy will not work for all. There should be recognition of diversity and plurality in multilingual society. Policymakers should therefore critically examine entrenched ideologies which have persisted over the years that, serve to perpetuate power and authority of English over Indigenous languages. Furthermore, to avoid educators’ and administrators’ resistance to language policy, top-down approach to language policy and planning by bureaucrats should be discouraged. Opinions of every stakeholder as much as possible should be sought to make policy extensively representative. In this way, educators and administrators would embrace the policy and make it work.

To this end, I recommend that Ghana should redefine literacy learning and the education of the nation. Education and literacy should not be defined as only people who can read, write and communicate fluently in English. People who can exhibit the same skills and qualities in their mother tongue must be accorded the same recognition and should be allowed to play elite vital role in formal settings. Through this, Ghana could maximize human resources and reduce low literacy levels. If we look at other sub-Saharan contexts, such as Nigeria where similar language-in education policy is practiced, low
literacy levels are still high. Ghana needs to consider the possibility of bilingual education. Equal emphasis on mother tongue instruction will help ameliorate high levels of illiteracy in the country. Equal attention to mother tongue education would also ensure identity development.

To educators, instead of resorting to punishment, educators must adopt effective humane strategies to encourage students to learn English willingly. Students must be encouraged to learn a second language instead of being forced to acquire it through cruel means. Classroom practices must therefore be made conducive for smooth acquisition of knowledge. To ensure this, educators must acknowledge and validate the knowledge children bring to classroom. Educators must be careful not to put any impediments in the way of students when they try to participate in class in their mother tongue.

Teacher education in Ghana should also acknowledge the multilingual and multiethnic nature of Ghana. Colleges of education and universities should incorporate in their curriculum strategies for teachers to implement language policies in multilingual and monolingual classrooms in Ghana. This study shows challenges that students in both schools face in decoding and reading comprehension. As a result, teacher education institutions should map out new curriculum strategies to address reading comprehension challenges in Ghanaian classrooms.

Lastly, I recommend that future study of the phenomenon I studied should be conducted ethnographically. Ethnographic study will give researchers enough time to study the phenomenon extensively. Through ethnography, researchers will be able to study stage by stage, how English-only instruction affects students’ cognitive development and success.
rate. Finally, I believe a study of English-only instruction at junior high level will help us understand how the policy impacts on learners at that level as well.

For implications of this study, the study has led to understanding of the effects of the English-only policy on learners’ intellectual growth. The findings of this study inform stakeholders in education, as regards the best practices for curriculum selection and implementation for English second language learners. Findings from the study again lead to better informed classroom and academic support strategies to enhance academic experience of learners. Better education strategies will provide students smooth classroom learning experiences thereby creating better opportunities for them to succeed in their studies.

Limitations

The participants of this study included children. Research ethics require that a study that requires children participation, parents must consent to their children’s participation. Some parents were curious about what their children were being investigated on, although they agreed with their children’s participation. Therefore, studying children was challenging, looking at all the ethical considerations involved. In addition, a comparative case study of two schools could be very lengthy. To conduct this comparative case study, I needed enough time and funding to do a thorough study. This study was conducted outside Canada so limited time and funding affected the study, particularly, the scope the researcher intended to cover. Another limitation is that my presence in the classroom as a stranger created some sort of anxiety among teachers and students alike at the initial stage. However, participants became used to me over time, and the initial uneasiness subsided to pave way for a smooth study.
Moreover, there were issues of generalization of the findings. Since this study did not cover every part of the country due to time, limited funding and the fact that the students mostly speak English, I was thinking that it would not be appropriate to generalize. Some researchers have made arguments over generalization of comparative case study findings. The argument is centered on single case study. For example, Flyvbjerg (2012) and Merriam (1988) provide interesting perspective about the issue. They both observe that proponents of natural sciences hold the position that case study is not scientific method; therefore the findings cannot be generalized. Flyvbjerg argues that it is incorrect for people to regard single case study, which applies also to natural research as not generalizable. “It depends on the case one is speaking of and how it is chosen” (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Merriam also posits that generalization is possible for multicase or cross-case analysis. Since my study involved two sites, my arguments over the findings are based on the position for generalization put forward by Merriam. I strongly believe that the findings of this study are not unique to only the two schools studied. The phenomenon can be observed in almost all the primary schools across the country (particularly public schools) because the same language policy and curriculum are used. Therefore, I make a compelling case for generalization of the findings of this study because of the general educational policy practiced in the primary schools in Ghana. I hope that future study will include more than two schools to ensure participation is more representative.

**Conclusion**

I have presented detailed findings of this study in this chapter. The two questions of this study have adequately been answered by the findings reported in this chapter. The study shows that English-only instruction does not work well for students who are emerging
bilinguals. The English-only instruction hinders students' participation in class. Based on the findings, I have provided recommendations to guide policy makers and educators for consideration. The recommendations require all stakeholders in education in Ghana to revise language policies and educational practices to bring positive changes. I believe for some reasons my study is limited in terms of scope, so I recommend to future researchers to do a study beyond the scope of my study. I have also demonstrated the justification for conducting this study. I hope this study would bring change to ensure that all students receive the needed education.

List of References


Myjoyonline. (2015, October 18). Educationist backs call for use of local languages as medium of instruction. Retrieved from


List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Reasons for 2002 English-only language policy

1. The previous policy of using a Ghanaian language as medium of instruction in the lower primary level was abused, especially in rural schools. Teachers never spoke English in class even in primary six.

2. Students are unable to speak and write ‘good’ English sentences even by the time they complete the Senior Secondary School (High School).

3. The multilingual situation in the country especially in urban schools has made instruction in a Ghanaian language very difficult. The source added that a study
conducted by the Ministry of Education showed that 50 to 60 percent of children in each class in the urban area speak a different language. “It is therefore problematic if we insist that all the children be instructed in Ga, Twi, or Dagbani depending on whether it is Accra, Kumasi or Tamale”.

4. There is a lack of materials in the Ghanaian languages to be used in teaching. The minister of Education declared that “Only five, out of the languages that are spoken by our major ethnic groups, have material developed on them. Certainly, we cannot impose these five languages on the entire nation and people of other ethnic origins”.

5. There is a lack of Ghanaian language teachers specifically trained to teach content subjects in the Ghanaian language. The minister added “merely being able to speak a Ghanaian language does not mean one can teach in it”.

6. There is no standard written form of the Ghanaian languages. He says “For nearly all the languages that we have, there is hardly any standard written form”.

7. The minister in order to support the claim for the use of English as the medium of instruction from primary one cited an experiment by Rockwell (1989) and indicated that children transfer from L2 to L1 better.

8. The minister pointed out that English is the lingua franca of the state and that all effort must be put in to ensure that children acquire the right level of competence in both the spoken and written forms of the language.
Appendix 2:  Official Letters for permission

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION FROM SCHOOL AUTHORITY

Dear Sir/Madam,

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT ACADEMIC RESEARCH

OWUSU KARIKARI RAYMOND – UNIVERSITY OF REGINA, CANADA

I am a student of the University of Regina, Canada. I am pursuing master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction. I am currently conducting comparative case study on the English-only language in education policy of Ghana. Your school has been selected as one of the two primary schools in the Ashanti region to be used for the study. My study will
involve classroom observation of class 4 (BS4) students and a focus group interview session with teachers. The interview is expected to last no longer than 45 minutes.

The Research and Ethics Board (REB) of the University of Regina has given approval for this study. I have provided consent forms to be completed by the participating teachers. In addition, assent form meant to be completed by students and informed consent letter for parents/guardians of students of the specific class will personally be delivered when I arrive in your school. I would be glad if you could organize Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meeting for me to meet with parents. This is to ensure that parents become fully briefed over my study before agreeing to their children’s participation. I plan to spend three weeks in your school.

Please feel free to contact me for any clarification when it becomes necessary.

Thank you

Sincerely,

---Signed---

(Raymond K. Owusu)
Appendix 3: Consent letter

CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS

You are being asked to take part in a research study called English only language policy of education in a multilingual society – The case of Ghana. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.
What the study is about: This study is being conducted as a partial requirement for a Master’s Thesis project. The purpose of this study is to explore effects of English language use as medium of instruction, especially at the lower level of education in Ghana.

What we will ask you to do: If you agree to be in this study, I will conduct a focus group and one-on-one interview with you and other teachers. One-on-one interview will be conducted after each observation session. The interview will include questions about your opinion on the current language policy, how you apply the policy in classroom, and students’ participatory levels in English only lessons. With your permission, I would also like to tape-record the interview.

Risks and benefits: I do not anticipate any risks to you participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. However, there is possibility that any negative comments over the language policy could become an issue of concern by policy makers. There are no financial benefits to you as well except to gain from the findings of the study in your academic pursuit in future.

Your answers will be confidential. The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I make public I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept in password protected computer file. If I tape-record the interview, I will destroy the tape after it has been transcribed, which I anticipate will be within two months of its taping. The only confidential issue that will arise is that I cannot guarantee that all participants in the focus group interview will keep comments confidential.
**Taking part is voluntary:** Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time. However, any decision to withdraw should be communicated to me in the course of the study or at most one month after the study. Your data will be deleted accordingly.

**Ethical approval:** Please be advised that the interview questions have been approved by the Research Ethics Board (REB) of the University of Regina (U of R). This means that the study has been approved by U of R REB. The researcher conducting this study is Owusu Karikari Raymond. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Dr. Andrea Sterzuk (E-mail: andrea.sterzuk@uregina.ca). If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Chair of Research Ethics Board: +130658549856 or email: research.office@uregina.ca. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

**Statement of Consent:** I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Your Signature ____________________________ Date ____________________________

Your Name (printed) __________________________________________________________________________

In addition to agreeing to participate, I also consent to having the interview tape-recorded.

Your Signature ____________________________ Date ____________________________

Signature of person obtaining consent ____________________________ Date ______________
Appendix 4:  Assent letter

STUDENT LETTER OF ASSENT

Dear Student,

I am a student of the University of Regina in Canada. Raymond Owusu Karikari is my name. I want to do research study in your school. I want to know how students learn under English only instruction. I will be observing you as you learn in the classroom. I will be learning from you for three weeks. When I finish I will go back to my university and write my report. It is my hope that my research will bring changes that are good for you and other children.

I have selected your school as one of the two schools in the Ashanti region for my study. As I have said, I will only be observing you so don’t worry about any interview from me.
My decision to write you this letter is to ask for your permission to participate in my study. My assurance to you is that your name will not be used when I am writing my report. I will do that so that nobody will know that any statement I will report in my work came from you. Finally, if you don’t want me to write anything about you it is your right to say so. Even if you agree to participate in my study, you can stop participating at any time.

I want to be observed by Owusu Karikari Raymond.

Yes _______  No _______

Student’s signature __________________________
Appendix 5: Approval from Research and Ethics Board

University of Regina
Research Ethics Board
Certificate of Approval

Investigator(s): Raymond Karikari Owusu, Andrea Sterzuk
Department: Faculty of Education
Supervisor: Andrea Sterzuk
Title: English-Only Language Policy of Education in Multilingual Society – The Case of Ghana

APPROVED ON: May 20, 2016
RENEWAL DATE: May 20, 2017

APPROVAL OF: Application for Behavioural Research Ethics Review
consent form for teachers, student letter of assent, consent form for parents
request for permission from school authority

FULL BOARD MEETING

The University of Regina Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above-named research project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this research project, and for ensuring that the authorized research is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the original protocol submitted for ethics review. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol, consent process or documents.

Any significant changes to your proposed method, or your consent and recruitment procedures should be reported to the Chair for Research Ethics Board consideration in advance of its implementation.

ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS
In order to receive annual renewal, a status report must be submitted to the REB Chair for Board consideration within one month of the current expiry date each year the study remains open, and upon study completion. Please refer to the following website for further instructions: http://www.uregina.ca/research/for-faculty-staff/ethics-compliance/human/forms/ethics-forms.html.

Dr. Larena Hoeser, Chair
University of Regina Research Ethics Board

Please send all correspondence to:
Research Office
University of Regina
Research and Innovation Centre 109
Regina, SK S4S 0A2
Telephone (306) 585-5775
research.ethics@uregina.ca
Appendix 6: Interview Questions

1. What can you say about students drop out rate in this school? What do you think accounts for that?

2. What do you think are the good and bad sides of English only language policy for students?

3. In your view what role do you expect local languages to play in teaching and learning processes?

4. What can you tell me about students’ level of the English language proficiency (both oral and written) as set out in the syllabus at any level you teach? What might have accounted for that?

5. Tell me about a time when a student struggled to complete an assignment due to English language issues.

6. The current Minister of Education has indicated her readiness to change the existing policy to the use of local languages for instruction, what makes her idea so important now?

7. What has been your experience of NALAP? How has it impacted your classroom experience?

8. Can you tell me about students’ transition to junior high school?

9. What are some important issues that we did not talk about that you want to put across?