

## EVALUATION OF LANGUAGE POLICY IN EDUCATION IN TWO SPEECH COMMUNITIES IN NORTHERN GHANA

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### **Abstract**

*The paper evaluates the implementation of language policy in education of two speech communities in Northern Ghana. The objective is to find out the knowledge levels of this policy and how it is implemented among different stakeholders such as teachers, educationists and school children. To achieve this, interviews and questionnaires are used to collect data from these stakeholders. The paper reveals that there is a mismatch between the educational policies and implementations. It observes that LP in education recognises the importance of mother-tongue (MT) medium of instruction and bilingual education, yet the constant fluctuations of LP in education have hindered its successful implementation and this needs to be addressed. The study recommends that policy makers do not arbitrarily make policies that are not based on scientific or research evidence. Technocrats should be involved, thus allowing dialogue between policy makes and technocrats. It also recommends that political affiliations be put aside and a focus should be on a policy that will benefit the populace. The last recommendation is that not only should the Government of the day have the policy of language in education but also ensure that challenges and barriers to implementation are minimized.*

**Keywords:** *Language policy, evaluation, speech community, education, pedagogy*

## Introduction

Over the past decades, Ghana's pursuit of quality education has led to changes in its language policies in education. These changes have been aimed at enhancing the skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in the language of pupils through education. Agbedor (1994) observes that for the past two decades, the interest in language in education has grown considerably among scholars such as linguists, psychologists and economists but the problems of language in education are invariably related to issues of language policy and implementation within the educational system. Spolsky (1978, p.3) notes that "language in education which takes place in a social context and recognition of the complex sociolinguistic forms within a community is essential to the development of a valid and workable language education policy."

Previous accounts of LP in education in Ghana include Agbedor (1994), Bodomo (1996), Owu-Ewie (2006) and Ansah (2014). Agbedor (1994) conducted a study which is conceived as a preliminary investigation into the status of language policies in a multilingual country like Ghana. He also examined factors that determined the introduction of the L2 (English) as a medium of instruction in education. Bodomo (1996) discusses the language situation in Ghana looking at the relations in LP development and suggests trilingualism as a model of developmental communication which supports mother-tongue medium of instruction. Owu-Ewie (2006) examines MT (Mother Tongue) educational policies by reacting to some of the issues against the policies and calls for the introduction of late-exit TBE (Transitional Bilingual Education) model. Ansah (2014) describes the LP in education in Ghana from independence arguing that while the flux in LP in education are attributed to constant changes in government leadership, the poor implementation strategies of such policies do not reflect the sociolinguistic practices in Ghana. For a successful implementation, both Owu-Ewie (2006) and Ansah (2014) having the right calibre of teachers by calling for teaching of the L1 in all the Colleges of Education across the country to ensure that the basic school teachers are trained and equipped to teach the L1. However, they did not outline the pedagogical process of training the teachers.

This paper seeks to fill the gap by showing some practical measures that can prepare the teacher-trainee adequately to teach. This paper uses two speech communities in Northern Ghana to investigate the situation of language policy practices in education in Ghana. The paper has also outlined some factors that have hindered or promoted the success of these policies.

## Language Situation in Ghana

Previous studies of languages in Ghana (Bodomo 1994, 1996) have provided a comprehensive picture of the language situation in the country. Bodomo (1996) gives a detailed presentation of the language situation in the regions of Ghana by classifying the indigenous languages into ten major language groups which do not conform to a one-to-one matching with the ten regions of the country. The newly created regions have not been considered separately as they were part of the ten regions during the time of data collection. For the purpose of this paper, we have re-grouped this language groups to conform to a one-to-one matching with the ten regions of Ghana for easy suggestions of a regional language using the sub-grouping suggested by Agbedor (1994) and Bodomo (1996). This is illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1: Classification of the Indigenous Languages According to Region**

Region	Language group	Languages	Speakers in the region	Regional language
Ashanti	Akan	Asante Twi	3,449,358	√
Greater Accra	Ga-Dangbe	Ga	1,056,158	√
		Dangbe		*
Northern	Mabia	Dagbani	1,258,657	√
	Gurma	Konkomba	651,088	*
	Guang	Gonja	204,442	*
Eastern	Akan	Akuapem	1,312,977	√
	Ga-Dangbe	Dangbe	460,814	*
Western	Akan	Mfantse	1,809,148	√
	Nzema	Nzema	846,079	*
Brong Ahafo	Akan	Bono	1,314,500	√
	Nafaanra	Nafaara	53,900	*
Central	Akan	Mfantse	1,744,332	√
	Guang	Awutu-Efutu	112,665	*
Volta	Gbe	Ewe	1,482,180	√
	Guang	Krachi	162,981	*
	Buem	Adele	72,000	*
Upper East	Grusi	Kasem	86,158	*
	Mabia	Gurenne	750,205	√
	Gurma	Konkomba	47,083	*
Upper West	Mabia	Dagaare	675,367	√
		Waale		*
	Grusi	Sisaala	139,293	*

Key: √ = most widely spoken in the region (regional language)

\* = language spoken in the region (non-regional language)  
 The Table presents the language groups in Ghana according to their geographical locations showing the regions and the main languages spoken. The classification suggests from the distribution that it is possible to have at least six major languages (Akan, Ewe, Ga, Dagbani, Gurene and Dagaare) which could be considered as regional languages. See Table 2.

**Table 2: Possible Regional Languages**

Regional language	Region
Akan (Asante Twi)	Ashanti
Akan ( Bono)	Brong Ahafo
Akan ( Mfantse)	Central
Akan (Akuapem Twi)	Eastern
Akan (Mfantse)	Western
Ewe	Volta
Ga	Greater Accra
Dagbani	Northern
Dagaare	Upper West
Gurene	Upper East

It is also possible to have suggested the first two most widely spoken languages of every region as some are not mutually intelligible. The languages in Table 2 however may serve as regional languages for the regions; note that the new regions are captured under the mother regions in the table. Akan could be the regional lingua franca for five of the ten regions of Ghana while the other five regions would have one regional lingua franca each (Agbedor, 1996). Each of the languages above has the largest number of L1 speakers in each region and they are mutually intelligible with other languages also in the same region. These mutually intelligible languages represent the majority of the people in the regions and, therefore, may be used as language of education for each region in Ghana. Nearly all these proposed regional languages are used on radio and television in all the regions. They are also taught as subjects in schools in the regions and some of the public universities.

### **Educational Policies in Ghana**

Since pre-independence, Ghana has had a number of language policies in education that have alternated between English (L2) and the Ghanaian languages (L1) as media of instruction in the lower classes. This section looks at the trend of policy shifts between 1925 and 2007 that reflects the situation of LP in education in Ghana as seen in Table 3 and 4.

**Table 3: LP in Education in the Pre-Independence Period (Basic Level)**

Period	Era	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
1529-1925	a. Castle Schools	*	*	*	*
	b. Missionary	√	√	√	*
1925-1951	Guggisberg	√	√	√	*
1951-1956	Listowel	√	*	*	*

Key: √ = A Ghanaian language was used as the medium of instruction

\* = Ghanaian language was not used

**Table 4: LP in Education in the Post-Independence Period (Basic Level)**

Period	Era	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
1956-1966	Nkrumah	*	*	*	*
1967-1969	Busia	√	*	*	*
1970-1973	Afrifa	√	√	√	√
1974-2002	Acheampong	√	√	√	*
1987-2002	Rawlings	√	√	√	
2002-2007	Kufour	*	*	*	*
2008-2016	Mills, Mahama	√	√	√	*
2017-	Akuffo-Addo	√	√	√	*

Key: √ = A Ghanaian language was used as the medium of instruction.

\* = Ghanaian language was not used

Table 3 presents language in education from pre-independent era while Table 4 presents the situation in post-independent era. It is observed that although there are similarities in some cases, the country has not had any one policy in this respect. The pronouncement on the language to use as medium of instruction in the classroom in the early and later stages was left entirely to politicians and the implementation to the teacher or perhaps to individual schools. As seen in Table 4, many of the policies were in favour of the L1 at least for the *first three years* of formal education. There were also periods that the policy went even beyond the basic level. For example, language policy from 2002 states that “English should be used as the medium of instruction from primary one, with a Ghanaian language studied as a compulsory subject to the Senior High School”. In 2008, this was again reversed to L1 medium of instruction from KG1 to Primary 3 while English was used as medium of instruction thereafter. The regular erratic pattern of frequent policy shifts due to

change in the political climate has impaired the ability of Ghanaian teachers and education planners to make sustained use of the tremendous pedagogical potential of mother tongue-based instruction.

### **Evaluating the LP in Education**

The Language Policy in education in Ghana, which is mainly about the medium of instruction, has never been stable as seen in Tables 3 & 4 due to changes in the political leadership. Early policies as recommended by educational commissions such as the Phelps-Stoke Commission in 1925 and Bernard Committee in 1956 spelt out two major goals: to establish a language-in-education model that will support strong bilingual learning outcomes through the appropriate learning and use of mother-tongue and English for teaching and learning by positioning an indigenous languages and English as the two pillars of successful learning. The pro-mother tongue language policies in education were implemented to make education accessible through the Mother Tongue (MT) although the use of the target language (L2) for classroom instruction at the lower classes was still prevalent in many schools both during and after the colonial period. The use of the target language was a threat to the achievement of the goals of the introduction of MT which was meant to give access to at least basic school education.

The language policies in education in the Ghanaian context have been constrained by sociopolitical changes in the past including government policies of positive discrimination in favour of an English only language policy in education. This perception and belief are widespread among some policy-makers (Ameyaw-Akumfi, 2002). Even some parents perceive English as the key to achieving the purpose of education by acquiring proficiency in English and they believe that English as the medium of instruction in schools from as early as possible is the key to attaining that proficiency as well as quality education (Annamalai, 2003). Other constraints include the inability to provide viable solutions to the challenge as they did not take account of the linguistic demography in the classrooms and did not also provide detailed implementation guidelines. This paper, therefore, tries to evaluate the implementations of these policies in two speech communities in Northern Ghana.

### **Methodology**

The study was conducted in two speech communities in Dagbon (Dagomba land) and Gonjaland. For each speech community, two communities, a rural and an urban community were chosen. They are Yendi and Malzeri for Dagomba and Salaga and Boyanto from the Gonja. The Dagomba and Gonja constitute two of the major ethnic groups in the Northern Region of Ghana and are geographically located



in different parts of the region. In each community of the speech communities, Dagbani and Gonja are mainly spoken respectively with other languages in the urban communities. Since this study is focused on LP, the only primary schools of the rural communities were selected for enquiry. In addition, two oldest public and private schools in the urban communities were chosen. The oldest were chosen on purpose to see how they experienced the different regimes of LPs during the different political eras and the private schools to see if they implement the policy. A questionnaire and two interview guides were the main tools for data collection. The questionnaire was designed for the teachers and teacher-trainees and one of the interview guides for the educationists from the colleges of education in the northern region and officers from District Education Offices. The third interview guide for the pupils was to find out what they thought about the use of L1.

The data gathered was analysed to find out the language use in school and compared that with the implementation or otherwise of the language policy in education in these schools. Data were collected to cover the following areas:

1. language for instruction in the classroom
2. language use in the school, outside the classroom
3. multilingualism in the community
4. materials for teaching L1
5. availability of L1 teachers
6. L2 interference
7. challenges to successful implementations of policies.

### *Language situation in communities*

Ghana, like many other African countries are multilingual. There are as many as 60 language groups in Ghana. Dagbani and Gonja are two in the Northern Ghana. Yendi and Salaga are district capitals although Yendi is much bigger. As expected, the two urban communities have several language groups not only of Ghana but also from neighbouring Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Togo and La Cote D'Ivoire. Hausa, (a non-Ghanaian language) for example is spoken by nearly everyone in Salaga, while Dagbani is the main language in Yendi. On the other hand, Malzeri and Bonyanto to a large extent are rural communities that could be described as linguistically homogeneous settings. These four communities were chosen for these characteristics.

### *Sampling*

Following arguments of Labov (1966) on responses becoming redundant after 80 study participants, a sample size of 80 participants was selected for this study. Three sets of participants were selected from the communities; the first set

comprised 20 males and 20 females, representing teachers and teacher trainees. The teachers included 24 regular teachers who started teaching from 1999 and aged between 35-45 years comprising 12 males and 12 females and 16 teacher-trainees, who were all teacher trainees from Tamale College of Education, comprising 8 males and 8 females and aged 18-25. The second set comprised 20 educationists consisting of 10 males and 10 females. The educationists included 6 circuit supervisors (3 male and 3 females) and 14 tutors from Tamale College of Education, Bagabage College of Education, both in Tamale and EP College of Education, Bimbila, all in the Northern Region. All the educationists have language (English or Ghanaian language) background from the University of Education, Winneba and aged between 30 and 50 years. The third group was 20 pupils from six basic schools of the urban and rural communities. The pupils comprised 10 males and 10 females aged 9-11 years. The choice of the pupils was motivated by the fact that there is the early-exit point as defined in the new educational system. It was appropriate to find out how well pupils at that level were prepared for the L2 medium of instruction from primary 4. Participants were not ethnically segregated in the urban communities and so the probability of selecting only respondents from one ethnic group was very minimal.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, a conscious effort was made to include both males and females to get the different perspectives. Table 5 shows the gender of participants.

**Table 5: Participants (Gender Cross Tabulation)**

Participants	Male	Female	Total
Teachertrainees	20	20	40
Educationist	10	10	20
Pupils	10	10	20
<b>Total Count</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>% of Total</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 5 shows the distribution of participants as 50% males and 50% females. The next variable that was examined was language for instruction in the classroom but first to find out if teachers in both urban and rural or from both private and public institutions are aware of a language policy in education. Their responses showed that all teachers are aware of either beginning to teach in either an MT or English. However, this was not expressed by any of the teachers as a policy. For all the teachers, they were encouraged by the district education office and circuit



supervisors to teach the local language in the first three years using it as the medium of instruction and English taught as a subject and use English from primary 4 as a medium and MT as a subject. In the two oldest schools of the urban communities, the teachers said this encouragement to start with MT or English has never been stable and so they eventually code-mix or sometimes code-switch between MT and English. They preferred to use English but when pupils seemed not to understand, they used the local language. They also stated that sometime in the past, the circuit supervisor insisted on the use of the MT but it really never worked because they wanted their pupils to speak English early as it was the expectation of parents. The private schools had similar responses. In summary, the private school teachers said their heads insisted on ensuring that by the first two or three years the pupils spoke English so they actually used more English irrespective of the class. Answering the question if they use MT in the classroom to teach P1-4, one of the private school teachers said the following:

*"Private schools are different. Our children must know English very well and their performance at the end must be good to give us more children so we do not use the MT much"*

The educationists were fully aware of the policy and the policy changes of the years but admitted that it has been difficulty to get the schools going by the policy. They said they think it is very useful to start with the MT but enumerated several reasons (to be discussed later) why in spite of their awareness and monitoring role, they were unable to enforce the policy to the letter. For example, one of the Circuit officers said:

*"For us, it is a good policy and has lots of advantages but the challenges make it difficult to implement. For example, it is not in all our schools that we have teachers of the classes concerned speak the local language. In other cases, there are no books"*.

What is clear here is that all the educationists and teachers of the six schools are aware of the language policy in education but do not know that it is a policy and do not feel obliged to go by it. The pupils were simply asked if an MT is used in the lower classes in their schools. Pupils of the urban schools said it was used more in the lower classes but sometimes though not much in the upper classes too. In the rural schools, respondents from both Boyanto and Malzeri said Dagbani and Gonja were used in all the classes because many children even in the upper class do understand English well. This led to whether MT was used outside the classroom... Respondents from both rural and urban schools said that Dagbani and Gonja were spoken a lot outside the classroom, as one of the teachers in Yendi said, *"We all speak Dagbani outside the classroom, even among teachers"* The responses of the teachers were confirmed by both the educationists and the pupils. The educationists

said their observation was that teachers in rural school speak more of MT than those in the urban areas. These responses seem to suggest that the use of the MT will be accepted by people from the communities but the ambition of teachers to get their children speaking English early is what challenges them in the implementation of the policy where they have to use MT for lower primary.

Interferences of language were also investigated. Responses of Teachers to whether they observed any interferences of MT over English or vice versa when MT was used as medium of instruction in the classroom showed that 12 of them said none interfered with the other. A majority of the teacher respondents said that pupils had pronunciation challenges of English but pupils spoke them quite distinctly. Of the 8 who thought otherwise, one of them said that *"the pupils have Dagbani interfering with English. They substitute what they do not know in English with Dagbani words because of a low level of English"*. If this is the language use, there is some degree of interference of English with Dagbani. This is expected as they know more of the MT than English.

The study also tried to see what the role of multilingualism could be in the implementation of a language policy in education that calls for either English or MT during the early stages. We started by asking all respondents how many languages they spoke. Table 6 shows the level of multilingualism among the respondents

**Table 6: Multilingualism among Respondents**

Number of languages	1 language	2 languages	3 languages	4 languages
Respondents	7	17	33	23

Of the 80 respondents, 23 speak four languages, 33 speak three languages, 17 speak two languages and 7 speak only one language. Many of the respondents were from the two speech communities, they were Gonjas and Dagombas. There were a few, (4) who were neither Gonja nor Dagomba and were not long in the area enough to have learnt the two languages. The next question was if they teach Dagbani or use Dagbani or Gonja? As many as 68% said they neither teach Dagbani nor teach in Dagbani. According to them, knowing the language does not mean they can teach the MT. As many as 80% of the teachers said that they actually cannot read or write Dagbani. They can only speak it. Given that many across all the categories of respondents are multilingual, learning a second language seems normal and should perhaps not be a problem for those who are not originally from the two speech communities.

Parts of the questionnaire and interview guides inquired about the schools having adequate teaching and learning materials for MT. Schools from rural and urban communities said they have some books but not enough for the pupils, in which case, the school only ensure that the teacher has a copy. The two oldest schools in Yendi are innovative. The respondents said they use different books. There are prescribed textbooks but because of inadequacy, they look around and buy other books in Dagbani. Probing further, all categories of participants said that materials are enough only for teachers and not for the pupils. This is a definite gap in the implementation of the policy. One of the teachers from Yendi said the following:

*"Mother tongue education is encouraged but we don't have all the necessary materials. Sometimes, we just have enough for only the teachers"*

Although responses from respondents on the multilingual situation of respondents suggested that a majority do not teach Dagbani nor Gonja, the study investigated the availability of enough trained teachers for MT in the schools. None of the schools, not even the old schools had more than one trained MT teacher in the school. This suggests that there are insufficient teachers for the teaching of MT. This called for an inquiry into the training institutions for training MT teachers.

The last item on the instruments looked at challenges to successful implementations of policies and the way forward. The pupils were asked if they thought MT should be used as medium of instruction for the first three years. The responses from both the Gonja and Dagbani speaking communities were in favour of a policy of MT. They were also asked whether they thought there was any challenge to teaching in MT. Again, responses from the two speech communities were not different. Pupils said that some of their teachers did not speak the MT of students and they did not have books. The teachers and educationists also mentioned the same challenges. See Table 7.

**Table 7: Challenges of the Use of MT as Medium of Instruction**

Challenges	Pupils	Teachers	Educationists	Total	% of Total
Not enough books	20	38	18	76	95
Non-native children in school	14	35	13	62	77.5
Not enough trained MT teachers	18	35	15	68	85
Poor understanding of the policy	20	38	20	74	92.5

Frequent policy shifts	12	40	20	72	90
Negative perceptions on relevance of learning MT	14	36	16	66	82.5
L1 teachers ashamed of teaching L1	18	35	16	69	86.25
Use of L1 even after P3	20	36	20	76	95

One could say that the challenges according to participants of this study are enough textbooks for both teachers and pupils, the presence of pupils whose L1s are not the same as the local language of the locality, lack of enough trained MT teachers, L1 teachers feeling their area of specialty is inferior, frequent policy shifts, understanding of the policy as a policy and not a mere suggestion abuse of the use of L1 and the instrumental or integrative value of MT in Ghana, where English is the official language used for government business and the rest of formal education in the country.

The implication of the findings is that there is a mismatch between educational policies of language in education, implementations and outcomes of the policies. In the literature review, Tables 3 and 4, the goals of most of the educational policies have been centered on the status of MT as a medium of instruction in Ghana for P1-P4. Findings from this study however show that the policies were not even understood by some level of implementers (some teachers). The policies were interpreted as suggestions from the district education offices which did not actually put the needed pressure to implement the policy.

It is noted that the colonial era saw the castle schools from 1529 to 1925 use CL (L2) medium of instruction in schools purposely to train the European traders' children who acted as interpreters between their parents and the local people. It is also noticed that at post-independence era in 1956-1966 and 2002-2007 educational policies maintained the L2 medium of instruction. These policies were implemented based on political will and not to change colonial language policies owing to the importance of CL in the competitive market economy in Ghana. None of these periods saw the use of MT (L1) medium of instruction.

Some subsequent policies took L2 into consideration and the need for bilingual education established. In spite of this fact, responses from respondents show the constant fluctuations of LP in education for all these years made it difficult to implement the policies to the letter because most new governments that come to power usually have something to change. Up till now, it is difficult to say what the different achievements of the different language policies are due to challenges



to these policies. The study reveals that certain factors have been hindrances to the policy implementations. These hindrances include lack of political will to change colonial language policies, understanding of the policy, lack of enough trained teachers for MT, Insufficient books, and lack of instrumental and integrative values for indigenous languages and elite closure.

Although not explicitly expressed, it is clear from the choice of English as medium of instructions as policy and preference of parents that some class of elites do not support the use of MT. English is considered by such a group as the highest domain in order to preserve the privileges with which English is associated. Most elites then prefer to send their children to schools where English is the sole medium of instruction from the lower level. This practice is widespread in the urban communities like Yendi where private schools are very common and currently use English as medium of instruction. The result has been the rise of more private schools which function as if they are not bound by the state's LP in education.

As illustrated in Table 2, the regional languages are the most widely spoken languages in each area and they are also taught as subjects in the teacher colleges of education and some universities in Ghana. "The ten Ghanaian languages are studied as undergraduate and graduate courses. For example, the University of Ghana, Legon and the University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast offer a graduate degree program in Akan (Twi and Mfantse), Ga and Ewe, whereas the University of Education, Winneba offers undergraduate courses in Akan (Twi and Mfantse), Ewe, Nzema, Ga, Ga-Adamgbe, Gonja, Dagaare, Dagbani, Kasem, and Gurune" (Owu-Ewie, 2006, p. 79). Akan is widely spoken in five of the ten regions of Ghana, Dagbani is widely spoken in the Northern region, Ga in Greater Accra, Ewe in Volta, Akan (Mfantse) in Central and Western, Akan (Akuapem Twi) in Eastern, Grunne in Upper East and Dagaare in Upper West as shown in Table 3. The Majority of the LPs (1951-1955; 1970-1973; 1974-2002) in education implemented MT, used as the medium of instruction from lower primary 1 to 3 as seen in Tables 3 and 4.

Lack of instrumental value for indigenous languages also impedes LP in education implementation. Linguistic instrumentalism is defined as "a view of language that justifies its existence in a community in terms of usefulness in achieving specific utilitarian goals such as access to economic development or social mobility" (Wee, 2003, p.211). Elite perspectives on MT as a medium of instruction in school are traditional views that often lead to evaluating or marginalising the MT. It is observed that some policy in education makers do not yet view the indigenous languages as commodities so it is not surprising people in the communities are attracted to CL medium of education than to an education through the medium of MT. This is due to what Tuominen (1999), as cited in Kamwangamalu (2013) termed as UTILITY-MAXIMIZATION which is the costs and benefits of educating



children in a community's ethnic language. These lead to the question whether to educate a child in a community language or educate the child in a language of wider communication such as English. In the Ghanaian context, the aim of the policies is the establishment of a language in education model that will support strong bilingual learning outcomes through the appropriate learning and use of Ghanaian languages and English. As remarked by Fishman et.al (1977), languages are rarely acquired for their own sake; they are acquired as keys to other things that are desired in life. Policy makers in Ghana will have to look at language in education from this perspective.

It is observed in Ghana that the desire to have access to employment and the desire to move up the social ladder generally needs the required knowledge of English so the demand for English increases and parents begin to speak and teach their children English even at home. Teachers who are trained to teach L1 start teaching English and some to the extent of feeling ashamed to teach L1. The data on language use in the classroom in schools show that there is generally a preference for English even in the rural communities, thus, more use of English in the urban communities.

This is the method which can make indigenous languages valuable in a bilingual education as in the very early stages of formal education, pupils will begin to appreciate and value their mother tongue.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

To a large extent, bilingual education is being promoted in Ghana. The historical trend of language in education policies shows that L1 has for most of the time being a consideration for education in the early years of education. It is observed that policies have always been made but the policies have had several challenges when it comes to implementation. Although these challenges are numerous, key ones include the understanding of the policy by teachers who should implement them in the classroom. Many of the teachers are not aware of the real policy so they do what they think will help the pupils. The traditional perspective of the economic and social values of L1 has also made implementation difficult because most people prefer to have their children taught in English regardless of the level. Because of these same reasons, some teachers who are trained to teach L1 find themselves doing different jobs. The result of these challenges in the schools under study is a failure of the bilingual model of education. The schools under study are not different in their perspectives of the value of MT.

There is however research evidence indicating that children who start formal education in the L1 tend to do better in early years of school than their counterparts who start everything in English. Researchers and policy makers must

dialogue and implementers must know the policies. Policy makers must also consult and scientific knowledge on this should be shared with the public. Not knowing the benefits of a bilingual language policy can bring about rejection, especially in comparison to an international language like English. The fact that even people who haven't been to school try to speak English shows their preference for it.

In spite of this situation, and based on the evaluation of the 1974-2002 LP in education which was reformulated in 1987, this paper proposes the maintenance of the September, 1987 policy which supports the early-exit transitional bilingual education where mother tongue is used as the medium of instruction from Primary 1 to Primary 3 and learnt as a compulsory subject in the upper primary (4-6), Junior High School (1-3), and as a core subject in the Colleges of Education (1-2) and other Tertiary Institutions.

Evaluating this policy from a student's experience as a product of the 1974-2002 policy reformulated in 1987, we present a plausible social benefit of a student from 1981 to 1999 in the table below.

**Table 8: Evaluation of the 1987 LP Policy**

Year	Level of Education	Place	Region	Ghanaian Language studied
1981-1986	Primary 1-6	Yendi	Northern	Dagbani
1987-1988	JSS 1	Yendi	Northern	Dagbani
1988-1991	JSS 1-3	Accra	Greater Accra	Ga
1992-1994	SSS	Kumasi	Ashanti Region	Asante Twi
1996-1999	Training College	Tamale	Northern	Dagbani

From the table above, it is clear that those who passed through the 1974-2002 language in Education policy might have had the opportunity of studying one or two additional Ghanaian languages in addition to the L1 they learn as medium of instruction in the lower primary (1-3) and as a subject in the upper primary (4-6). The scenario presented provides a clear justification that in addition to Dagbani as L1, the student would have the opportunity to study Ga in JSS (now JHS) in Accra after Primary School Education in Yendi and studied Asante Twi in Kumasi at the Senior Secondary School. He/she also studied Dagbani at the Training College where the student was trained as a teacher. This shows that the choice of L1 medium of instruction in a multilingual class should not be an issue. Instead, it creates social benefits for the pupils during and after school.

Based on the above, this paper recommends strongly that policy makers do not arbitrarily make policies that are not based on scientific or research evidence. Technocrats should be involved, thus allowing dialogue between policy makers and technocrats. It also recommends that political affiliations be put aside and a focus on a policy that will benefit the populace. The last recommendation is that not only should the Government of the day have the policy of language in education but ensure that challenges and barriers to implementation are minimized.

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