IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHOOL LANGUAGE POLICY IN GHANA: INTERIM REPORT

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PREFACE

The Improving project participants internationally seek to generate knowledge about educators and students in schools and classrooms; to use this knowledge to inform policy dialogue and improve local practice; and to develop an in-country capacity for monitoring and evaluating educational results.

At the turn of this century, the Ministry of Education, the Ghana Education Service, and others began a review of the School Language Policy and its implementation. The IEQ project was pleased to begin this research study related to the Language Policy in cooperation with the Ghana Education Service, Curriculum Research and Development Division, and others, with the hope that this research would inform future language policy discussions and decisions. This linkage between research, policy and practice is at the heart of IEQ and the opportunity to examine bilingual or mother tongue education and the Language Policy was very timely.

The publication of this Interim Report on “Implementation of the School Language Policy in Ghana” affords the team an opportunity to present preliminary findings from the first set of data collected in October and November 1999. Each of the six case studies in the Report contains information on specific topics that was collected commonly across sites. Each chapter also Educational Quality (IEQ) project in Ghana is part of a long-term USAID global initiative. IEQ reflects the expertise and interests of its author, such as, teacher preparation, pedagogy, linguistics, anthropology, supervision, and policy formulation and implementation. The individual cases conclude with a discussion of policy implications for the site. The Interim Report concludes with a discussion of findings across sites and of options for policymakers at all levels to consider.

It continues to be the privilege of the individuals involved with this in-depth, qualitative research study to conduct the research and to engage in dialogue with educators, community members, and policy-makers. We hope that it will inform the lively dialogue on language policy currently taking place among stakeholders at all levels and that it will contribute to improved quality of primary education throughout the country.

Shirley Miske
Technical Advisor
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EXECLIUE SUMMARY

Ghana’s School Language Policy calls for the predominant Ghanaian language of an area to be used as the medium of instruction (MOI) for pupils in Primary Classes 1 - 3 and for English to be the medium thereafter. English is to be studied as a subject in P1 - P3 and Ghanaian language as a subject in P4 and following.

To provide empirical data for current discussions of the Language Policy, in mid-1999 the Improving Educational Quality research project initiated a multi-site, in-depth qualitative research project. The purpose of the study is to describe the range of ways in which the Language Policy is being implemented in schools and to probe some of the reasons why the policy is being implemented in these ways.

The first of the six communities visited, Nantwi, is a settler community of about 500 people in the Greater Accra Region. Farming and animal husbandry are the major occupations of those who have migrated to this region. Nantwi Primary School’s 124 pupils attend classes in mud brick classroom blocks with thatched roofs. Not all pupils from the community are enrolled in school. Dangme and Ewe are the major languages of the community, although Hausa and other languages are also spoken.

The four community members interviewed were not aware of the language policy. Nevertheless, the chief and an SMC member said they prefer that Dangme be used for instruction in Lower Primary. The PTA and SMC Chairmen prefer English. In the first round of data collection in September 1999, all sixteen parents interviewed individually preferred English as the medium of instruction for the school (MOI). In a May 2000 focus group interview, a majority of parents supported implementing the language policy after learning what it stated. Nantwi teachers do not support the Language Policy and they use English as MOI since none of them speaks Dangme. The Circuit Supervisor, Assistant Director of Education for Supervision, and head teacher also do not support the policy. Nantwi has developed its own school language policy of Early English medium, that is, English MOI from Primary 1onward. Pupils in P1 say they prefer to be taught in Dangme or Ewe; P2-P4 pupils say they prefer English. Instruction in P1-P4 ranges from activity-centred to lecture to the predominant question-and-answer method.

Apala is a small rural community in the Eastern Region comprised of migrant farmers from Greater Accra and the Eastern regions. The community is ethnically heterogeneous; Twi is the predominant language. One school block is mud brick with corrugated iron roofing; the other is bamboo. All the teachers speak Twi, although it is L1 for only two of the four P1-P4 teachers. The PTA Chair and 14 out of 16 parents prefer that English be used for instruction. The SMC Chair and two parents prefer that both Twi and English be used.

The school population is 249. Of the 16 pupils interviewed, most say they prefer to be taught in English but about half prefer to participate in class in the local language. Nearly all pupils interact with other pupils in Twi and observations show that pupils participate actively in lessons when teachers switch from English to Twi in class. The school policy calls not only for English medium, but also for pupils to speak English on the compound. Pupils note that they are encouraged to speak English and warned not to speak Twi.
There are no textbooks for pupils at Apala in Ghanaian language; neither are there textbooks for Environmental Studies, or Religious and Moral Education. The Way to Knowledge supplementary reader is used as a textbook, however, and there is a 1:1 ratio in P1 of books to pupils for this subject, Maths, and English. P2 has a ratio of one textbook for every three to four pupils in these areas, P3 has no textbooks, and P4 has one textbook to every two or four pupils for four subject areas.

Awocha is a small farming community in the Western Region on the coast. The P1-P3 teachers in Awocha’s public school speak Ahanta, Fante, and English; all but the head teacher are untrained. The predominant language of the area is Fante. Teachers use Fante as MOI and some English. Ahanta is not an officially recognized language that can be used for instruction. Hence, pupils learn to read and write in a second language, Fante, and English is the third language they learn.

The P4 teacher speaks Fante and English in the classroom to ensure pupil understanding, a practice that has been labelled “over-implementation” since he does not limit Fante to Ghanaian language class only. This raises questions about the wisdom of the three-year transitional programme of mother tongue education mandated in the language policy. Research that points to five years needed for fluency, literacy, and transition also challenges this pattern and suggests the need for further exploration into the English language instruction pupils receive in P1-P3.

The head teacher at Awocha, the Circuit Supervisor, and AD (Supervision) all support implementation of the language policy and think it is a good policy. All desire to have more in-service training for teachers to help them implement the policy better. The sixteen parents interviewed, six of whom were literate, and said they generally prefer English MOI in the hope that their children will be able to be more proficient in English and have more work and travel opportunities in their adult lives. Some parents said they prefer English over Fante and are eager for Ahanta language materials to be developed. Parents report a high level of community involvement with the school.

The Kapa School is a private school, rich in resources, located in a major urban university community in the Ashanti Region. Teaching and related educational service jobs are the main occupations in the community. The prevalent language of the area is Akan, but pupils come various ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. The community numbers about 18,000; the school population is more than 1,700. Kapa School has 48 teachers. The language of instruction in the school is English, although some of the pupils interviewed said they would understand what is taught better if Ghanaian language were used for instruction.

Of the 13 parents interviewed, all were literate in English. Parents support the school policy of English MOI, as do the teachers and the head teacher; but the head teacher personally supports the Language Policy and notes that children can articulate well in the Ghanaian language when it is taught in Lower Primary. He also sees that it helps pupils in learning English. The Circuit Supervisor and AD (Supervision) are vehemently opposed to the Language Policy.

Two of the four teachers have received preparation to teach Ghanaian language as a subject; two have not. Pupils at Kapa School carry their books and school supplies in school bags, and have
their own textbooks to use at home. Teachers use a variety of methods and materials in their teaching, and engage pupils in conversations in English.

The Noto School serves the Noto Township, the main district headquarters, and surrounding clan-settlements. Notosco, although a public school, is supported by additional resources from parents. The school was established as a nursery for the children of Government staff on transfer here from many parts of Ghana. The school is perceived to offer good primary education, as measured by a child’s competence and performance in English. Languages spoken in the area are Kasem and Nankani. The school compound is spacious and well kept. There are six teachers at the school.

Three out of four teachers did not seem to be aware of the Language Policy for schools and none of them uses Kasem as MOI. Most of the children interviewed were bilingual or trilingual, and claimed to speak English. Pupils said they used both Kasem and English in the home. The majority of parents interviewed were educated individuals who are literate in English. Most preferred English MOI.

The Circuit Supervisor and the Assistant Director (Supervision) are aware of the Language Policy and the benefits of using local language as MOI and would like to see the Language Policy implemented. They do not, however, feel that Notosco’s non-implementation of the policy requires any sanctions.

For the lower classes, teachers’ pedagogical approaches centre on choral repetitions combined with questions for which pupils are invited to respond individually. Small group activity is not frequent. In Class Four the lecture method is used in combination with question and answer dialogues between teacher and pupils.

There were few textbooks for Religious and Moral Education, Environmental Studies, and Ghanaian languages. Pupils were not allowed to take home textbooks; however, some pupils had their own copies. The shortage of textbooks meant that teachers spent considerable time reproducing texts or diagrams on the blackboard for general class use. In one case teacher spent almost a full lesson doing this while pupils talked and played about.

Medofo is a nucleated settlement with a population of 2,000 in the Volta Region. Occupations centre around farming, although some individuals engage in petty trading. The main ethnic groups are Ewes and Akans; Ewe is the main language for interaction in the community; it is also the predominant language of instruction.

Medofo School is a public school with a population of over 250 pupils and 12 teachers; it also has a kindergarten. Classroom blocks are bamboo, cement block, and a roofed pavilion without walls. The educational level of the parents interviewed ranged from middle form four through SSS to diploma.

Of the eight community members interviewed, one was aware of the Language Policy. Two individuals of stature, the Chief and the Queen Mother, preferred Ewe as MOI in Lower Primary, but five others preferred English. Three parents felt that using English would make the children
learn faster and better. None of the teachers was aware of the Language Policy, although all were implementing it.

A majority of the pupils--14 out of 16--said they would prefer subjects like Mathematics and Environmental Studies to be taught in Ewe because then they understand it. The two pupils who prefer these subjects to be taught in English say it is because they want to be proficient in English. Also, most of the pupils (10 out of 16) said they prefer to use Ghanaian language when asking or answering questions in class because they cannot not speak English. Classroom observations revealed that more pupils participate in lessons when they are taught in Ewe. They ask more questions when the medium of instruction is Ewe. They also interact with each other mainly in Ewe both in and out of classroom.

The Circuit Supervisor says that he has implemented the policy by briefing the teachers, organizing in-service training, and supervising its implementation. However, he is personally opposed to the Language Policy and thinks English language should be used right from P1 to help the children become familiar with it from the beginning since English is an accepted language everywhere.

The overall ratio of textbooks to pupils at Medofo is about 3:5 for English and Ghanaian language (supplementary readers); 1:3 for Mathematics. In addition to the lack of actual textbooks for Ghanaian language, there are no textbooks for Religious and Moral Education or Environmental Studies.

Cross-site Patterns and Policy Implications

In addition to the insights gleaned from in-depth research into each site, the team found interesting patterns across the six sites--some of which are described below.

No circulars or language policy documents were available in any school or supervisor’s office. Most teachers and supervisory personnel know what the policy is, but some are unsure, some do not know, and some state the policy incorrectly. The Language Policy appears to be supported at the public schools by head teachers, Circuit Supervisors, and Assistant Directors (Supervision) who agree with the policy. Administrators at four sites are not in favour of the policy, however. Neither incentives nor sanctions exist to encourage schools to follow the school language policy. Hence, it appears that, despite the existence of a national language policy, decisions of medium of instruction are devolving to the local level and head teachers, teachers, and communities are deciding on a school’s MOI.

Most sites had textbooks available for Maths, English, and Integrated Sciences. No sites had textbooks for Environmental Studies, Religious and Moral Education, or--most importantly--Ghanaian Language. Most schools had at least a few supplementary readers (Nimdee Kwan) available, but there are no teachers’ guides or manuals for this book and it does not follow the Primary Syllabus. Neither are any subject textbooks, such as Maths, available in a Ghanaian language. Hence, it could be said that currently it is not possible to carry out the language policy because resources do not exist to support teaching and learning in the mother tongue in Primary 1 - 3.
In most of the six schools visited the majority of P1 - P4 teachers speak and are literate in the languages of the children. In one school, however, the only non-native speaker of the local language is assigned to teach Class One. In another school, no teacher speaks the mother tongue of the pupils and pupils are retained in P1 due to poor English language skills. (Such retention would not occur if the language policy were being followed.) This situation calls for a critical look at teacher deployment with regard to concern for pupil learning and language development.

The role of Teacher Training Colleges in preparing teachers for mother tongue education is also pivotal. One way of achieving the goals of the Language Policy is to solidly incorporate the following areas into Teacher Training College programmes: (1) methodology for using Ghanaian Language as MOI; (2) teaching Ghanaian Language as a subject; (3) methodology for teaching English as a subject and using English as medium of instruction; (4) methodology for teaching Ghanaian language as a second language where it is the predominant language of the home but not of the area (e.g., Ahanta and Fante in Awocha). The content and structure of the Ghanaian Language--and what this means for children’s language acquisition--are also important topics to be considered.

Most practicing teachers did not receive training in language teaching or first language MOI methodology when they attended Teacher Training College. They also have not received any in-service training in mother tongue MOI methodology or teaching Ghanaian language as a first or second language (with one exception of a reported in-service on teaching Ghanaian language). In-service training on teaching English is offered through QUIPS and other projects, but there was no evidence in this study of any development partner support for Ghanaian language subject or MOI instruction.

IEQ project research findings are intended to inform policy dialogue. Policy options provided in the report are given to spark discussion and, ultimately, to encourage a higher quality education for all Ghanaian children.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

by

Chris Dowuona-Hammond and Rosamond Asante-Frempong

1. Background

The issue of the best language of instruction in schools has been a thorny one for years in many African countries, including Ghana. Approximately 60 languages are spoken in the country; none is a national language. Ghana uses English, its official language, as a medium of instruction from Primary Four through University, yet the majority of Ghanaians do not speak English as a first language (L1). The use of English as a medium for school work demands a reasonable ability to understand, read, and write it, yet most children enrol in school with limited or no proficiency in English. They are very proficient in their own mother tongue, however, and ready to learn the new ideas and concepts that are taught in the early years of school.

Researchers have established that the use of the L1 as the medium of instruction during one’s early years of schooling results in improved and faster acquisition of knowledge by pupils. In addition, the use of the mother tongue as language of instruction is also effective in helping with the acquisition of second languages. (See Fafunwa, et. al., 1989; Collison, 1972; Andoh-Kumi, 1992; Yates, 1995).

The Government of Ghana has formulated the following Language Policy for schools, which takes into account the tenets of the above research on learning and language:

In the first three years of primary education, the Ghanaian language prevalent in the local area is to be used as the medium of instruction, whilst English is studied as a subject. From Primary Four, English replaces the Ghanaian language as medium of instruction, and the Ghanaian language is then treated as just another subject on the timetable.

How effective has the implementation of this policy been?

Attempts to implement the Language Policy in Ghana have been beset with problems. Unsubstantiated statements are made regularly about the use of the Ghanaian language as a medium of instruction (English in Upper Primary) and as a subject of study in school. Significant amongst these is the belief that the policy itself largely accounts for the low level of literacy in English among pupils and students. Lack of resources, teacher preparedness, and other concerns confound schools’ ability to carry out the policy as intended. Negative attitudes toward the use of Ghanaian languages in instruction also compound the problem.
In order to address the foregoing issues on the Language Policy and to explore the effectiveness of its implementation, the team of researchers in the Improving Educational Quality project set out to conduct research on Language Policy implementation in Ghanaian primary schools. The purpose of this research is to describe the range of ways in which the Language Policy is being implemented in schools and the consequences of how the policy is currently being carried out, with a goal of more effective implementation or possible modification of the policy. The ultimate aim of the research is to generate knowledge about the use of the Ghanaian language or English as the medium of instruction in the classroom and then to create or use existing mechanisms to share the knowledge and its implications.

2. Research Design

In a study such as IEQ where the orientation is directed towards understanding the process or experiences in the implementation of the Language Policy, the research design should provide information about the perspective of schools and their communities as a means of discovering and explaining factors that differentiate non-implementers from implementers of the policy.

Researchers chose the qualitative, multi-site case study approach for the IEQ project. The case study design enables researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of a complex situation and probe the meaning of the issues from the points of view of those involved. The multi-site case study allows researchers to learn about the context and process and to probe both how and why the Language Policy is being implemented in distinctive ways in different parts of Ghana.

The study does not seek to compare schools or student achievement, and it does not claim to generalise or provide information on what is going on throughout the country. Qualitative research--and its methods, such as interviews and observations--enable researchers to explore a topic in depth about which little empirical information is available. Three research teams (three researchers and two research assistants per site) spent one week at each of the six sites, a total of more than 200 researcher hours.

3. Research Questions

In the main the study seeks to answer the question, “How is the Language Policy being implemented in primary schools in Ghana?” The following sub-questions are also being examined:

(1) What is the nature of the interaction between teacher and pupils and between pupil and pupil in the classroom when the Ghanaian language is being used as a medium of instruction?

(2) What are the attitudes of teachers and pupils to using Ghanaian language or English as a medium of instruction and subject of study. What accounts for those attitudes?

(3) What are teachers’ and pupil’s attitudes towards the Language Policy in Ghana?
(4) In what ways are curriculum and materials being used to deliver instruction in the Ghanaian language? What materials are available in the schools for teaching and learning in Ghanaian language?

(5) To what extent are teachers prepared to teach in the Ghanaian language (in what ways)?

(6) What behaviours or actions show teachers’ competence in the Ghanaian language?

(7) In what ways, if any, do supervisors help and ensure that the Language Policy is being implemented?

(8) In what ways does the community support or encourage the use of Ghanaian language or English as a medium of instruction in schools?

Since the study concerns the variety of ways in which the policy is being implemented, schools were selected to reflect the variety of linguistic, social, and economic contexts of Ghanaian public primary schools. This includes schools from one urban, three rural, and two peri-urban communities (with at least one “settler” school); schools in the north and the south where the teacher speaks the same Ghanaian language as the pupils; schools where the teacher does not speak the same Ghanaian language(s) as the pupils; schools where English is the medium of instruction and pupils enrol in school speaking English; schools where English is the medium of instruction but pupils enrol knowing little or no English (e.g., the settler school).

Half of the schools selected were schools participating in the QUIPS project; the other three schools are not affiliated with the QUIPS projects.

4. Instruments

For round one of data collection, researchers developed interview and observation protocols to gather information on the following: characteristics of communities, schools, and all participants in the study; awareness of the Language Policy; pupil-pupil interactions in class and out of class; attitudes of community members, parents, pupils, teachers, and supervisors toward the Language Policy; pupils’ and teachers’ preference for medium of instruction; textbooks and other materials available and used for teaching and learning; language and mode of instruction in each class; some observations about gendered interactions in the classroom; teacher preparation and competence in the use and teaching of Ghanaian language; the nature of and language used for teacher-pupil interactions; and the role of supervisory personnel (i.e., head teachers, Circuit Supervisors and Assistant Directors in charge of Supervision) in the implementation of the Language Policy.

Sixteen pupils were selected--two boys and two girls from Primary 1 through Primary 4--for more intensive classroom observation, and interviews, using an instrument developed in IEQ 1. The parents or guardians of these sixteen pupils were also interviewed.
5. Data Analysis

In keeping with conventions of qualitative research, the researchers analysed data inductively, initially reading through the data to become acquainted with the breadth and depth of information gathered. Researchers prepared field data summary sheets, highlighting topics and themes emerging from the data. Data was arranged and rearranged according to categories and sub-categories, thus enabling us to make assertions or hypotheses about the data. Hypotheses were verified through the triangulation of data collected from the sources listed above.

The second phase of data analysis further explored classroom interactions and pedagogy, teachers’ and parents’ attitudes, and pupil participation in classroom activities. The team also interviewed personnel and students in Teacher Training Colleges to further explore their role in preparing teachers to teach languages as media of instruction and as subjects. The findings of this data will be examined together with the data described here, and will be presented in a final report at the end of the first year of the project.
CHAPTER TWO
NANTWI

by
Fiifi Mensah

1. Community Profile

Nantwi, a community with a population of about 500, is located in the Greater Accra Region. Farming and animal husbandry form the two major occupations and economic activities of the community. It is a settler community--an area to which people from different parts of the country have migrated and settled--with hamlets dotted all over the area. The main ethnic group is Ewe, who migrated from Tefle in the Volta Region. Fulani forms the minor ethnic group. Dangme and Ewe are the main languages spoken in the area.

The only educational institution that serves the whole community is the primary school situated almost in the middle of the community. The two main religious denominations are Presbyterianism and Pentecostalism. The only amenities in the community are pipe-borne water, which serves the whole community, and a dam, which serves as a source of drinking water for the cattle. The vegetation is savannah and the crops grown are mainly yam, maize and groundnuts. The land is clay, and the surface becomes slippery during rains. As a result, the community is inaccessible by vehicles whenever it rains.

2. School Profile

Nantwi D/A Primary School is a public school that has a population of 124, 72 boys and 52 girls. The school has two classroom blocks; the walls of both are made of mud. There are two-classroom blocks. The first one contains P1, P4, and P6 classrooms and is roofed with asbestos roofing sheets. It also has windows and doors without shutters. The second block contains P2, P3 and P5 classrooms. It has dwarf walls about four metres high and is roofed with thatch.

Because of incessant disturbances by cattle, the school compound has been fenced with barbed wires to prevent the cattle from entering the compound. The school has two urinals--one for females and one for males--that are used by both pupils and teachers alike. Another latrine is under construction. Members of the community are building a new classroom block that will have offices with assistance from USAID.

Seventy-two boys and 52 girls are enrolled in the school. One-third of the pupils (38) are in Class One, due in part to a high rate of repetition at this level (five boys and four girls are repeating Class One). This pattern also holds for Class Six with 25 students where nine pupils are also repeating, four boys and five girls. Classes Two through Five have between 12 and 19 pupils per class.
3. Attitudes and Perceptions of Language Policy and Language Use

a. Community

At Nantwi, in addition to the parents interviewed, we interviewed four community members, three men and one woman. Initially only men presented themselves for the interviews. The researchers also wanted to hear from women from the community, and so required at least one woman to be added to the interviewees. This woman happened to be the chief’s wife, and a member of the School Management Committee (SMC). The three men were the chief of Nantwi, the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) chairman and the SMC chairman. All the members were farmers and three of them have had no formal education. The one who had formal education, the SMC chairman, reached the level of City and Guilds Joinery2 (i.e., woodwork and carpentry).

With regard to medium of instruction in schools, the chief and his wife preferred that Dangme be used in Lower Primary and English be used in Upper Primary. However, the PTA chairman and SMC chairman preferred that English be used for both Lower and Upper Primary. That is, they supported the status quo of early English medium at Nantwi.

b. Parents

At Nantwi D/A Primary School, 11 parents and five guardians were interviewed, six men and 10 women. The age range for the males was 24 to 48 years; 18 to 50 years for females. Twelve of the parents or guardians were farmers; the rest were herdsmen, traders, or managed the households (housewives). One 18-year-old girl who had just finished JSS represented her mother.

The diversity of the settler area is highlighted in the number of languages spoken by the 16 parents and guardians. Three were literate in English and Dangme, two were literate in only Dangme and one was literate only in Ewe. In a few households Twi, Fulani, or Hausa was spoken. Fulani was the first language for three parents, Ewe for seven, and Dangme for six. Thirteen parents or guardians had no formal education. Of the remaining three, one was P6 leaver, one a middle form two leaver, and the highest level of education represented was a middle form four leaver.

On average there were four children per family with a range of one to seven children. The majority of parents or guardians had enrolled all the children of school-going age in their household in school. However, one parent with four children had enrolled only two in school; another parent with four children had enrolled three out of four; and another parent with two children had not enrolled one of the two in school. At home, the age range of the pupils was from 5-15 years.

With regard to children’s attitudes towards the use of Ghanaian language at home, all 16 parents and guardians say that the children like it. At home, the children speak mainly the local languages but they also try to speak English occasionally.
In this first round of data collection all 16 parents and guardians said they preferred that in primary school the children should be taught in English. They gave the following reasons:

- If they don’t understand English, they can’t operate in future.
- It is the key language, he will work with it in future.
- To build them up for the future.
- Without it they can’t even work.
- They can go places with English.
- I like them to learn the English Language so that in future they will get good jobs and look after me.

In the second round of data collection at Nantwi in May 2000, we interviewed the parents again, in focus groups of women and men this time, rather than individually. The results were strikingly different. Nine out of ten mothers and several fathers voiced their support for mother tongue education and said it was important for their children to study (in) the Ghanaian language in order to get a job in mass media, to read letters, and to know their own language. When asked why they gave different answers this time, the parents and guardians stated that before they had not known about the policy and that the school had recently hired a teacher who spoke Dangme and could use the language with the pupils. One father still vociferously supported early English medium, stating that a truly educated person was one who knew English and had forgotten his or her local language.

c. Teachers

The teachers were not using Ghanaian language as medium of instruction for two reasons. First, none of the teachers in the school were able to speak the local language fluently. (They belong to different ethnic/language groups.) Second, the teachers themselves did not support the national School Language Policy. They felt the policy was not good and that English should be used from P1 to P4—even though they agreed that pupils, especially those in P1, understand better when they are taught in the local language. As noted above, however, a new Dangme-speaking teacher was hired for the second semester, so conversations with teachers about local language use were slightly different during the second round of data collection. This will be reported in greater detail in the IEQ2 Phase One Final Report.

d. Pupils

In P1 we interviewed and observed four pupils. Two of them prefer to use Dangme to ask or answer questions in local language because they cannot speak English. Another pupil said she prefers Dangme but does not know why. The fourth pupil prefers to use Ewe because she cannot understand Dangme or English. She said, “I prefer teacher to use Ewe to teach because I understand only Ewe.” Three of the P1 pupils prefer that the teacher use English to teach Mathematics, however, because they all “feel good” when the teacher uses English to teach and they feel that they can know English better.

From P2 to P4 all the pupils observed and interviewed say they prefer asking or answering questions in English. They also prefer that the teacher teach all the subjects in English. They gave these reasons:
I want to learn English better.
I want to be very good at English.
I understand it better in English.
I feel happy when lesson is taught in English.

e. Supervisors

First round interviews with head teacher, the teachers and the circuit supervisor showed that they are aware of the Language Policy but none of them has a copy of the policy in their offices. Furthermore, they do not think the policy is a good one and they and do not support it. In this setting, the national Language Policy is not supported by the teachers and supervisors and a different school policy for medium of instruction in P1-P3 in primary school has been adopted. The school also is not teaching Ghanaian language as a subject at any level and, thus, also not implementing that section of the Language Policy. There are no sanctions for being at variance with the policy.

4. Language Use Inside and Outside the Classroom

Parents report that when they visit the school, they observe teachers using English language to teach the pupils. The pupils also confirm this. One P2 pupil stated, “The teacher said we should not speak vernacular in class.” Teachers explain that they cannot speak the local language and so they use English to teach. The P1 teacher is learning Dangme and observations confirmed that she occasionally uses Dangme in the classroom.

In P1 class the pupils use Dangme to communicate with their friends. From P2-P4, however, the pupils use a mixture of Dangme and English. When communicating with the teacher, they try to speak English.

Teachers encourage pupils to speak English in class and, as noted above, may also discourage the use of Ghanaian language. However, during break time pupils use a mixture of English, Dangme, and sometimes Ewe to interact with other pupils. They talk mostly about food, games, and homework, and sometimes they discuss learning materials they use in class.

5. Teaching and Learning

a. Primary 1

The P1 classroom has two doors and two windows without shutters. There are 15 tables arranged in such a way that eight of them are joined together and three joined together. The blackboard forms part of the wall. The walls were decorated with educational charts--wall charts of alphabets, of two letter-words, and of cubes painted in red and green colours. There were also different shapes--square, circle, rectangle and triangle--on some wall charts. Diagrams of items ‘on’ and ‘under’ tables and mats, and ‘inside’ open boxes were also hanging on the walls in the classroom.
There were 21 boys and 17 girls in P1. We observed the P1 teacher in English, Environmental Studies, Mathematics and Religious and Moral Education. Her teaching method involved questions and answers with groups. She also involved pupils actively in the class activities. The medium of instruction was English with occasional use of Dangme. During an interview the P1 teacher said, “I have to try very hard to learn the local language so that I can communicate with P1 pupils because they cannot understand the English language well in class”.

The teacher said that in general boys answer more questions than girls, but the P1 pupils do not normally ask questions in class. The statement is confirmed by class observations.

b. Primary 2

The P2 classroom consists of low dwarf walls and one entrance to the room. The eight tables in the classroom were joined in fours. The blackboard was made of wood and there were no charts on the walls. There were 6 boys and 6 girls in P2.

We observed the P2 teacher in English, Environmental Studies, Mathematics and Religious and Moral Education. He used questions and answers with groups and also engaged pupils to participate actively in the lessons. He used English except for one or two cases where he spoke Dangme. During break time he interacted with the pupils in English. In P2 girls answered questions much more frequently than the boys. However, both boys and girls asked questions almost at equal levels in class.

c. Primary 3

In P3 classroom there were 16 tables arranged in groups of four. The walls were dwarf type; a few charts on mathematical symbols and English words were hanging on the walls. The chalkboard was made of wood. There were nine boys and five girls in P3.

The P3 teacher was observed in English, Environmental Studies and Mathematics. During English lessons, he distributed textbooks to pupils and asked them to read silently. He then engaged the pupils in activities in which they participated actively. With the other subjects he used questions and answer with groups. His interactions with the pupils were in English, even during break time. He never attempted to explain any concept in class with local language. In P3, boys answered questions more often than girls. Also boys asked questions more often than girls.

d. Primary 4

The P4 class had two windows and two doors without shutters. There were 10 tables, which, unlike the other classrooms, were arranged singly in rows. There were no charts on the walls. Initially there were 13 boys and six girls, but later two pupils (one boy and one girl) joined the class, making a total of 14 boys and seven girls.

The P4 teacher was observed in English, Environmental Studies and Mathematics. His teaching method consistently was questions and answers with individuals. The medium of instruction was only English. The teacher reported that of the boys answered questions in class between 60 -
65% of the time while the girls answered 40 - 45%. On the days we visited his class, our classroom observations and field notes did not support this. We observed girls answer questions more often than the boys. In fact, the girls also asked questions more frequently than the boys. The teacher was very harsh, especially to the boys. He shouted at pupils whenever they got an answer wrong.

In a Mathematics lesson the teacher was furious at a boy who could not solve a problem which was easily solved by a girl. He said, “even a girl has solved it and you cannot. You are hopeless.” In this he insulted both the girls and the boy: the girls, by implying that they could not be expected to solve the problem easily, and the boy by directly calling him “hopeless.” This kind of teacher-pupil interaction has a direct bearing on girls’ and boys’ willingness to talk in class and to use English, the language in which the Language Policy expects pupils to be fluent at this level.

It should also be noted that not only is Ghanaian language not used as a medium of instruction in this school, but it is also not being taught as a subject. Hence, students from Nantwi who continue on to JSS are at a disadvantage in studying Ghanaian language since they have had no exposure to it in primary school.

6. Materials

As at other sites, there were no Religious and Moral Studies books in P1-P4. P1 had 10 Ghanaian language books, but the books were not being used. P2, P3 and P4 lacked books on Ghanaian language and Environmental Studies. P1 had a total of 80 books for 37 pupils, giving a ratio of about five books for every two pupils. P2 had 40 books for 18 pupils, giving a ratio of about two books for each pupil; P3 had the same ratio (35 books for 13 pupils). Although P4 had no books on Ghanaian language or Religious and Moral Studies, with 72 books for 18 pupils, four books (for three subjects—Mathematics, English, and Integrated Sciences) were available to each pupil.

Other teaching materials available were picture books, work books, and ‘shapes’ bottle tops for P1. In P2 there were flash cards and counters. In the other classes there were no other materials apart from the books mentioned above.

7. Conclusions and Policy Implications

Many inferences can be drawn from the results of the study. However, the most pertinent findings of the research can be formulated briefly as follows:

Observing teachers and pupils in classrooms revealed important information about the Language Policy implementation. All the teachers in Nantwi D/A Primary School come from language backgrounds different from the pupils and so are not fluent in the local language of the area. English was therefore used as medium of instruction from P1 to P4.
This raises questions about the posting of teachers. If there are no teachers posted to a school who speak the predominant language of the area, it is impossible for the school to implement the Language Policy.

In the classroom, most pupils tried to speak English, albeit with difficulty. Outside the classroom, the pupils used local languages to communicate among themselves, an indication that the pupils were more comfortable with their local languages. Observing the pupils outside also revealed that pupils use the languages from their different language groups.

Interviews with the chief, SMC chairman, PTA chairman and other community members reveal that they are not aware of the Language Policy. Several of them prefer English as medium of instruction, and they believe that English will help the pupils in future but that Ghanaian language will not. However, the chief and an SMC member (the chief’s wife) believe that local language should be used in the lower classes.

Interviews with parents and with pupils in P2-P4 indicated that they preferred English to Ghanaian language as medium of instruction. P1 pupils preferred Dangme (three out of four pupils) or Ewe (the fourth pupil). These same children liked learning Mathematics in English. The P2-P4 pupils and parents believed that using English would help the pupils acquire better skills in speaking English and that this would help them in future life. None of the parents has had any formal education.

If the school language policy is to be implemented, resources must be available to pupils. Inspection of books and other materials revealed that there were no textbooks in Ghanaian language in classes P2 - P4. The 10 Ghanaian language books in P1 were not being used. There were no textbooks in Religious and Moral Education in any of the classes. There were enough English and Mathematics books for P1 - P3. P4 had enough of all the books except Ghanaian language. Other materials available for teaching were bottle tops and flash cards.

One significant fact that must not be overlooked by policy-makers is what is going on at the level of implementation. Successful implementation requires the following:

Parents, teachers and community members need to be educated about the importance and benefits that can be accrued if the policy is implemented without hindrance. The pupils themselves also need to be educated on this issue.

The Teacher Training Colleges need to be equipped to teach teachers on teaching using Ghanaian languages, both content and methodology. Regular in-service training must be organised for practicing teachers on the use of Ghanaian language and English as media of instruction.

Teachers need to have the appropriate training, resources and supervision so they can speak and teach well using the prevalent language of the area.
The pivotal role of the district in facilitating a strong teaching and learning environment needs to receive increased attention. This is especially important in the policy and practice of teacher assignments and transfers and of teacher supervision.

Additional research should be undertaken to explore questions and concerns raised in this report, especially dealing with children and teachers in one school who speak different mutually unintelligible languages.

The above study provides useful information which suggests that multilingualism and dealing with children and teachers in one school who speak different, mutually unintelligible languages is not solely an urban problem as has been previously thought. This situation makes the Language Policy implementation very difficult.

The data highlighted that almost all members of the community including the teachers do not find favour in the Language Policy. In addition to other reasons for these attitudes, this suggests that individuals may not know the rationale or research behind the policy.
CHAPTER THREE
APALA

by
Kingsley Andoh-Kumi

1. Community Profile

Apala is a small rural community in the West Akim District in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The community comprises a number of farm settlements populated by migrants from other parts of the Eastern and Greater Accra regions. Apala village itself (which is the focal point of the community) has a population of less than 2000 people. It is located 5 kilometres off the main road. The road from the main one to Apala village as well as to the surrounding villages is untarred; it is a feeder road.

This community is ethnically heterogeneous--the Anums, the Krobos, the Ewes, and the Akyems are the main ethnic groups. The languages spoken in this community are Guan, Dangme, Ewe, and Akan (Twi). Akan (Twi) is, however, the predominant or prevalent language of the area.

The primary occupation of this community is farming--mainly cocoa and food crop farming. The economy is basically the subsistence type. There are, however, some petty traders among them, especially the women. Some of the men have added hunting and/or palm-wine tapping to their farming occupation. In the heart of the village is a garri-making project supported by 31st December Women Movement.

Apala has permanent “community” buildings including church buildings, Cocoa Board buying and storage centre and a house for CASHPRO. The buildings are found on either side of the only road that passes through the village. A borehole supplies water to the community; they do not have electricity.

The catchment communities are relatively autonomous, under their own odikro. All of the catchment communities are under one /hene (chief), who owes political allegiance to the /kyenhene, the /manhene (the paramount chief) of Akyem Abuakwa.

2. School Profile

As you enter the village you will find on the right side of the main road the first set of buildings. These buildings house the Local Authority Primary School, a public school under the direct supervision of the Ghana Education Service built around 1952. It comprises two blocks: one for primary and the other, a newer block, for Junior Secondary. The primary school block is built from mud and roofed with corrugated iron sheets. Primary Class One is temporarily housed in a

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1 31st December Women Movement is a non-governmental organization. First lady Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings is its president.
bamboo shelter, about 200 metres from the main primary school building. Classrooms for Primary Two to Six have dwarf walls and are virtually open. The buildings are very old with leaking roofs and there are no ceilings. The numbers of pupils’ chairs and tables seem adequate, but there are no cupboards. Therefore, textbooks are stored in the head teacher’s office.

A new block is being constructed with assistance from USAID and the district assembly. It will house three classrooms, an office and a store.

The primary and the junior secondary schools are all under one head teacher. The head teacher at Apala is 57 years old. He holds a 4-Year Teachers Certificate “A”. He also has G.C.E “A” level certificate. He has been in the teaching service for thirty-three years: three years as a teacher in the Lower Primary, twenty years in the Upper Primary and nine years as a head teacher. In fact, his entire experience of nine years as a head teacher has been at Apala. He supervises eleven teachers. He indicates that he speaks English, Twi and Fante (Akan). He writes English and Twi and says he is capable of teaching Twi (Akuapem), although his mother tongue (L1) is Fante.

The primary school has six classroom teachers, two of whom are female – the P1 and P2 teachers. All the teachers speak Twi, although not all of them are native speakers. The only non-Akan teacher among them handles P1!

We present more information on the P1-P4 teachers (our focus group). Two of the teachers are female and two are male; all have been teaching at Apala since they left college. Their ages range from 25 years to 50 years. The qualifications of the teachers are similar. Three of them have the Teacher’s Certificate “A” (4-Year Post-Middle School) and one has the Teacher’s Certificate “A” (3-Year Post-Year Secondary School). Two of the teachers have the GCE “O” Level certificate. The teachers’ teaching experiences span four to seventeen years.

Two teachers have Twi as their L1, one has Ewe as L1 and yet another has Guan as L1. Three of the teachers are trilingual in their L1, a Ghanaian L2 and English, while the fourth is bilingual in his L1 and English. Three of them are literate in Akuapem (Twi) and English, and one claims literacy in Ewe, Ga and English. All the teachers indicate that they are capable of teaching Twi as a subject. Three teachers claim they are capable of using Twi as the medium of instruction (MOI).

The population of the pupils stands at 249: 130 female and 119 male. Eleven female pupils are repeating; twenty are new and ninety-eight continuing [2]. The male pupils population comprises fourteen repeaters, thirteen new and ninety-two continuing pupils. The records indicate that for the 1998-1999 academic year there were no dropouts. The prevalent language of the area is Akan (Twi), but for most of the pupils this language is a second language. The level of spoken English among the children is relatively high for a rural school. Pupils speak mostly Akan (Twi) among themselves when on break and when they are having private conversation in class.

Four pupils, two boys and two girls were randomly selected from each of the P1-P4 classes. In P1 the selected pupils are all six years old, except one girl who is seven years. One pupil claims
she speaks Krobo, two speak Guan (Anum) and the other, Twi. Their L1s are Krobo, Anum and Twi respectively.

The P2 pupils’ ages range from seven years to ten years. Three of the pupils have Guan as their first language (L1) whilst the other one has Krobo (Dangme) as the L1. However, one pupil claims to speak only Guan; a second pupil speaks Guan and Twi; another pupil speaks Guan, Twi and English and yet another pupil speaks Guan, Krobo, Twi and English. One pupil indicates that they speak Krobo, Guan and Twi at home; the second says they speak Guan and Twi at home; another says only Guan is spoken at home and the last one says it is only Twi that is spoken at home.

The ages of the selected P3 pupils are between nine and 14 years (9, 11, 11, 14). Two of the pupils say they speak Ewe and Twi; one speaks Anum, Twi and English; the fourth speaks Twi, Krobo and English. Two pupils have Ewe as their L1; one, Twi; another, Anum. One pupil says Ewe is spoken at home; one, Ewe and Twi; one, Krobo; the other, Anum.

Three of the selected P4 pupils are nine years old, and the fourth one is thirteen years. Two pupils indicate that they speak Twi and Guan; one speaks Krobo and English, and another speaks Twi, Guan, and English. All the four pupils are non-Akan natives – three of them have Guan as their L1, whilst one has Krobo as his L1. Two of them indicate that they speak Guan at home; one speaks Krobo at home and another speaks Twi at home.

3. Attitudes and Perceptions of Language Policy and Language Use
   a. Community

Two community members were interviewed. These were the SMC chairman and the PTA chairman. The SMC chairman is also the Mankrado of Alapa. He is 70 years old and a farmer. He holds the Middle School Leaving Certificate (MSLC). He has 18 people as his household, whose ages range from 7 years to 45 years. He states that the prevalent language of the village is Twi and the languages of the market are Krobo and Twi.

The SMC chairman indicates that the teachers and pupils use English and Twi in class. He is fully aware of the official School Language Policy and quotes it correctly. He says he prefers that a mixture of Twi and English be used in teaching the pupils at primary. But his utterances indicate that he is especially concerned about English. He states:

   We visit the school to see how teachers are using Twi and English in teaching, and controlling their lessons and classes. When we meet the children we speak to them in English, asking them ‘how are you?,’ etc. When they make mistakes we correct them.

   We meet teachers and encourage teachers to assist pupils learn English. They too are doing their best. They are aware of our concerns.
The PTA chairman is 60 years old. He indicates that the prevalent languages of the village are Guan (Anum) and Krobo, and the languages of the market are Twi, Anum and Krobo. He acknowledges that the language of the district is Twi (Akyem).

On the official School Language Policy the PTA chairman has this to say:

I have heard about it but I don’t know how it is being implemented. I am not sure what it says.”

I cannot say whether I am assisting [with policy implementation] or not since I don’t know the policy.

He seems to prefer Early-English medium (English as MOI from P1). He says:

I helped to decide that English should be the medium. Pupils are expected to greet in English after classes, to speak English among themselves after classes.

I think that since English is the official language it should be the medium of instruction in order to lay a good foundation.

b. Parents

We interviewed fifteen parents or guardians; primarily men. Only two of the interviewees are guardians; thirteen are parents. The guardians are 53 and 67 years old, whilst the age range of the parents is 33-56. The parents/guardians are mostly farmers. However, two of them indicate that they were traders, while one has palm-wine tapping as an additional occupation.

The number of children in a household ranges from four to nine; majority of them have five/six children. The ages of the children range from four months to thirty-eight years. The number of school age children in the various households ranges from one to five.

The parents and guardians represent the different ethnic backgrounds of members of the community. This is clearly reflected in their L1/mother tongues and the languages spoken at home – Twi, Ewe, Guan and Dangme (Krobo). A few of them indicate that they are literate in English and/or Twi; only one indicates literacy in Ga. One parent indicates that Krobo (Dangme), Twi and English are spoken at home.

Out of the fifteen parents/guardians interviewed only two have the Middle School Leaving Certificate, the rest are either school dropouts (Primary 3, Primary 4 or Middle Form One) or never went to school at all.

Nearly all the selected parents/guardians indicate that they prefer English as medium of instruction rather than the prevalent language of the locality, Twi. We state below some of the reasons they give for their preference for English.
English is preferred because she can learn faster and better. The more English you can speak the better your education.

I prefer English. It is a mark of good education.

English because it can take you very far.

English. I enjoy listening to people speak English. I would want my children to be fluent in English. The community especially would want the children to speak English.

My preference is English. The reason is that the English language is the standard, and is also the international language. So without speaking or understanding the English language will not augur well for our children.

I prefer the English language to the local language. English language is an international language for the nation. So the children must be taught right from Class One. Also the local language cannot be used everywhere. In the offices and interviews for instance, it is the English language that is generally used. So the English language must be taught even from the KG level.

I prefer her to be taught in English, because English can take her far, more than the local language would. Even outside Ghana, she can no longer speak the local language.

However, two parents indicate that they prefer the use of both English and the local language (i.e., bilingual education). They reason:

I would like my daughter to be taught in both English and the local language. That is the easiest way she can learn the English language. That will also enable her to learn and write the local language.

English and Twi. They are all necessary. But I will want them to speak English well.

c. Teachers

The head teacher is aware of the Government’s School Language Policy and he is able to state it correctly. However, he does not have a copy of the document in his office. When asked about the pupils’ attitude towards the use of English as a language of instruction, he has this to say:

Pupils enjoy it. Pupils appreciate being taught in English, especially where the teacher has prepared adequately and does not use unfamiliar words.”

On the use of Ghanaian language as medium of instruction, he says:

We do not, as a policy, use the Ghanaian language as medium of instruction. When pupils fail to comprehend a lesson or a subject because unfamiliar English
words are introduced, then pupils find the lesson interesting when the Ghanaian
language is used to explain things to them.

He is not personally opposed to the Language Policy, however, and claims,

> We have in-service training here in the school and it helps us to help each other
deal with difficult issues concerning the implementation of the policy.

> Our policy is to use English as the MOI. However, the Ghanaian language is used
to explain subjects to enhance pupils’ understanding where English does not seem
satisfactory.

The teachers all claim that they are aware of the School Language Policy. They all state it
correctly except the P2 teacher who thinks the policy calls for Ghanaian language to be used as
MOI for all six years of primary school education. They all think that they will need training in
the use of the Ghanaian language if they are to implement the policy successfully. One teacher
states, “The Language Policy will work if it is implemented.”

Three of the teachers would prefer early medium English. The following are some of their
statements:

> It is good because if you understand English it helps to communicate with many people
who do not speak or understand your native language.

> I would wish to see everybody learn the English language.

> At staff meetings we are advised to use the English language often to enable pupils pick it
and perform better in it.

> I could advise that English should be made the medium of instruction throughout
schooling.

The P1 teacher, however, thinks that bilingual education will be very ideal.

**d. Pupils**

Since the pupils are the ‘beneficiaries’ of what happens in the schools we tend to give them more
focus in our report. Four pupils, two boys and two girls were randomly selected for intensive
observation and interview from each of the P1-P4 classes.
(i.) Primary 1

All four pupils would like to ask and answer questions in class in Twi. However, two of them say they would like their teacher to teach them in English whilst the other two would prefer being taught in both Twi and English. Specifically, they would like to be taught Maths in Twi. The main reasons are as follows:

I understand her in the local language more than in English.

When teacher teaches Maths I feel uncomfortable, but much more at ease when it is done in Twi.

When the pupils were asked what language they think their teacher should use to teach, three of them said they would like English. One gave no reason, the other two said:

I would like to be taught in English, because I want to learn English
I want to learn from her.

The pupil who indicated preference for Twi said:

I want to understand the lesson thoroughly.

(ii.) Primary 2

Three out of four pupils say they would prefer their teacher to use English when teaching. Two of them would like to ask and answer questions in English; one in Twi; and the fourth, Twi and English. One pupil prefers that the teacher handle Maths in English; one pupil likes both English and Twi and a third claims to understand better in Twi. Three pupils think their teacher should use English to teach. Their reasons are:

We want to learn English
We are happy.

Interestingly, the pupil who claims better understanding when Maths is taught in Twi indicates that the teacher should use English to teach and says, “We are happy”. One pupil would like the teacher to use Twi to teach. She says:

I just prefer Twi.

(iii.) Primary 3

One pupil says that he enjoys the English lesson—and says he can’t speak Twi well. The other three claim they enjoy the Twi lesson. One of them says: “I enjoy because I understand what is taught.”
Three of the selected pupils say they would prefer their teacher to use English when teaching; one prefers Twi. Two of them would like to ask and answer questions in English. One pupil would like to ask questions in English but would like to answer questions in Twi. One pupil would want to ask and answer questions in Ewe.

When we asked them to indicate how they feel when Maths is taught in English or the Ghanaian language, they replied:

When it is done in English, I don’t feel confident; when it is in Twi, I feel good; I understand it better.

In English, I don’t feel good. I would prefer Twi.
In English, I enjoy it; in Twi, I like it too.
I don’t like it in Twi. I’ll prefer it in English.

Three pupils think their teacher should use English to teach. Their reasons are:

I am not good in English, so I want it to be used often so that I can learn it faster.
I want to speak English fluently because I would like to be a teacher.
English is preferred because I want to speak it English fluently.

The only pupil who thinks that the teacher should use Twi to teach has this to say:

I understand it better in Twi.

(iv.) Primary 4

Three of them claim to speak Twi and English at school, while one speaks Krobo and English.

Three of the selected pupils say they would prefer their teacher to use English when teaching; one prefers Twi. However, all of them would like to ask and answer questions in English. Three of them prefer that the teacher handle Maths in English. Here are the reasons given by two of them:

It’s nice to be taught in English.
English makes us learn better.

The fourth pupil says she has better understanding when Maths is taught in Twi.

All the pupils think their teacher should use English to teach. Their reasons are that in this way they learn to use the English language, learn better, and have better understanding. Interestingly, the pupil who claims better understanding when Maths is taught in Twi indicates that the teacher should use English to teach and says: “for better understanding”
4. Language Use Inside And Outside Classroom

The pupils at Apala come from four different linguistic groups but they all speak the language of the area, Twi. Our observations reveal that pupils are active, vocal, and participate highly in lessons when the teachers switch from English to Twi.

a. Primary 1

All four pupils claim that they speak Twi at school. Two of the pupils indicate that they speak Guan (Anum) with friends, one says he speaks Twi and Guan with friends and the other, Twi. One pupil indicates that he uses the Ghanaian language “because I don’t understand any other language.” The others make no comments.

All the four pupils say that they interact with their teacher in Twi both in class and during break time. Our observations reveal that the P1 teacher uses English for Maths and English, and Twi for Environmental Studies, Religious and Moral Education, and, of course, the Ghanaian language. At times she mixes English and Twi in teaching Maths.

b. Primary 2

Two pupils indicate that they speak Twi at school, while the other two say they speak Twi and English. Two of the pupils claim that the teacher and pupils use English and Twi in class; the other two say that Twi is used in class.

All the four pupils indicate that they speak Twi with friends in class as well as during break time. Their reasons are varied:

She speaks Twi.
I like Twi.
We understand it better.
They don’t speak Guan.

Two of the pupils claim that the teacher talks to them in English and Twi; one, in English and the other, in Twi. However, three of them claim the teacher talks to other pupils in English and Twi, whilst one pupil says that the teacher talks to other pupils in English only.

Three of the selected pupils indicate that they talk to their teacher in English in class; the other talks to the teacher in Twi and English. They all claim that during break time they talk to their teacher in Twi.

c. Primary 3

At school, one pupil speaks English, another speaks Twi and two speak Twi and English. Two of the pupils claim that the teacher and pupils use English and Twi in class; one says English is used and the other one says that Twi is used in class.
Three of the selected pupils indicate that they speak Twi with friends in class. Their reasons are as follows:

- We speak Twi better than any other language.
- There are a few Ewes; my friends speak Twi, they are not good in English
- It is the language we speak fluently

One speaks English to friends. He says that:

- The teachers have warned us not to speak Twi.

Two pupils indicate that they speak Twi to their friends during the break time; one says he speaks Twi and Ewe, and the other speaks English to friends. The one who speaks Ewe and Twi explains that:

- Some of friends are Akans and others are Ewes who don’t speak Twi well.
- Some of my friends don’t speak Twi.

The pupil who claims to speak English with friends during break time says that:

- We want to improve our English

Three pupils claim that in class the teacher talks to them in Twi. (One of the three says: “Sometimes the teacher talks to me in English and I reply in Twi”). One of the pupils says that the teacher speaks to him in both English and Twi. However, three of them indicate that the teacher talks to other pupils in English, whilst one pupil says that the teacher talks to other pupils in Twi only.

Two of the selected pupils indicate that they talk to their teacher in English in class (one, however, says: “When I can’t express myself well in English, I use Twi”); one talks to their teacher in Twi and English and the other in Twi. Three pupils claim that during break time they talk to their teacher in Twi, while the fourth one talks to the teacher in English only.

d. Primary 4

Three of the pupils claim that the teacher and pupils use English and Twi in class; the other one says that Twi is used in class.

Two of the selected pupils indicate that they speak Twi with friends in class. One of them says:

- Because it is more familiar

And the other says:

- They don’t understand English or Krobo.
One speaks Guan to friends and the other speaks Twi and English. He says that:

Teacher encourages us to speak English.

Three pupils indicate that they speak Twi to their friends during the break time; one says he speaks Krobo. One pupil further explains that she speaks Guan with Guan speakers and Twi with the others.

All the four pupils claim that in class the teacher talks to them in English. However, three of them indicate that the teacher talks to them in Twi at other times; the fourth pupil still claims the teacher talks to her in English. Two of them claim the teacher talks to other pupils in English and Twi, whilst two pupils say that the teacher talks to other pupils in English only.

Two of the selected pupils indicate that they talk to their teacher in English in class; the other two talk to their teacher in Twi and English. Again, two pupils claim that during break time they talk to their teacher in Twi, while the other two talk to their teacher in Twi only.

The teachers in P2-P4 use English to teach all subjects except the Ghanaian language. There are occasions, however, when the teachers switch to Twi to explain difficult concepts or ideas. But after the explanation is done they go back to the use of English. Outside the classroom the teachers interact with pupils in both English and Twi. They also interact among themselves in English and Twi.

In P2-P4 the pupils make the effort to speak to the teacher in English, either in a form of questions or as answers to the teacher’s questions. For pupil-pupil interactions in class only a few do it in English. Most of the pupils talk to their peers in a Ghanaian language. The situation is the same outside the classroom – Twi is more used than English.

5. Teaching and Learning

We observed lessons in five subject areas in P1-P4. The teaching and learning strategies employed by the teachers were not very different. Certain teaching and learning patterns emerged. “Class, stand! Sit! Stand! Sit!” This is how the lessons start. They may continue with either a rhyme or a song (a “motivator”), or both. This normally takes between two to five minutes.

For the languages, the teachers start the real lesson by going through the “difficult” words and expressions with the pupils. The teacher usually writes the words or expressions on the blackboard. The teacher reads the words/expressions and the pupils repeat after him/her – the whole class, in groups and individually. If it is a reading and comprehension lesson the teacher then reads the text once or twice, followed by individual and group reading. Then there is the silent reading. This is also followed by questions and answers based on the text. Pupils are called at times to come to the blackboard and write their answers and then they are asked to do the work in their exercise books. If it is content work, e.g. grammar, the teacher does some explanation, gives examples as illustration, asks pupils to also give their own examples and
pupils are asked to come to board to write answers given. This may be followed by written exercises in the pupils’ exercise books.

For Maths the lesson starts with the revision of previous work through questions and answers and blackboard work. The previous work is then linked with the lesson of the day. The teacher does explanation through questions and answers. Pupils are invited to the blackboard to work sums or solve problems. Pupils then work sums from their textbooks in their exercise books and teacher goes round to check on pupils’ work.

For the other subjects the pattern is almost similar to the above – explanation by teacher, choral repetition, individual repetition, presentation of ‘facts’ through questions and answers, blackboard work and seatwork assignments.

During round two of data collection, the P3 teacher involved pupils by using word and sentence strips to teach new English words, manipulatives, and other creative teaching methods.

6. Materials

Access to textbooks varies according to class level for Ghanaian language, English, and Maths. There are no textbooks for Environmental Studies in P1-P3 or for Religious and Moral Education P1-P4. Although a new Environmental Studies syllabus has been written and disseminated, to date no textbook has been published that follows the syllabus. Hence, teachers either use dated books that follow the old syllabus, or create their own lessons.

For us, what is most interesting in this study of the implementation of the school Language Policy, is that there are no textbooks for Ghanaian languages. (Apala L/A Primary School uses the Nimdej Kwan (The Way To Knowledge) supplementary reader series as textbooks.) Also, there is not a single textbook in the Lower Primary that is written in the Ghanaian language.

There are forty-five pupils in P1. They have 43 Ghanaian language ‘textbooks’, a ratio of about 1 textbook to 1 pupil (1:1). There are 45 English Language textbooks, a ratio of 1:1. For Mathematics, we have 60 textbooks, a ratio of about 1.3:1. There were no textbooks for Environmental Studies, and Religious and Moral Education.

P2 also has forty-five pupils. There are 15 Ghanaian language ‘textbooks’, a ratio of 1:3. There are 10 English Language textbooks, a ratio of about 1:4.5. The Mathematics textbooks are 15 in number, a ratio of 1:3. Again there are no books for Environmental Studies, and Religious and Moral Education.

There are forty-four pupils in the P3 class. There are no textbooks for any of the subjects for P3 pupils. (The head teacher confirms that P3 has serious textbook problems.)

The P4 class also has forty-four pupils. There are 19 Ghanaian language textbooks, 10 English language textbooks, 21 textbooks for Mathematics, and 21 Science textbooks. These give the following ratios respectively: 1:2; 1:4.4; 1:2 and 1:2.
Teaching and learning materials such as wall charts and flash cards were all in English.

7. Conclusions and Policy Implications

Apala is in a very good position to implement the School Language Policy. All the teachers speak the language of the area and have received some kind of training in the teaching of Twi as a subject. They are all confident that they will be able to use the Ghanaian language as MOI.

As noted above, the pupils at Apala come from four different linguistic groups but they all speak the language of the area – Twi. Our observations reveal that pupils are active, vocal, and participate highly in lessons when the teachers switch from English to Twi.

The teachers all claim that they are aware of the School Language Policy. They all state it correctly except the P2 teacher who thinks the policy calls for Ghanaian language to be used as MOI for all six years of primary school education. They all think that they will need training in the use of the Ghanaian language if they are to implement the policy successfully. One teacher says, “The Language Policy will work if it is implemented.”

However, the school has its own language policy – that English should be the language of instruction from P1. Not only that; the pupils are required to speak English only on the compound. The implications of this position are enormous. If this position is not checked, it means that any school or head teacher can “promulgate” a policy independently. The Ministry may wish to consider if it desires decentralization of education in the way it is currently going. As long as the pupils all over the country write the same final examinations (BECE) it seems that it would be more advantageous for the students to have some kind of uniformity in our practices.

Second, if the school continues with its current policy then there is a lot to do. There are not enough reading materials in English. A number of the pupils do not have the ability or confidence to use or speak English, as evidenced when the head teacher spoke English to some pupils outside the classroom and the pupils responded in Twi. A reading centre or a library at Apala could help to build pupils language skills and confidence, along with organised reading competitions and encouraging the pupils to use English outside the classroom.

There is also the need for the school to organise very frequent INSET for the teachers on English language as a subject as well as on the use of English as MOI, as the language proficiency of some of the teachers is of concern. The teachers would benefit from training in the teaching of English as second language at the primary level.
1. Community Profile

Awocha is a small village located in Ghana’s Western region. The buildings are spread on a small hill on a section of the dirt road that leads to a major port town. The village is about twenty-five kilometres west of the district capital.

The settlement pattern of the Awocha village is the cluster type. The layout is rugged and undulating. The sea bounds the southern part of the village, while the north, east, and west are covered by a stretch of forest and cash crop farms. The inhabitants of the village are predominantly farmers even though they live along the coast. The main cash crops cultivated are cassava, sugar cane, and vegetables. Growing crops and gari processing are the most common economic activities.

The community is peopled by native Ahantas numbering about four hundred. A woman is the odikro (chief), an uncommon leadership arrangement.

2. School Profile

The Awocha District Council primary school is a public school. It has two completed classroom blocks. The Lower Primary block is a completely new one put up by USAID and is made up of three classrooms and the head teacher’s office. Close by the Lower Primary block is an uncompleted block being put up by the people of Awocha themselves. The Upper Primary classroom block, which stands some distance away from the lower block, is old and almost dilapidated. The school compound is reasonably large but rugged and sloppy.

There are two bungalows one for the headmaster and one for the teachers built by USAID. Each of the bungalows has a Kumasi Very Improved Project (KVIP) toilet attached. The compound itself is bare. There are no recreational facilities such as seesaw slides, although there is a playground on which children run during break.

The four teachers teach combined classes. The head teacher is the only qualified and trained personnel in the school.

The school has a population of 182 pupils some of who commute from the two nearby villages two kilometres away. The prevalent languages spoken in the school are Ahanta and Fante.

3. Attitudes and Perceptions of Language Policy and Language Use
   a. Community

Among those interviewed were the chief, an opinion leader, a women’s group organizer, and the
P.T.A. chairman. All those interviewed are farmers and between 49 and 72 years old. Two of the parents had the middle school leaving certificate, one stopped schooling at Class Two and was not literate.

As mentioned above, there are five to seven children per household, between four and seven school-going children in households. The chief has seven children in school, the woman’s group organizer has two, and the PTA chairman has three boys in school.

The community members said that the prevalent language used at the market, district and village is Ahanta.

Two of the community members preferred local language to be used at the lower level, the other two want English to be used as a language for interaction both in Lower Primary and Upper Primary. With regard to medium of instruction (MOI), two said they want Ahanta because their wards should be able to “read and write Ahanta.” The other two want English to be used.

All the community members said they have been giving assistance to the teachers by helping the teachers to weed their farms during the farming season. The women’s group organizer assists the school by donating footballs and jerseys. The community involves the school in all its cultural activities through plays, drumming, dancing and singing the “Kuntun,” a folk song. The women’s group leader also has been donating drums to the school to be used during cultural activities.

Teachers having problems learning the local language are also helped by the community and some of the pupils to learn the local language.

Those interviewed were aware of the Language Policy. Two of them could say what the policy was about and said they help with the provision of exercise books and other materials needed by the school. Another said he helps teachers to learn the local language.

The role of community members in helping to select the language of instruction at the school surfaced in Awocha. Three of them said they help teachers to decide on what language of instruction to use in the school:

    I suggest to the teacher about the need to know the mother tongue.
    I approach the teachers to try to use Ahanta because he wants it developed since Fante is imposed on us.
    I assist by donating textbooks as my personal contribution.

b. Parents

Equal numbers of mothers and fathers were interviewed at Awocha. Fifteen were parents; one was a guardian. Their ages ranged from 28 to 65. Thirteen of them are farmers, one is a fisherman, and one a trader. Only six can read and write. Most of them said Ahanta was their first language, only two said Fante is their first language. There were between one and seven children in each household and their ages range from one to nine years old.

Most of the parents want their children to be taught in English in school since they think that
English is the language that will make their children be able to live comfortably in this world. One parent made this point—and also noted the significant connection between knowing English and taking examinations

I want my child to be taught with English because I want him to be able to communicate with outsiders, and, again, all examinations that I have seen my child take are all written in English.

Others were of the view that with the learning of English their children will be able to travel outside this country to seek better jobs and, to read and assist them in English, one parent favored his/her child using English because it is a national language.

Some parents also feel that the learning of English will enhance their children’s chances for better learning and for them to be fluent in the language.

Even though most parents want their children to be taught in English, some also believe that their wards should be taught in the Ghanaian language—Ahanta—that they feel will let their children have better understanding of some of the basic concepts in learning. One parent said,

The use of Ghanaian language (Ahanta) will enable my child to quickly understand what she is told and also for the stability of our culture. [I favour Ahanta]

Another parent also wants Ahanta to be developed and be used well. He said, I want to…so as to develop the Ahanta language and also be able to come out with the printing of textbook as early enough to enable the pupils to learn and to know of the language better and to be able to use it well.

One parent was undecided about which language should be used as MOI in school for his/her wards.

Parents high interest in pupils learning and becoming literate in the local language is noteworthy: they are eager for their children to become literate in their own language—a language that is not officially recognized by the government, and for which there are no materials available. Due to the Ahantas historical relationship with the Fante, parents stated that they would prefer their children learn and learn in Ahanta, but, barring that English was preferable to Fante. However, when a Ghanaian language is used in school, it is Fante.

b. Teachers

(i.) Primary 1/Head Teacher

The head teacher is a 51-year old man who hails from Beahu in the Ahanta west district of the Western region. The head teacher is a middle-aged man 51 years holding the teachers 4-year certificate. His professional training was at Sefwi wiaso Training College. He has taught for 14 years and has eight years experience as a headteacher, two of which he has spent in the present school. His first language is Ahanta (not a written language) and he speaks and writes Fante and English. He supervises three teachers and teaches P1. The P1 teacher uses Fante most of the time in his teaching. He says he prefers this because “Fante is one of the 11 languages recognized by the G.E.S.” (Ghana Education Service). Occasionally he uses English in his teaching.
The Head Teacher is aware of the Government Language Policy in education, although he says “it is not very clear about what it says-- but I think it’s about using Ghanaian language in Lower Primary and using English in Upper Primary as medium of instruction.” He also thinks “it is a very good policy and should be pursued.” He added, that “would effect no change except to insist on emphasizing the use of Ghanaian language in the Lower Primary.” He has been making everything possible to see to the policy’s implementation. But he said “for proper implementation teachers must be given in-service training on the implementation of the policy/

(ii.) Primary 2

The P2 teacher speaks and teaches in Ahanta, Fante, and English and can read Fante and English. He is a 26-year-old man from the Ahanta West district of the Western Region. He holds the SSCE certificate and is a student at the Seventh Day Adventist Training College on attachment to this school. The Ghanaian language he is studying is Twi. He stood in for the P2 teacher who was sick during this data collection period.

The teacher was not aware of the Government Language Policy but he felt that the English/Ghanaian language should be used as MOI interchangeably as and when the situation demands.

(iii.) Primary 3

The P3 teacher was 21 years old, a product of the SSS. He has been in the school, teaching in the present class, for one year. Ahanta is his first language; he also speaks Fante and English and can read both languages. There are 37 students in his class.

The teacher claimed that he was aware of the Government Language Policy but thinks “both languages English and Ghanaian language should be used at the Lower Primary as medium of instruction”. When asked about the changes he would have made to the policy if given the chance. He said “ I still think both languages should be used at both the lower and Upper Primary”.

(iv.) Primary 4

The teacher comes from Elmina in the Central region. He is 24 years old and an “A “level holder who is not a trained teacher. He has been in the school for two years and has been teaching in this class both years. He speaks Fante and English well. His first language is Fante and he uses it well as MOI. This teacher was aware of the Government Language Policy and he says’ the policy is a good one”.

d. Pupils

Out of the 16 pupils eight were girls and six were boys. Their ages ranged between seven and 15 and all speak Ahanta and Fante.

During break most of the pupils said their topics of conversation are entertainment, personal issues, and whatever took place in the classroom during lessons. All except two used the local language during interaction, these two were undecided as to which language they used for interaction.
On teacher-pupil interaction the pupils felt they could interact well with their teachers if the local language was used. They said if the local language is used as medium of instruction they understand whatever is taught better. Five of them preferred English to be used during interactions with the teacher whether in class or outside. Of those who preferred English, one said. “I like English but I am not very good and so I use Fante to communicate with others.” Others, too, say that they like English because it is the official language.

Pupils’ responses on materials indicate that apart from the prescribed textbooks their teachers use few flash cards and teaching aids. During classes they share the books with other pupils and occasionally they are made to read them aloud especially in English and they are also given exercises in books.

Little homework was given since it was the beginning of the term. Friends, mothers, and fathers helped the pupils to do their work and at times some, about three, do not get any help. Apart from two of the P4 pupils who said they were helped by the use of English, the rest said Ahanta was what were used to help them do their homework.

e. Supervisors

(i.) Circuit Supervisor

The Circuit Supervisor comes from Busua town in the Ahanta west district of the western region. This officer is a man aged 50 who possesses G.C.E. ‘O’ level and the teacher’s certificate ‘A’ 4-year. He trained at Sefwi Wiaswo training college. His experience in teaching amounts to 14 years, 9 of which was in Lower Primary and 5 in Upper Primary. He has been a circuit officer for 8 years and has been in the present circuit for 5 years, 3 of which he has been with Awocha D/C Primary School.

The Circuit Supervisor’s first language is Asante Twi, but he speaks Fante Ahanta, Nzema, and English. He can write Fanti, Asante Twi and English and he is capable of teaching Fante and Asante Twi. He supervises 140 teachers in 18 primary and Junior Secondary Schools.

This officer is aware of the Language Policy and thinks the policy is “okay except that it is not applied well.” If he had the opportunity to effect any changes he would “encourage the teaching of the English language and insist on the use of the Ghanaian language.”

He said Ahanta and Fante are used in the area but the former is used most in the classroom. With the implementation of the Language Policy he said he “helps interpret certain words to teachers.” He believes that “in-service training should be organized frequently to update teachers’ knowledge on teaching.” For teachers who do not use the local language to teach, he has been encouraging them to use it as MOI where it supposed to be used.

With regard to pupil-pupil interaction he said they use the local language so frequently since it has become part and parcel of them and this actually affected teaching and learning.

On textbooks, he said they were not adequate in the case of Ghanaian language but the teaching was supplemented with the use of teaching aids, which the teachers themselves prepare.

(ii.) AD (Supervision)
This Assistant Director of Education in charge of Supervision is a 58-year-old man, a native of Adobe in the Ahanta West district of the Western region of Ghana. He holds the certificate ‘A’ post ‘B’ (Osei Tutu College) and a certificate in agricultural Science (Bagabaga Training College). He has been in the district for 25 years. He was a Circuit Supervisor for 10 years and from then on became the AD. His teaching experience totals 12 years, seven years in Lower Primary and five in Upper Primary.

The officer speaks Nzema as a first language but speaks English, and Akuapim Twi as well and writes in Nzema and English. He is capable of teaching Nzema and Fante as Ghanaian languages. The AD (Supervision) was unable to give the exact number of schools and the number of teachers he supervises. He gave rough figures of 52 schools and 108 teachers respectively.

The AD (Supervision) accurately the Government Language Policy on education to show that he was aware of its existence and said it “should be pursued” because “children should be competent in their own language for literacy and oral skills”. He would not make any changes in the policy but would ask “employing specialists in the district and Ghanaian language organizers to mobilize equipment, textbooks and other materials to intensify the teaching of Ghanaian languages in schools” to solve non-implementation problems”.

On his contribution to the Language Policy he said he “organizes teachers in the area for those who can teach and speak the local language exchange classes with those who cannot to help teach the subject”. Again he draws teachers’ attention to the policy if the teacher concerned is not doing the right thing.

He saw pupils interacting well when they communicate in the local language. This he said was due to their understanding of whatever they talk about when the local language was used. He said that when the local language was used in the classroom, especially during the Ghanaian language class, interaction was observed to be at its peak but the situation is different when English was used. The use of the local language was believed to be linked with their parents’ attitude towards the language since the language is used all over the house.

He described the textbook situation in the same way as expressed by the head teacher and the Circuit Supervisor. The AD Supervisor thinks there should be in-service training organized frequently for teachers to learn more on the methodology for teaching Ghanaian language and also how teachers can improvise materials to help them in their teaching.

4. Language Use Inside and Outside the Classroom

The P1 teacher said pupils were happy and understand and could contribute in class topics when the local language is used as MOI, but when English was used the class became quiet. He said pupils’ interaction was high when local language was used. Pupils mostly used Ahanta and responded to questions in this language.

During lessons when the teacher was around, the MOI was mainly English (80%) with some Ahanta (20%) and sometimes Fante. The teacher involved all pupils in discussion on whatever topics he chose. Pupils always answered questions from the teacher in Ahanta and Fante because

Illustration 2 Throughout the report this position will be referred to as “AD (Supervision)” or “AD”.

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they had difficulty responding in English.

In P2 pupils interacted using Ahanta throughout when the teacher was not present in the classroom. After about 20 minutes of discussion in a Mathematics lesson, the teacher gave the pupils class exercises to do for the rest of the period. All the questions in the exercise were in English.

Ten of the sixteen P1-P4 pupils interviewed said that Fante is used as MOI while three said Ahanta/Fante or only Ahanta is used. This confirms what the teachers said about the language used as MOI. The first language for 15 of them was Ahanta whilst one said Fante was his first language. Fourteen speak Ahanta in the house and two said they use both Ahanta and Fante. Most of the pupils said that they are able to communicate, understand, and feel comfortable with the use of the local language and, because of that, they use it everywhere they go.

5. Teaching and Learning

All the teachers used the choral repetition and used Fante as both MOI and language of interaction. A few of them especially P2, P3 teachers occasionally grouped their pupils for activities.

a. Primary 1

There are 52 pupils in the P1 class, 31 girls and 21 boys. In the classroom the children sit in a circle at tables and chairs arranged to that specification. Lessons in Mathematics, English and Ghanaian language were observed in this classroom. All assignments and homework were given in English. The teacher used the demonstration and discussion approach with Fante as the MOI. Occasionally he used Ahanta and English.

During break the teacher normally walked straight to his bungalow, which was nearby. On the way to his home he interacted with pupils using Ahanta.

b. Primary 2

Three lessons (English, Ghanaian language, Mathematics) were observed in this class. On the first day of the visit to the class, the teacher was not around but the children sat in circles and took textbooks and read on their own. Some of the pupils flipped through their books and some also walked round looking at the few wall charts. Pupils interacted using Ahanta throughout. They changed the books they were using when the bell rang for the next lesson. After about 20 minutes of discussion in a Mathematics lesson, the teacher gave the pupils class exercises to do for the rest of the period. All the questions in the class exercise were in English.

c. Primary 3

In the classroom boys and girls were seated together in groups. The teacher used English most of the time in teaching Maths but changed to Fante occasionally. He said, “It is very difficult to teach Maths in Fante.” In the classroom the children interacted using Ahanta most of the time and responded to questions in Ahanta. The teacher mostly used the teacher-centred approach since materials were inadequate.

At break majority of the pupils rushed to their houses. No food is sold around the compound so
they come to find something to eat”, said one parent. Due to the rains and the sloppy nature of the land, however, children from the other villages stayed around during break at 10:15 a.m. and 12:00 noon to cluster around the classroom block. Their conversations were in Ahanta.

The teacher understood Ahanta but used Fante for his lesson. In one lesson just before break, the teacher asked the pupils in English whether they were hungry. There was no response but when he used Ahanta to ask the question they all responded in chorus and started running out of the classroom.

d. Primary 4

In compliance with the Language Policy, the MOI was English. Occasionally the teacher uses Fante; however, whenever the teacher uses English in teaching there is always silence in the classroom. The moment he uses Fante the responses are overwhelming and all pupils participate in the lesson. The pupils also communicated in Ahanta and Fante during classes and break.

The teacher gave exercises in class, which he went round marking and occasionally prompting them about some mistakes he had seen. The teacher used other materials when he taught--supplementary readers. The teacher assigns exercises and homework in English.

All the teachers talked about students sharing some textbooks since they were not enough to go round. Their pupils were very happy and enjoyed using textbooks especially those with pictures in them.

On the language of instruction their pupils understood whatever they were taught in the local language because they understood it well and were interested, could ask questions and also contribute to the lesson. During English lessons pupils sat idle and even some responded to questions using the local language, which the teachers translates into English the to them. Teachers used the question and answer, discussion, and the demonstration methods for teaching.

Apart from the English language lessons (where the teachers use very little English for teaching) in all four classes, the local language was used in teaching all lessons even in P4 where the MOI was supposed to be English.

Boys were found to contribute more by way of asking questions and responding to questions in class. Apart from one teacher who said that girls at times approach him when they have problems, the rest said that girls were “shy-looking.” All the pupils claimed they “like the use of Ghanaian language, understand it better and love to use it to communicate with others.” Their love for the use of the local language is most likely due to the attitude of the community where local language is constantly used for interaction, as it is in the house.

Even though only one teacher has had training in the use of local language to teach, all claimed to be competent in the use of the local language for instruction. The one who has had the training felt that more in-service training should be organized for teachers to up-date their knowledge in the use of the local language to teach. As he puts it, “I have been able to learn things I did not know formerly.”
6. Materials

There are no textbooks in Environmental Studies or in Religious and Moral Education for P1-P4.

a. Primary 1

The textbook situation in Ghanaian language is one book to four pupils, and about one to two in English, and Mathematics. (As with other sites, the Ghanaian language book is a supplementary reader and not a textbook.) Hence, pupils shared textbooks in pairs because of the few copies available in all the subjects. The P1 teacher said they do not have any other materials for teaching the local language. This makes the teaching of the local language difficult since even teachers handbooks are not available. The teacher added that it was because of the lack of these materials that some teachers “refuse to teach the Ghanaian language (Fante) subject.” This teacher frequently uses charts when teaching.

b. Primary 2

The regular Primary Two teacher was absent during our observations and we were not able to procure complete information on textbooks at this level.

c. Primary 3

Only ten pupils out of 37 had access to the textbooks. There were no wall charts and the classroom had only a clock hanging on the wall. The teacher sometimes used local objects like trees around the school as examples in his lessons.

d. Primary 4

The class has 17 students and 17 English textbooks, 17 Integrated Science textbooks—a 1:1 ratio for these two subjects—and just three Maths books.

7. Conclusions and Policy Implications

When the Language Policy calls for the predominant Ghanaian language of the area to be used as MOI in P1-P3, the approximately sixty language groups of Ghana are reduced to to the ten or eleven “official” languages, that is, those that have an orthography and are recognized for use in schools. This is problematic in communities such as Awocha, where families are eager for children to maintain the home language that is not an officially recognized language. The school implements the Language Policy through the use of Fante, but this does not resolve the dilemma for maintaining Ghanaian language and cultural traditions among the Ahanta people—or for myriad other people in Ghana who do not speak one of the official languages.

The relationship between school language and school examinations was raised by the Awocha parent who astutely noted, “all examinations that I have seen my child take are all written in English.” This parent preferred the use of language, in part, for this very reason. When the Language Policy advocates the use of Ghanaian languages but English is the language of the informal and formal examination system at all levels, the importance the educational system assigns to English over Ghanaian languages is clear. If the School Language Policy is to be fully implemented, then subject matter examinations must also be written in languages other than
Parents report a high level of community involvement with the school, including having a role in selecting the MOI for the school. One community member also reports involvement in helping teachers learn the predominant (though not official government-approved) Ghanaian language of the area. Community support for the school is admirable and it appears that lessons for healthy school-community relations here could well be taken to other communities. Community members’ role in helping to select the MOI for the school also raises the question of who chooses--and who should choose--the language of instruction for a school in a given community.

“Over-implementation” is a popular derogatory term used to describe the practice of using Ghanaian language in the classroom after Primary 3. Awocha could be described as one of these sites--but it could also be described as a school that tries to do what is best for children who, as a group, have not reached the policy’s expectation of fluency at the end of P3. In P4, in compliance with the Language Policy, the MOI was English. However, when the P4 teacher used English he observed that routinely there was silence in the classroom. The moment he used Fante the responses were overwhelming and all pupils participated in the lessons. This raises questions about the kind and quality of instruction to which children have been exposed, but it also challenges the soundness of the policy in declaring P4 as the magical year when all pupils will be equally ready to participate fully in schooling in English.

Those in charge of supervision over the Awocha School are solidly behind the School Language Policy. The AD for this area supports the School Language Policy, wishes for more resources and textbooks in Ghanaian language to implement the policy, and would like to organize more in-service to help teachers in this area. He stated that the Government Language Policy should be pursued because “children should be competent in their own language for literacy and oral skills.” He would like to “employ specialists in the district and Ghanaian language organizers to mobilize equipment, textbooks and other materials to intensify the teaching of Ghanaian languages in schools to solve non-implementation problems.” The Circuit Supervisor is also aware of the Language Policy and thinks it is good “except that it is not applied well.” If he had the opportunity to effect any changes he would “encourage the teaching of the English language and insist on the use of the Ghanaian language.” The head teacher at Awocha also thinks “it is a very good [language] policy and should be pursued.” Given the lukewarm support and outright opposition of supervisors in other districts to the Language Policy, actual implementation of the Language Policy could be tried in the future at Awocha (and in other schools) under the supervision of these individuals. This could be the supportive environment needed to see how the Language Policy truly works, when implemented as envisioned.
CHAPTER FIVE
KAPA SCHOOL

by
Peter Amissah

1. Community Profile

The Kapa School community is located in a major urban area in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. It comprises a university and its neighbouring suburb. The estimated population of the community that the school serves is about 18,000. Teaching and related educational service jobs are the main occupations of the people of the community. The prevalent Ghanaian language is Akan but English is understood and widely used by members of the community.

The physical layout of the community consists of residence halls for university students, faculty buildings, guesthouses, and laboratories, as well as lecturers’ bungalows, all of which are artistically arranged.

2. School Profile

The school is private and is managed by the university. It is located in the northern side of the university near the highway. Roads leading to the school from the town and the university are asphalted. The school has twenty-four streams and a pupil population of 1,723; 875 boys and 848 girls. The school has 48 teachers, excluding the head teacher who does not teach but sees to the day-to-day administration of the school and the supervision of the teachers.

The school has a large compound dotted by different types of shade trees and flowers with beautiful buildings linked to each other by concrete lanes. The buildings are regularly maintained. The school has many resources, as evidenced by the abundant materials available to teachers and pupils, what pupils’ were wearing, the book bags they carried.

Kapa School is a multilingual school. Pupils come from different ethnic and language backgrounds. Pupils interviewed report that they speak Twi, English (two speak only English), and Hausa. The language of both communication and instruction is English.

3. Attitudes and Perceptions of Language Policy and Language Use

a. Community

Three community members were interviewed; the PTA chairman, a lecturer from the university; the SMC chairman, another lecturer; and an opinion leader, a nurse. All three were for the use of English as the medium of instruction (MOI) throughout the primary school. The PTA chairman and the opinion leader did not offer any explanation for their choice. The SMC chairman stated that English should be used “with a chunk of Twi” and added,

the idea of local language as a medium of instruction in this school is impossible because firstly teachers and pupils come from different ethnic backgrounds and
secondly the school wants to intensify the use of English to enable pupils to perform well in their school subjects to enable them earn higher qualifications.

b. Parents

Thirteen parents were interviewed; three parents of the 16 pupils selected for observation were not available for interview. One was a nurse, two were traders, six were teachers, one was a student, two were businessmen, and one was a property valuation officer.

The oldest guardian had ten children in the household. Apart from two parents, who had one and two children respectively in the household, there were three to six children in the other households.

Six parents said they speak English and Twi, five speak only Twi at home, one speaks only English at home, and one speaks Hausa, English and Twi at home. All the parents interviewed were literate in English. Seven parents were also literate in Twi, and one in German.

All the parents thought that English language should be used as medium of instruction (MOI) throughout primary school. Five of the parents were of the opinion that competency in English would take their children places, while one of them was confident that if a child was fluent in English she/he would not encounter problems in life. Another parent thought English would help a child get a good job. Others were of the opinion that English enhances learning and would make their children learn faster and better. Two of the parents wanted their children to learn English so that they “could speak the official language of the nation.”

Only three of the 13 parents thought that the learning of both English and Ghanaian language is necessary for a well-rounded education of the children.

c. Teachers

(i.) Primary 1

The P1 teacher interviewed is a woman of 41 years. She has the Teacher’s 3-year Post-secondary ‘A’ and had obtained the G.C.E. ‘O’ level certificate by studying at the Institute of Adult Education. She has taught for 16 years in the Lower Primary. At the time of the interview she was in her sixth year in P1. There are 52 pupils in her class, 23 girls and 29 boys.

The P1 teacher studied Ghanaian language to the level of middle school leaving certificate (MLSC). She learnt to speak Ga at home; it is her first language. She received no training in college in using Ghanaian language as MOI or in learning to teach Ghanaian language to primary school pupils.

The P1 teacher can speak Ga, English and Twi, and can read English and Twi but can write only in English. She uses English as MOI. The teacher is aware of the Government’s Language Policy and can state it accurately but is of the opinion that it should be reviewed because she thinks English and Ghanaian language should be taught side by side. On the other hand, she says that if she had the opportunity she would effect changes in the policy by asking the Government to train more Ghanaian language teachers. “My husband has instructed me to speak Ghanaian language to children in the home,” she added.
(ii.) Primary 2

This teacher is a woman 53 years old with 25 years experience in Lower Primary, all in the present school. She trained at Bolgatanga and Juabeng training college. She possesses the teacher’s certificate ‘A’ 4-year and G.C.E. ‘O’ level. Twi is her first language but speaks and writes English as well.

The Primary 2 teacher studied Twi at training college for six terms. She studied methods of using Twi and learned how to teach Twi as a subject, specifically to primary school pupils. She reported that she did not enjoy the Ghanaian language classes, however, because she wanted to study other things than her own language, which she understood.

There are 52 pupils in the class, 30 girls and 22 boys. The teacher is familiar with and uses various methods: demonstration, pair drills, chorus answers and questions and answers.

The teacher is aware of the existence of the Language Policy and can state it accurately without mistakes. When asked what she thinks of it she said, “the idea is good but we do not do it that way because we want children to pick [learn] English as quickly as possible.” Asked about changes she would want to make in the policy she says, “English as a second language should be used to teach all subjects while Ghanaian language is used only when we teach Ghanaian language. Children should be given the opportunity to pick English quickly.”

(iii.) Primary 3

This class teacher is a 48-year-old woman from the Eastern region. She holds the 4-year teacher’s certificate ‘A” and has G.C.E. ‘O’ level. She has a total of 22 years teaching experience in Lower Primary, 15 of which she has spent in the Kapa Primary School. She is in her fourth year of teaching in the present class. This year the pupils in her class number 59--27 girls and 32 boys.

The teacher speaks and writes English, Twi, and Ga. Her first language is Twi, but for all other subjects except Ghanaian language she uses English as the medium of instruction. She received instruction in Twi as a subject for 12 terms and learnt to teach Twi while at college, although not specifically to primary school pupils. She assess herself as an effective teacher of Ghanaian language. She reports that she has received some INSET on teaching the Ghanaian language in primary school.

This teacher knows about the existence of the Government Language Policy and says “it is a good policy” but she feels “English should dominate in the primary school”.

(iv.) Primary 4

The P4 teacher interviewed and observed is a woman aged 49 years. Both her academic and professional qualification is the two-year post secondary teacher’s certificate ‘A’. She has taught for 27 years, 23 in Lower Primary and four years in Upper Primary. She speaks English, Twi and Ewe but can read and write only English and Twi. Her first language is Twi. She says she can teach Twi as a subject but uses English to teach all other subjects. She has been in Kapa Primary for 19 years and has taught the present class for two years.
She studied no Ghanaian language at any level of education and says that she did not learn to speak a Ghanaian language at school, rather she learnt it at home.

This teacher is aware of the Government Language Policy and says ‘the implementation is not effective because most teachers do not read and write in the school language’. She also thinks that the teaching of the Ghanaian language should be “a must in the training college….”

d. Pupils

We interviewed 16 pupils, eight boys and eight girls from P1-P4. Their ages ranged between five and 11. Out of the 16 pupils, four speak only Twi, two speak only English, and 10 speak both English and Twi. Nine out of the 16 stayed with parents, five of them with mothers only, one stayed with a grandfather, and one with an uncle.

While one said the only language he can use in class is English, the other 15 said they use Twi as Ghanaian language to communicate in class. Thirteen of the pupils speak Twi as their first language while the L1 for two of them is English, and one has Ewe as his first language. At home seven of the pupils speak only Twi, five speak only English, and three speak both Twi and English. One pupil speaks Hausa and Twi at home. At school eight of the pupils said they speak English, seven say they speak Twi and English, while one says he speaks only Twi.

(i.) Primary 1

All four pupils in P1 prefer to ask and answer questions in English. Two pupils prefer to use English because they understand it. One says it is his best language while another says, “because the teacher says so”. Three pupils want the teacher to teach in Twi so that they can understand lessons. One pupil prefers that teacher uses Twi because she understands it well.

(ii.) Primary 2

All four pupils prefer to use English when asking and answering questions. The reasons are varied. Three pupils use English because their teacher says they should speak English. One of them says, ”I want to learn it”. All four pupils want the teacher to use English to teach. Two want to “speak English well”, two say they “want to learn it”.

(iii.) Primary 3

One pupil in P3 prefers to use Twi to ask and answer questions in class because he understands it. Two pupils use English because they understood it. One pupil uses English and Twi because, he says, “sometimes… I do not understand English ….so I use Twi”. Three pupils want the teacher to use English to teach, for various reasons. They said “I understand it”, “I want to learn it”. One prefers the teacher to teach in Twi “for understanding”.

(iv.) Primary 4

Two pupils prefer to use English because ‘Teacher has asked us to use English always’. One uses English because ‘…. I want to be fluent in it’. One pupil said he prefers to use Twi because “I understand it”. All four pupils think the teacher should use English to teach.
e. Supervisors

The head teacher of Kapa Primary School was enthusiastic about the Language Policy. He said, “when we teach the Ghanaian language in Lower Primary classes children can articulate in it and it will assist them in the learning of English”. He says that he would have encouraged the proper implementation of the policy if it were not for the school’s own policy of total use of English as medium of instruction in the Lower Primary.

On the contrary, both the Circuit Supervisor and the AD (Supervision) were vehemently opposed to the Language Policy. According to the Circuit Supervisor the policy “should be revised and teachers should use English right from the onset of education and teaching language as a subject.” On the surface this seems surprising as the Circuit Supervisor and the AD are both officers who have very little to do with Kapa because the school is private. Yet it looks as if their attitudes are consistent and in conformity with the Metropolitan Director of Education who is opposed to the use of Ghanaian language as a MOI.

4. Language Use Inside and Outside the Classroom

With regard to pupils’ preference for asking and answering questions in class, all four pupils in P1 prefer to ask and answer questions in English. Two pupils prefer to use English because they understand it; one says it is his best language; and another says, “because the teacher says so.”

All four pupils in P2 prefer to use English when asking and answering questions. The reasons are varied. Three pupils use English because their teacher says they should speak English. One of them says, “I want to learn it”.

One pupil in P3 prefers to use Twi to ask and answer questions in class because he understands it. Two pupils use English because they understand English better. One pupil uses English and Twi because “sometimes… I do not understand English …. so I use Twi.”

Two P4 pupils prefer to use English because “Teacher has asked us to use English always.” One uses English because “I want to be fluent in it.” One pupil prefers to use Twi because he understands it.

Generally, P1, P2 and P4 teachers use English in interacting with pupils in class. The P1 teacher speaks English as well as Twi and reads and writes both. She can teach Twi, but for all other subjects she uses English as medium of exchange.

In P3 there is a mixture of English and Twi for class interaction. Three P1 pupils want the teacher to teach in Twi so that they can understand the lessons. One pupil prefers that the teacher use Twi because she understands it well. During break and at other times teachers interact with P1 pupils in both English and Twi.

All four P2 pupils want the teacher to teach in English. Two give as reasons that they want to “speak English well;” two say they want to learn it. Three P3 pupils want the teacher to teach in English for various reasons. Two prefer English because they understand it, and a third wants “to learn it.” One prefers the teacher to teach in Twi “for understanding.”

All four P4 pupils think the teacher should use English to teach. When asked why, two pupils said, “I want to learn and be fluent.” Another pupil said that some pupils in the class do not
understand Twi and therefore English should be used; a fourth pupil said the teacher should use English because “I like it.”

In pupil-pupil interactions inside classrooms, some P1 pupils say they use English, others Twi, others a mixture of Twi and English. At play Twi and English are mixed for interaction. This is similar for P2 pupils. Pupils in P3 say they speak Twi with other pupils in the classroom because they all understand it. They use a mixture of Twi and English at play. P4 pupils all say they use Twi when they are talking to their friends in the classroom and out of the classroom. Pupils’ reasons for choice of language in and out of the classroom include:

I understand it (Twi) better  
My friends like English.  
I understand both languages.  
[I prefer Twi;] It is our home language.  
The teacher says we should speak English  
We are asked to speak English in class.  
We come from abroad and we don’t like Twi  
[Twi;] My friends don’t understand English.

5. Teaching and Learning

a. Primary 1

The P1 teacher was observed on two occasions during English and Mathematics. Throughout the lesson only English was used as a medium of instruction. Some of the children interacted among themselves in Twi but asked and answer questions in English. The class answered most of the questions in chorus. There were a lot of charts for the lesson in both Mathematics and English. The teacher motivated her pupils with praises and sometimes-concrete incentives, like toffees and lollipops. The teacher gave a lot of exercises in class, which she went round to supervise. Children were neatly dressed and sat in groups around tables.

b. Primary 2

Four lessons were observed in this class, two in Mathematics and two in English. During these lessons we observed that the teacher used English throughout as MOI. Children asked and answered questions in English, but interacted among themselves in both Twi and English. There were enough textbooks in both Maths and English for all children. The teacher used the question-and-answer method most of the time.

c. Primary 3

The teacher was observed teaching English. There were wall charts depicting fruits, vegetables, the weather and animals.

She began with a warming-up physical exercise. The teacher asked the pupils to “stand up, sit down, stand up,” before introducing the lesson. She often asked questions in English and pupils answer in English but when answers were not adequate she explained further in Twi. The
medium of instruction for English class was English. The teacher led pupils to define the wind as “moving air.” Pupils often gave choral responses. The teacher used a lot of teaching and learning materials; there were charts with pictures, depicting some one using leaves to cover his head because it is raining. At one point in the lesson a child answered a question in Twi and there was spontaneous laughter by the rest of the class. Pupils contributed to the lesson mostly in English. One pupil demonstrated his ability in English when he said, “my mother says when there’s thunder and the TV is on we have to put it off.” The lesson ended with the teacher asking pupils to clear their desks.

d. Primary 4

The teacher was observed in Mathematics during which English was the MOI. Children communicated among themselves in both English and Twi, usually in undertones to avoid teacher’s reprimand. Children responded to teacher’s questions in chorus but teacher did nothing about it. Pupils had enough materials, they had a mathematics set, and the teacher drew charts on the chalkboard with shapes and figures.

6. Materials

All pupils in P1-P4 had plenty of textbooks and learning materials. Each pupil had his or her own set of textbooks to use at home or at school. Pupils had sufficient numbers of exercise books, pencils, and other school supplies, and most carried these things around in book bags. Teachers also had ample teaching supplies, including charts.

7. Policy Implications

Kapa School is the only private school of the multi-site case study. The school is rich in resources—pupils have their own books, textbooks and book bags, there are ample materials for teaching and learning, the teachers have been trained and they teach creatively, the school has well-maintained and beautiful buildings. Kapa School is also the only school where some pupils report that they only speak English. Well-educated parents support pupils’ schooling and English instruction; one reported that he supports the intensive use of English to enable pupils to perform well in their school subjects to enable them earn higher qualifications. Whereas parents in some rural areas said they want their children to learn English to “go places,” Kapa School parents know that the way to “go places” is to earn higher qualifications. Kapa School highlights how important such resources are in providing a quality education for children. Whereas the English-only medium is often cited as the reason for pupils’ success at Kapa and at other schools, the entire set of resources in this particular context of teaching and learning is critical, and cannot be separated from the English-only medium in trying to understand the school’s and the pupils’ successes.

The four teachers interviewed support the use of English as a MOI. The head teacher seems to understand the rationale of the national school Language Policy very well and he supports it. Surprisingly, he says he would encourage the proper implementation of the national school Language Policy if it were not for the school’s own policy of English MOI. He observed, “when we teach the Ghanaian language in Lower Primary classes children can articulate in it and it will assist them in the learning of English.”
Out of the four teachers interviewed, two of them could be described as adequately prepared to teach Ghanaian language both as MOI and subject—although they are only asked to teach Ghanaian language as a subject in this setting. Both P1 and P4 teachers had received training in the teaching of Ghanaian language at college, both as MOI and subject, while the P2 teacher had not received any training in Ghanaian language teaching. The P3 teacher received some in-service training in teaching the Ghanaian language in primary school. Since teachers are called on to teach Ghanaian language as a subject in this Early English medium school, this training is also important and beneficial for them and for the pupils whom they teach.
CHAPTER SIX
NOTOSCO

by
Albert Awedoba

1. Community Profile

The Noto Township, located about 5-6 kms from one of the district headquarters in the Upper East Region of Ghana, is linked to Noto town by an asphalt road. Noto Township has a population of a few hundred which includes employees of ICOUR drawn from the district and elsewhere in Ghana. The dominant language is Kasem, one of the eleven government-sponsored languages. However, other languages are spoken. Of the non-local languages, Twi is the most popular.

The Noto Township, the Noto River--a tributary of the White Volta--and the Noto Dam are associated historically. The township comprises workshops and a cluster of neatly laid out residences built in the mid- to late 1970s to accommodate the senior and junior staff of a European company responsible for the construction of the Noto Dam and for the setting up of the infrastructure for an irrigation scheme. Until 1974 when the building of the Noto earth dam began, the area was bushland.

One remarkable feature of ‘new’ Noto is the fact that most of the houses here are property of the irrigation section of the Ministry of Agriculture. Ministry staff currently living in the residences are subject to occasional transfer. As a place once perceived to have had modern infrastructure some well-to-do residents had attempted to put up residences here. With the electrification of the nearby District capital, however, interest in Noto has waned.

The Noto Township is relatively well endowed with amenities. It has potable water, electricity, a staff canteen, a clinic and related social amenities. The primary school co-exists with other educational facilities including a nursery, from which it draws its pupils, and the new Junior Secondary School housed in temporary buildings.

Within a radius of two kilometres are another primary and junior secondary school. Implementation of the Language Policy would be expected at these institutions, as they serve local clan-settlements.

To the north, south and east of the township lie a number of traditional clan-settlements separated from the township by a buffer of farmland and irrigation plots and, in some cases, uncultivated fallow land. To the west is the dam and beyond it are bushlands. The vegetation is open savannah interspersed with acacia and shea nut trees and other scrub vegetation. The residents of the township are mostly government employees but some of them are likely also to engage in growing cash crops like rice, groundnuts and sow beans and tomatoes. The dam
provides opportunities for fishing but this is a pastime for local people rather than Township people.

The Township Community lacks the demographic stability expected of other settlements and lacks some of the features of settlements in the district. It has no acknowledged leader such as chief. For ritual purposes the jurisdiction of the elder of one of the autochthonous clan-settlements is acknowledged. He has power to lease out land for settlement. Plot irrigation, however, is vested in the Ministry authorities. Clan-settlement authorities do not interfere in the affairs of the township.

The Noto School (Notosco) is unusual in one respect: the community from which it draws its pupils comprises the township itself, the main district headquarters, and surrounding clan-settlements. Pupils have come from the border town nearby to attend the school. Many of the pupils are the children and wards of those in gainful employment. Notosco is perceived to offer better primary education--measured by a child's competence and performance in English--than most other schools in the district do.

The District capital has schools run by the catholic mission and the government. These include vocational schools, senior secondary schools and a University faculty. The main town has access to potable water, electricity, a large market and a fairly good network of roads that link the district capital to the regional capital a short distance away.

The languages spoken in the District are Kasem and Nankani. Most people here are bilingual in the two languages. Kasem is generally accepted as the language for out-group communication. The indigenous people are Kasena-Nankana and it is not always possible to say who is Kasena and who is Nankana. Centuries of co-existence and inter-marriage have almost blurred the distinction as far as the community is concerned. The most visible symbol of common identity is the institution of chiefship. There is one paramount chief for the area. Cultural institutions may differ slightly from one clan-settlement to the other but these are not an issue.

2. School Profile

Notosco is a few hundred metres from the township. Access is easy as it is located on the road from the District Headquarters. The school was established in 1988 as a nursery for the children of senior staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and those engaged in the dam project. Many of the staff at the time were on transfer to this District from other parts of Ghana. It has been said that until the establishment of the Nursery, some Irrigation Project workers sent their children to an English medium school in the regional capital, a considerable inconvenience in view of the distance, time, and associated risks. With time, the special purpose nursery grew into a school that is now patronised by both local people in salaried employment and by salaried staff on transfer from other regions and districts. These individuals constitute a kind of the local elite who enjoy relatively high incomes.

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3 Kasem is a Grusi language; Nankani, an Oti-Volta language. Both belong to the Gur or Voltaic family of languages commonly found in Northern Ghana and neighbouring West African countries.
Noto seems to embody the concept of an ‘experimental’ school although it remains within the mainstream of public schooling. Experimental schools in Ghana are usually urban-based; are free to determine their own curriculum and can teach foreign languages if they so wish. (It was hinted that Noto might soon introduce French into its curriculum). Experimental schools also employ teachers and pay salaries at levels the school authorities deem appropriate. The schools can and usually do take fees that are higher than those charged by the public schools (often referred to derogatorily as ‘Cyto schools’). ‘Experimental’ schools are perceived as more effective than the public elementary school that has lost the confidence of parents in urban Ghana.

Noto is housed in two blocks, roofed with metal, and joined by an office attachment to form a horseshoe shape. The compound is spacious, neat and well maintained. Classrooms are equipped with desks and tables. Help for the construction of the school block came from PTA, that is, from parents who levied themselves to generate the funds needed to begin the foundation of the school building, a relief and development agency, an NGO, the District Assembly and the irrigation company. The school compound was first occupied in 1993, before the buildings were fully completed.

There are six teachers at Noto, two men and four women. The head teacher is a woman and her responsibilities extend to the nursery. The school has no housing meant specifically for its teachers; however, some of them live in accommodation intended for staff of the irrigation company. No teacher has an independent means of transport and this impacts on teacher punctuality. Like their teachers, the majority of the pupils live some distance from the school compound. Some of them are children of irrigation company staff; most live either in the District Headquarters or in the dispersed clan-settlements.

The irrigation company provides an open truck to convey pupils to and from school and staff benefit from this service. However, the school does not control the movement of these vehicles that make two regular trips in the morning and in the afternoon, bringing pupils or taking pupils to the town. Children are picked from a central point in the main town and dropped off at the same point or on the way (those who need to alight before the truck reaches the central picking point). A child who lives in a clan-settlement has to walk either to the school or to the central point and wait for the vehicle. One Class Two girl lived at one of the sub-chiefdoms, four to eight kilometres from centre of the District capital. She is either walked or lifted on bicycle to the central point to board the vehicle. She is unavoidably late with this arrangement; the first vehicle arrives in school at about 8 a.m. and the second does not get to school before 9 a.m. when classes are already in progress.

Although the township has had electricity for more than ten years, the school does not appear to have been wired. It has access to potable water through a pipe on the school compound. There is a latrine. The school has a mini food market where women sell cooked food to the children at break time. The school benefits from some of the amenities available to the Township such as the clinic run by the Irrigation company.

Lower classes are larger than upper classes. Class sizes range from 55 in Class One to 37 in Class Six. There is a numerical balance between boys and girls enrolled in the classes. There are no significant differences between the sexes in terms of the repeats. The dropout rate is low. No
child appears to have dropped out; however, a few girls have been pulled out by parents and sent to other schools. One mother pursuing further education had to send the child to her mother (i.e., the child’s grandmother). This child now attends another school.

3. Attitudes and Perceptions of Language Policy and Language Use

Attitudes and perceptions will be discussed from the perspectives of the stakeholders: 13 parents, four teachers, and 15 pupils were interviewed. Additionally the PTA chairman and the supervisors of schools were also interviewed. It should be emphasized that Notosco does not implement the official Language Policy. Most stakeholders with whom we spoke support this. Teachers, parents and most pupils are happy that teaching is in an English medium.

   a. Community

The PTA chairman, an employee of the Ministry of Agriculture on transfer to this district, favours the use of English as medium of instruction (MOI). However, he would prefer the introduction of a language of wider communication, specifically, a national language, to serve as MOI in all schools.

Although the interviews were limited to the immediate stakeholders, the impression is that the wider community prefers the use of English as a medium of instruction in schools. The community position, echoed by one illiterate parent, seems to be that an early use of English would enhance the learning of that language; furthermore, fluency in English is itself evidence of formal education, a gateway to employment in the formal sector.

   b. Parents

The majority of respondents are educated males and 30-40 years old; two are above 50. Most were Kasena but diverse groups such as Akan, Ewe, Bulsa, and Ibarra (Nigerian ethnic group) were also represented. Their livelihoods differed and included farmers and wage earners (civil servants). Educated parents are literate in English but less than half are literate in Kasem, the local language. They maintained that Kasem was spoken in most households in addition to one or two other languages such as English. The households themselves differ in size, ranging from one child to twelve children.

From the information currently available, nearly all parents English as MOI rather than the local language, Kasem. Some felt that since Kasem is a mother tongue and prevalent language of the community, children were sufficiently equipped in Kasem and learning it in school need not therefore be considered as a priority. Others felt that command of Kasem did not enhance future prospects. “Kasem will not help the child,” one non-Kasena parent remarked. Non-Kasena parents agreed. Nevertheless, a minority favoured bilingual instruction in Kasem and English, since they perceived the two languages to be complementary.

The reasons for parental choices of English MOI differed slightly. Most parents seem to assume (a) that the use of English as a MOI helps children learn English; and (b) that competence in English promotes education, and a good education improves pupils’ future prospects in life.
These assumptions are implied in such comments as, “I prefer English…because that will make the child have a lot of interest to learn than when Kasem is used” (from a farmer with six years of primary education). The feeling that literacy in English is the basis for future success in life is reflected in the remark of this illiterate parent: “I see the difference between those who are illiterate and those who are literate; so I want my child to learn English and become an important person in future”. There is also a minority perception that a Kasem MOI might retard learning. One non-Kasena parent said he insisted that his children did not speak Kasem at home.

Although the sample of 13 parents may seem small, their perceptions are likely to be representative of the opinions of other parents of children in this school and also of the parents of children in less endowed schools in this area. First, the popularity and appeal of Notosco is based on its use of an English medium that was necessitated initially by the ethnic mix of the Noto township. Second, there is the general Ghanaian tendency to measure level of education by perceived fluency and command or sophistication in the use of English; for example, in another of the sites discussed in this report, a parent is reported to have remarked that an educated person is one who has forgotten his mother tongue. The raison d’être of formal education for most people has been the acquisition of a job, a legacy of colonialism (see Grindal, 1976). Colonial policy in Northern Ghana was aimed at educating the traditional elite to provide the leadership that the British expected of the elite and to perform the clerical tasks that required some literacy (see Bening, 1990).

c. Teachers

We interviewed three women and one man teaching classes one to four. Their ages ranged from 26 years to 38 years. The head teacher was 45. Three teachers and the head teacher are Kasena and the Class Three teacher is Fante. The qualifications of the teachers were similar. Two had secondary education and three years of teacher education and the other two had basic education and four years of teacher training. Their years of teaching experience ranged from two to ten years. Though more than half of this time had been spent at Notosco, each teacher was handling the current class for the first time. All teachers are bilingual in their first language, English and another Ghanaian language.

The profiles of the teachers present a number of paradoxes. None of the three teachers whose first language is Kasem had been trained in a Teachers College where Kasem was taught. Only the Class Four teacher claimed to be able to read and write Kasem. On the other hand, Class Three teacher who does not speak Kasem was actually trained in a college where Kasem is taught. She attended some of the Kasem classes not to pass the prescribed examination in Kasem but rather to prepare to take the examination in Twi.

The only teacher who seems to be fully aware of the Government’s official Language Policy for schools is the teacher who does not teach the Ghanaian language and does not sympathise with the policy. The head teacher (who stood in for the Class Three teacher to teach this class, Kasem) did not seem to know the policy while the Class Two teacher’s understanding of the policy was partial. None of these teachers uses Kasem as a medium of instruction in class (not even the Class One teacher). With the exception of the Class Four teacher the rest did not think it was useful to teach Kasem, the main local language.
(i.) Primary 1

The Class One teacher is a 30 year-old woman. She holds a post-primary teacher’s qualification and has eight years of teaching experience, five at the Lower Primary level. She has been at Natosco for the past five years but this is her first time of handling this class. In addition to Kasem, her mother tongue, she speaks Wali. In training college, she was introduced to the teaching of Dagaare/Wali and she spent nine college terms learning Dagaare/Wali and language methodology. She learnt Sisali informally. She regards her performance at college to have been average. She did not enjoy the language classes but did not say why. At college the introduction to language teaching was general and not aimed at primary school teaching. There she was exposed to language methodology. Dagaare/Wali (belonging in the Gur group) together with Kasem but they are not of the Grusi sub-group to which Kasem belongs. It can therefore be expected that the differences between these languages would not facilitate the transference of all the acquired teaching and methodological skills to the teaching of Kasem.

(ii.) Primary 2

Class Two Teacher was 38 years old. Holds the post primary teachers qualification and has ten years of teaching experience at the Lower Primary level. She has been at Natosco for the past six years. This is her first time of handling this class. She speaks Kasem, her mother tongue, as well as Hausa and Dagbani but does not read or write any of these. She has studied none of these languages at school. However, through interacting with speakers of the second languages she was able to acquire them. She regards Kasem as the predominant language of the community in which Natosco is situated. She made it clear that she did not learn to teach any Ghanaian language in College. This seems surprising in views of the requirement that everybody learns a Ghanaian language at Teacher Training College.

(iii.) Primary 3

The Class Three Teacher is a 38 year-old woman. She speaks, reads and writes the Akan dialects of Fante and Twi in addition to Ga. Her father is Fante and this is how she came to learn this language. She studied Ga at Primary and Middle school, and Twi at the Primary school. She did not speak Kasem fluently and did not list it as one of the languages that she speaks. Although she studied some Kasem at the training college although this was to enable her prepare to take the compulsory language exams in Twi. She gave Kasem as the dominant language of the community and indicates that she speaks only a little of it.

The teacher said she did not learn to teach a Ghanaian language while at college, however she did learn how to teach language (language structure, vowels and consonants and pronunciation) specifically to primary school pupils. In all, she was exposed to language teaching for six terms viz. in the first and second years. She found customs and institutions interesting. She holds the post secondary teachers qualification and has two years of teaching experience, one at the Lower Primary level. She has been at Natosco for the past two years but this is her first time of handling her present class.
It can be concluded that, teachers’ preparation for Ghanaian language teaching was limited or nonexistent. Teachers were trained in colleges where their first languages were not taught. However, at the training colleges, they participated in classes where languages they did not speak were being taught. These teachers received pedagogical instruction meant for teachers who are first language speakers. They were exposed to the rudiments of language teaching but nothing more. All but one suggested that the college training was helpful to them in using a Ghanaian language as medium. One remarked on the transference of skills acquired to the teaching of other Ghanaian languages. Nevertheless, a teacher who has not been taught his first language and how to teach it may not know enough of it (or about it) to be able to teach that language effectively, even if he or she is familiar with general teaching methods. This is what prevails in Notosco.

d. Pupils

Looking at the pupils in this school, it is hard to distinguish them from some of the children in urban schools. Their uniforms were generally neat, they wore shoes (snickers) and carried backpacks. Their meals were above average--rice, noodles, etc. Their turn-out for the scheduled interviews suggests that Notosco parents invested more in these children than the average local parent would or could. Most pupils gave Navrongo as their hometown and most spoke Kasem as their first language. However several ethnic groups including Akan, Ewe, and Bulsa are represented. Most of the children stayed with their parents. Most of these children were bilingual and in some cases, trilingual. In addition to the first language, they claimed to speak English. Many of those who were not ethnic Kasena understood Kasem. Pupils said they used both Kasem and English in the home.

The perceptions and views of the children on languages preferred and the languages they used with each other and with their teachers are insightful and they shed some light on the issues of interest in this research and contribute to the research questions before us namely, how the Language Policy is implemented in the primary schools in Ghana. And what possible explanations exist for the way the Language Policy is being implemented.

In pupil-pupil interactions, one out of three pupils prefer Kasem and two out of three opt for English. Those who use English in pupil interactions do so for various reasons. There were those who felt that English is good and has prospects. This opinion is held by pupils like this class four child who says, “English can send me anywhere I like where people do not speak Kasem” and a Class Two pupil who would prefer English because it is more widely spoken. He said, “I would opt for English. If you meet somebody and the person spoke English you would understand him or her”.

All of these children gave English and Kasem as the languages spoken in the school. They thought English was more popular in the school than Kasem, the local language, and that English was the medium of classroom intercourse. The languages that pupils used in class for interaction among themselves were English and Kasem. Three out of four gave English as the medium of classroom interaction among pupils. The reason advanced was that pupils could not speak the local language fluently. This is captured in the remark of a Class Three child who says “I don’t speak Kasem properly, so English is what I can best express myself well in”. English becomes the lingua franca, the medium for communication between children who do not understand each
other’s languages. A Class Two child seems to echo the views of a Class Four child when he says, “My friends understand English but I cannot understand Twi and Ewe”. However a number felt that the practice of speaking English was in itself intrinsically good, as a Class Four child explained. For some pupils it is the difficulty of speaking fluent Kasem that accounts for the use of English. Nevertheless we come across this revealing comment by a Class One pupil: “our madam said we should not be speaking Kasem” which indicates that the attitudes of teachers have a role in children’s disinterest in Kasem, the local language. Those who prefer Kasem do so because they cannot express themselves in English. This view is suggested by what this Class Two child has to say: “when you have not understood something and you cannot express your difficulty in English, you use Kasem”.

The role of teachers in the preference for English as a medium in pupil-to-pupil interactions in the classroom cannot be denied. Teachers themselves set the example by their choice of medium for communication with individual children. Pupils’ responses suggest that in classroom interactions with teacher only in one out of six cases did teacher use Kasem to the pupil. In all other cases it is English. Outside the classroom teacher used English in three out of four cases. Pupils felt that teacher used English in all cases when he or she communicated with others in the classroom. When pupils were asked about the medium of communication between the teacher and themselves and between the teacher and other pupils in the classroom the majority suggested that this was English. P3 teacher was said to use English with pupils inside and outside the classroom. No pupil recollected her having used any other language. P2 teacher used slightly more Kasem than the others. Of the Kasem speaking teachers, the Class Four teacher used Kasem the least, according to the perceptions of the children. The picture is that, teachers use far more English with children than they use Kasem with the pupils, whether in the classroom or outside. It is only in the case of Kasem lessons that Kasem is used as a medium of instruction. Even then Class Three pupils who are taught Kasem by the head teacher because their class teacher does not speak Kasem are taught in both Kasem and English, according to pupils.

Pupils were also asked to comment on their attitudes to the use of English and Kasem media of instruction in class and to comment on whether they liked the Environmental Studies lesson taught in English and if they would suggest a change of medium if they had an option. While all children in all classes gave English as the medium of instruction and said they liked the use of English to teach Environmental Studies, half the sample would wish to see a change to a Ghanaian language medium if they had the choice. The following comments show these trends. Primary 1 pupil: “Sometimes I do not understand the English”; another Primary 1 pupil says: “I understand English not much” while a Primary 2 child maintains: “I do not understand Kasem very well”.

Clearly there are pupils who do not understand enough English to benefit from the lessons and this pertains to Class One pupils. For one Class Four child, it seems that loyalty to the first language is an important consideration: “Kasem is our language.”

It can be concluded from children’s responses that children like their lessons and the use of English to teach them. Based on the question of MI for Environmental Studies, children are divided. Half would have preferred the use of Kasem for reasons such as their inability to
understand English. Some of those who do not see a need to replace the English medium did not understand Kasem, as a P2 child confirmed: “I don’t understand Kasem very well”.

e. Supervisors

Unlike the class teachers, the Circuit Supervisor and the Assistant Director (Supervision) are aware of the Language Policy and would wish to see it implemented. They appreciate the benefits of using the local language as medium of instruction in the area. They do not, however, feel that Nitosco’s non-implementation of the policy requires the application of sanctions.

4. Language Use Inside and Outside the Classroom

On the playground or outside the classroom when children are on break, both Kasem and English are spoken pari pasu. Children are divide equally between those who think it is Kasem that is used and those who thought English was the medium of communication among children on break.

5. Teaching and Learning

Pupils in Class Four suggested that the teacher’s approach (i.e., the questions that he or she poses, his or her way of presenting the subject and ability to explain things) go toward make a lesson interesting.

   Teacher asks questions which we enjoy.
   When teacher is teaching it is always interesting.
   Teacher explains how the work is so I understand it.

Children’s comprehension of the lesson is also important as some of their comments illustrate:

   When I do not understand a language my teacher tells me (helps me). (P2 child)
   Because I understand what is taught. (P1 girl)
   I am brilliant so the work is always ‘cheap’ for me. (P1 boy)

For a Class Four child, medium is a factor in level of interest in a lesson:

   English makes a lesson interesting. English is not our language and we want to learn it.

For the lower classes, teachers’ pedagogical approaches centre on choral repetitions combined with questions for which pupils are invited to respond individually. Small group activity is not frequent. In one case teacher exhibited disciplinarian tendencies including knocks and insults. Handclapping is the most common mode of expression of approval. In Class Four the lecture method is used in combination with question and answer dialogues between Teacher and pupils. The teaching pattern for classes above one, usually comprise of class teaching followed by exercise set to be carried out in class.
Except for Class One, teachers usually give homework. As the school does not permit children to take home school textbooks the homework is copied into exercise books and taken home. Those who assist are mostly siblings but parents and other relations also help. In one exceptional case, a pupil reported having had private tuition at home. The language used is mostly English although Kasem is used too. From an inspection of the homework books it is clear that homework is given frequently in Classes Three and Four.

6. Materials

Teachers appreciated the benefits of using teaching aids such as flash cards and posters. They described pupils reactions thus: ‘Excited and curious’, P4; ‘Eager to use materials’, P3.

Teaching and learning materials for this school were however limited to the textbooks. The Class Two teacher maintained that materials did not exist. The walls of the classrooms exhibited very little by way of posters or wall charts. The few posters in evidence had little bearing on the immediate educational needs of the pupils and were not observed to have been used by the teachers for lessons. There are hardly any textbooks for Religious and Moral Education, Environmental Studies and Ghanaian languages. It is only in P3, where, paradoxically, the teacher does not teach the language, that Ghanaian language textbooks are available at a ratio of one book to three pupils. English and Mathematics fared much better and each class had books on those subjects. Mathematics was generally better provided than English. Pupils were not allowed to take home school textbooks. “They do not allow us to take the books home because people tear them,” a P4 child remarked. However, some pupils had their own copies. Other material objects used included counters.

The shortage of textbooks meant that teachers spent considerable time reproducing texts or diagrams on the blackboard for general class use. In one case teacher spent almost a full lesson doing this and while she busied herself thus pupils talked and played about.

7. Conclusions and Policy Implications

One perception that emerges, is that most people, educated and non-educated alike, perceive that command of the local language and knowledge of the traditional culture and ways of life are a function of an association with the home and tradition--not necessarily with schooling. That is, people who have not been to school are usually regarded as more knowledgeable in and conversant with the local language and customary ways than those who have spent much of their childhood and youth away from home and in schools. Teachers and educated people are not perceived to be better users of the local language. These are issues that call for further research.

From the above features of Notosco, a number of policy implications emerge. Although the school does not implement the official Language Policy, the majority of pupils will not be disadvantaged by implementation since the majority of them are either L1 speakers or L2 speakers of the language prevalent in the area. However, there is a minority that will not benefit due to inadequate competence in the local language. This includes the children of government employees who have recently arrived in the District.
Though the teachers have not been specifically trained to teach the language, it is still possible for them to teach it and use it as Medium of Instruction. To make them more effective in this, in-service training will be necessary. More importantly, the teachers need to change their attitudes to the Language Policy. Clearly, teachers here, just as other stakeholders, have not been educated to appreciate the value of using the first language as medium of instruction. If the textbooks were written in the Ghanaian languages the teacher’s tasks would be eased to a considerable extent. Linguists have long ago come to the realization that subject matter influences choice of language and language patterns or registers. The appropriate registers are yet to be established for teaching in the various Ghanaian languages. The issuance of textbooks in the language will go a long way to codify registers for teaching the various subjects.

From the limited evidence discussed above, it would seem that some training colleges are do not follow strictly the requirements on teaching the Ghanaian languages and condone with some students who for one reason or another skip the Ghanaian language.

Until the attitudes of parents and teachers and other stakeholders change to favour first language medium education, implementation of the official Language Policy will change the character of Notosco. Once Kasem medium replaces English in this school, most parents are likely either to withdraw their children and send them to any school in the District that offers English medium education or else, select any other school which is more conveniently located and is less expensive relatively. The school could however, woo back parents if it demonstrates eventually that quality education can be provided using the medium of the local language.

Notosco’s continued flouting of the official Language Policy could have effects beyond this school. Currently, it would seem that Notosco, like schools of its kind, is relatively better than others in its vicinity. The superiority of some of these schools is due to a combination of factors including the commitment of parents and stakeholders and the motivation of teachers. There is a willingness to commit resources and to monitor teaching. However, because the medium distinguishes these schools it is medium that is credited with the improved performance in the English medium schools.
CHAPTER SEVEN
MEDOFO

by
Eric Wilmot

1. Community Profile

Medofo is a nucleated settlement\footnote{In a nucleated settlement pattern the buildings are not scattered or spread widely from each other.} in the Volta Region of Ghana. The Medofo school community comprises three towns almost joined together along two intersecting untarred roads. The main ethnic groups are Ewes and Akans; Ewe is the main language for interaction in the community. The approximately 2,000 inhabitants of the town are predominantly farmers, although some engage in petty trading as well.

2. School Profile

Medofo Roman Catholic Primary School is a public school that serves the greater Medofo community. It has two streams of single shift type\footnote{Two streams refers to two sections of Class One, Class Two, etc. The two streams are designated A and B. “Single shift” indicates that all pupils attend school at the same time of day.} with twelve classrooms. Six of these (i.e., P1A to P3A and P1B to P3B) are in bamboo-fenced structures roofed with aluminium sheets and located adjacent to the head teacher’s bungalow. The floors of these classrooms are not cemented; they are dirt. Another set of three classrooms hosting P4A to P6A are located in a pavilion roofed with aluminium sheets without sidewalls. Only three upper grade classrooms of the “B” stream (i.e., P4B to P6B) are housed in a block built with cement and fitted with windows and doors. The head teacher’s office and the school’s storeroom are at one end of this block. Near the office end of this block is another bamboo-fenced building used as Kindergarten 1 and 2 classrooms. The head teacher’s bungalow, a cement blockhouse built with World Bank funds, is also located on the school compound and fenced with bamboo.

The Medofo Primary School has a urinal each for boys and girls. There is a borehole nearby which serves as a source of drinking water for both the town and the school. The compound is grassed with several trees and shrubs that provide shade. The school shares a common football field with the junior secondary school located in between the primary and junior secondary schools.

At the time of the team’s first visit, the school had a full complement of twelve trained teachers and a detached head teacher. In addition two supporting women were in charge of the kindergarten. The school enrolled more 257 pupils for the 1999/2000 academic year, 135 girls and 122 boys. The same pattern was observed in the kindergarten, with 51 girls and 43 boys. Only one girl and one boy transferred from the school during the 1998/99 academic year. There were no dropouts. Like the community, the language for interaction in the school among both
teachers and pupils was Ewe. This was also the predominant language of instruction, although it was mixed with English.

3. Attitudes and Perceptions of Language Policy and Language Use

a. Community

When the community members turned up for the interviews at Medofo, only men appeared (School Management Committee member, Secretary, Unit Committee Chairman, the Paramount Chief and P.T.A Chairman). Therefore, arrangements were made for four extra members to come the next day to be interviewed. Three women and the Catholic Priest, who happens to be the local manager of the school, came to be interviewed. Thus, in the end eight people were interviewed, five men and three women.

Apart from the Chief who was 72 years old and one SMC member who was 20 years old, the rest were between 38 and 51. The language of the town is Ewe and it is the language of the district as well as the language used for the market.

Only one of them is unemployed, the 20-year-old SMC member who has just completed Senior Secondary School 3 (SSS3). The others are a teacher, a trader, a carpenter, an orderly, a farmer, a chief and a priest. The educational level of the community members interviewed ranged from middle form four, the terminating level of the pre-secondary school system of Ghana’s educational system (five of them were in this category), through SSS to Diploma. The number of children in the household ranged from zero to ten. There is an average of two primary aged children at school from the household of those interviewed.

Of the eight community members interviewed, only the PTA Chairman was aware of the Government’s Language Policy for education.

Five of the community members think that English should be used as a medium of instruction at the Lower Primary. One of these prefers that Ewe be used for explanation when English is the medium of instruction; one thinks a mixture of Ewe and English. Two individuals of stature, the Chief and the Queen Mother, prefer the use of Ewe as the medium of instruction. The Chief, for instance, remarked after his interview,

at the Lower Primary the local language should be emphasized [as a medium of instruction]. When you learn a foreign language you have to translate it into your first language in your mind to be able to understand. Out of [my] experience as a teacher, children being taught in both get confused.

b. Parents

The majority of parents (14 out of 16) prefer that English be used as the medium of instruction in the Lower Primary. Their reasons were varied:

I prefer English because with it you can go everywhere and have no problems.
English is an international language. It will therefore be easier for the child to communicate well even if he travels outside.

[I prefer English] so that I can learn from the child.

Three parents feel that the use of English would make the children learn faster and better. “If a child is started in English she would build on” was one the responses received in this direction.

One parent feels that English is the purpose of school. She said, “English, to me, is the basis for determining whether a child has benefited from the school or not. What is more, they can read. They have more books in English than Ewe”.

Only two parents wanted both English and Ewe to be used. In their opinion, if both languages are used then “the child can speak both languages well”. No parent indicated a preference for the use of Ghanaian language only.

c. Teachers

With the exception of the P2 teacher none of the four teachers interviewed had any idea about the Language Policy. The P2 teacher is also the only one who has a positive attitude towards the policy and feels that it should be maintained. The rest have a negative attitude towards the policy and that, said given the opportunity, they would advocate for English as the medium of instruction.

The P4 teacher, for instance, said she did not enjoy using Ghanaian language in P4 because “it is not useful.” According to her, she is compelled to use Ghanaian language at times because when she uses English the pupils do not understand. Observations conducted in her classroom confirmed this. The P1 teacher feels that the use of English as a medium of instruction “will enable children to interact with children from other parts of the country. This will also help them understand news and other government issues.”

d. Pupils

Four pupils, two boys and two girls, were selected at random from each P1 to P4 class. They were interviewed and in and out of the classroom while in school. Their parents or guardians and teachers were also interviewed.

With the exception of two, a Kotokoli boy and an Akan (Twi) girl in P2, all the rest were Ewes. They all speak Ewe in class with their classmates. Seven of them said they stayed with their mother, five indicated that they stayed with both parents and four with their grandmothers. However, when their parents were invited for the interview, twelve women, including five grandmothers, and four fathers attended.
A majority of the pupils--14 out of 16--said they prefer subjects like Mathematics and Environmental Studies to be taught in Ewe because then they understand it. The two pupils who prefer these subjects be taught in English say it is because they want to be proficient in English.

Also, most of the pupils (10 out of 16) said they prefer to use Ghanaian language when asking or answering questions in class because they could not speak English. Of the remaining pupils, three (one each in P2, P3 and P4) said they preferred to use English in asking or answering questions in class. The reason for this according to the P2 and P3 pupils is that they want to learn to speak English. The P4 pupil in this category said he wants to speak it to prove that he knows it. The last pupil preferred to use both Ewe and English because she is “not well-grounded in English.”

Classroom observations revealed that more pupils participate in lessons when they are taught in Ewe. They ask more questions when the medium of instruction is Ewe. They also interact with each other mainly in Ewe both in and out of classroom.

e. Supervisors

(i.) Head Teacher

The head teacher at Fodome is 51 and comes from the Hohoe district of the Volta Region. He holds a four-year Teachers Certificate “A”, the minimum professional certificate for teachers in Ghana, and has been a head teacher for 20 years, seven in this school. He is a detached head teacher, not officially assigned to teach any class but whose job is purely administrative in nature. He is literate in Ewe and English language but can speak Akan (Twi) as well.

The head teacher is aware of the Government’s Language Policy and can say exactly what it says but does not have a document on it in his office. To the question of what he does to help its implementation he said, “I have briefed the teachers. I usually organize in-service-training and supervise its implementation.” He says that if he finds any teacher not using the prescribed language for instruction he “will call him/her to find out why and then remind him/her to carry out the policy.”

However, he is personally opposed to the Language Policy and thinks English language should be used right from P1 to help the children become familiar with it from the beginning since English is an accepted language everywhere. He says if he had the opportunity to effect changes in the policy he would say, “the local language should be taught as a subject and English used throughout.”

(ii.) Circuit Supervisor

The Circuit Supervisor is 45 years old Akan from Asukawkaw in the Kete-Krachi district of the Volta Region. He holds a Diploma in Religious Studies and a four-year Teachers Certificate “A”, the minimum professional certificate for teachers in Ghana. He has taught for 11 years in the Upper Primary and has been a Circuit Supervisor for two years all in the Fodome Circuit. He
is literate in Akan (Twi), English and can speak Hausa. He supervises 21 schools, 14 of which are primary and the remaining seven, Junior Secondary School.

The Circuit Supervisor is aware of the Government’s Language Policy and is able to explain what it says. He has no document on it in his office but meets teachers to discuss it and its essence as a way of helping in its implementation. Asked to say what he does when he finds teachers not using the prescribed language for instruction, he answered “First I advise them on the harm they are doing to the pupil. If it continues, I warn and threaten sanctions against him/her.”

However, he is personally opposed to the policy and will suggest that English be used right from the beginning. He “feels it (the Language Policy as it stands now) is the cause of the poor English usage in the schools because it is difficult for pupils to switch over to English even when it is needed. Consequently both teachers and parents are affected”.

(iii.) AD (Supervision)

The Assistant Director in charge of Supervision is a 56-year-old Ewe from the Ho district of the Volta Region. He holds a four-year Teachers Certificate “A”, the minimum professional certificate for teachers in Ghana, and a two-year Specialist Certificate in History. He has taught for 32 years with two years in the lower and has been an Assistant Director for seven years District. He is literate in Ewe and English and can speak Twi, too.

He is aware of the Government’s Language Policy and can say exactly what it says but does not have a document on it in his office. To the question of what he does to help its implementation he said, “At workshops we hammer the use of the mother tongue. The Circuit Supervisors also do this in their rounds of regular school visits. They are told by us to make sure the appropriate language is at the appropriate time”. According to him if he finds any teacher not using the prescribed language for instruction he “reprimands them or remind them of the need to use the correct language at the correct time

He feels the Language Policy is a good idea, but has a personal attitude that is pro-English language usage at all levels. “It is a good idea”, he said, “It will help the children to learn English Language; if it is used regularly as in the North the children will improve. When we go to teach in the North because we can not speak the local language we teach in English and the children are forced to learn”.

4. Language Use Inside and Outside the Classroom

In P1-P3 the MOI was mainly Ewe for all subjects except Mathematics and English. Mathematics and English language lessons were taught predominantly in English with code switching into Ewe to provide explanations, give directions and reprimand pupils. However, in P2 Mathematics was taught predominantly in Ewe with code switching into English (English being used for the concepts in Mathematics and for giving exercises). In P4 English was the MOI, with code switching into Ewe as in the lower classes.
Despite three out of four teachers’ opinions that English should be the MOI, all the teachers agreed that pupils understand better and respond better when Ghanaian language is used as the MOI. Classroom observations confirmed that pupils enjoyed lessons better and participated more when lessons were taught in Ewe. Similar reactions were observed even when instruction was in English and teachers code switched into Ewe.

Both in and out of class, pupils interacted among themselves and with their teachers mostly in Ewe. However, they occasionally asked questions or responded to some of their teachers’ questions in English when the MOI is English. The pupils said they speak Ewe at home. Their parents confirmed this in their interviews.

5. Teaching and Learning

a. Primary 1

The P1 teacher generally used question and answer method in teaching with few variations depending on the subject. For instance, in the English lesson observed on picture reading, he employed this method and code switched between English and Ewe. He used English as the main medium of instruction and Ewe for providing explanations/clarification of words pupil did not understand. She also used Ewe to give names of objects for pupils to understand what they were and also to reprimand pupils.

In the Ghanaian language lesson the teacher used choral class repetition for the key words and also provided model reading. Question and answer method was also used to teach Environmental Studies and Religious and Moral Education. These lessons were taught entirely in Ewe. She used a mixture of Ewe and English in a predominantly lecture approach in the teaching of Mathematics.

b. Primary 2

The English lesson observed in P2 was taught mostly in English and was characterized by choral class repetition. The teacher initially went through the key words with the class, pronouncing each word in chorus after her and later individually. She explained these key words in a mixture of English and Ewe. Then she read the passage line by line and pupils repeated in chorus after her.

In the Ghanaian language lesson the teacher used choral class repetition for the key words in small groups, individually and whole class. She also provided model reading and pupils read in a similar manner. The entire lesson was presented in Ewe.

She used the question-and-answer method to teach Mathematics and Environmental Studies. The difference was that while the latter was also taught entirely in Ewe, in the former Ewe was used with occasional code switching into English. The teacher asked most questions in Ewe.
c. Primary 3

In the English lesson, reading based on the passage “The little black cat” in Unit One of the textbook the teacher used English as the medium of instruction and occasionally used Ewe to inquire about absentees and to give directions. The teacher provided model reading and individual pupils read after her. She then asked comprehension questions orally and wrote the correct responses on the chalkboard for the class to copy in their exercise books towards the end of the lesson.

At the beginning of the Ghanaian language lesson on nouns pupils were asked to read some words after the teacher. Apart from this, the question-and-answer method was mainly used. Even when pupils answered questions in English the teacher reminded them to use Ewe. However, when the teacher invited the class to praise a pupil (e.g., “clap for her”), she spoke in English.

Questions and answers were also the method used to deliver the Mathematics lesson. The lesson was presented mostly in English with code switching into Ewe. She used Ewe for explanations, to repeat questions that pupils did not understand in English, and to direct pupils to do exercises in their books.

Researchers also observed one Environmental Studies and a Religious and Moral Education (R. M. E.) lesson. These were presented in the form of lecture and questions and answers. The Environmental Studies lesson was on the migration of the people in the traditional area where the school is located; the R. M. E. lesson was on obedience. The teacher narrated the migration story and interspersed it with questions, which she called on pupils to answer. In the R. M. E. lesson she lead pupils using a mixture of the two methods to describe what they were expected to do at home and in school on a typical day.

d. Primary 4

In an English lesson on reading and comprehension, the teacher used model reading to help pupils read a two-paragraph passage entitled, “The Hawk and the Hen,” from Unit One of the P4 textbook. First she read, then she asked pupils to read after her in chorus. This process continued until she asked individual pupils to take turns to read. After that she translated the passage into Ewe when no pupils volunteered to do so. Later she asked the class to read again in chorus and then in small groups before reviewing a few comprehension questions with the class orally.

The teacher also said during her interview that she assigns exercises in English for all subjects except for Ghanaian language where she uses Ewe. Classroom observations confirmed this as well.

The Ghanaian language lesson in P4 was delivered solely in Ewe. It was a reading lesson on a passage with title “Naneke mele Kuvia wɔwɔ me o” which literally means “There is nothing to gain from laziness”. The lesson started with pronunciation drill. Teacher pronounced “sika, Akpene, Sukuviwo, nkeke, nufiala” and other words, and pupils repeated after her. The teacher then gave a model reading of the passage sentence by sentence and pupils read after her. The
story was about a village called Atando where all the citizens are lazy. The footpaths leading to their farms and stream were bushy. The story was written on the chalkboard. After the model reading, pupils read on their own, and then answered a few comprehension questions. Exercises were finally given. These were on sentences based on the passage but with blank spaces and pupils were made to fill in the blank spaces in their exercise books.

The Mathematics and Environmental Studies lessons were delivered also using questions and answers. Ewe was used throughout the latter but in the former the teacher code switched between Ewe and English. The lesson was taught in Ewe but most of the questions were asked in English and pupils gave number names also in English. Rewards like “clap for him” were given in English.

6. Materials

Generally, the amount of materials at Medofo is inadequate. For the classes observed, the overall average ratio of textbooks to pupils is approximately the following: English, 3:5; Ghanaian language (supplementary readers), 3:5; and Mathematics, 1:3. P1 through P3 classes do not have Environmental Studies textbooks; only P4 has 16 Environmental Studies textbooks for the 24 pupils. There are no textbooks for Religious and Moral Education in any of the P1 to P4 classes selected. As a result, pupils are not given textbooks to take home.

a. Primary 1

In P1 there are only two English language textbooks for 25 pupils, a ratio of about 1 textbook to 13 pupils. There are 18 Mathematics textbooks, a ratio of about 2:3. For Ghanaian language there are 11, a ratio of about two textbooks to five pupils. Thirteen picture books are also available. There are no textbooks for Environmental studies or R. M. E. The only extra teaching materials were the R. M. E. syllabus and a Mathematics teacher’s handbook.

The teacher distributed available textbooks to the pupils when the subject was to be taught. Pupils were not allowed to take the books home because “these children are not old enough,” said the class teacher. Pupils are happy to use the books but do not have any books of their own. The teacher says that pictures, toys, and manipulative materials enhance pupil-pupil interactions, but observes that live animals and plants do not.

b. Primary 2

Primary 2. In P2, there were 25 pupils. However they had only 10 textbooks for English Language (a ratio of about 2:5); nine for Mathematics (about 1:3) and 18 for Ghanaian language (a ratio of about 3:4). There are no textbooks for Environmental Studies and R. M. E. The only extra materials were the teachers’ handbooks for English, Mathematics and R. M. E. The teacher agrees that these materials are not enough and would wish to have supplementary readers, picture books, more textbooks, and color chalk.
Pupils share textbooks when lessons are going on. Higher achievers are paired with slow learners. For learning English language, the teacher also writes on the chalkboard. The teacher said that when pupils use the teaching materials their interest is enhanced.

c. Primary 3

The 22 pupils in P3 had relatively more textbooks than any of the other classes. For English Language, there are 17 textbooks, a ratio of almost three textbooks to every four pupils. There are 20 textbooks for each of Mathematics and Ghanaian language, a ratio of about 1:1 for each subject. Again, there are no textbooks for R. M. E. In addition, there were syllabi for Environmental Studies and R. M. E. According to the teacher, pupils and teachers provide pictures and real objects to help instruction given in Ghanaian language.

d. Primary 4

In P4, there are 24 pupils but only one textbook for English language. The teacher is therefore compelled to write all English lessons on the chalkboard. The ratio of textbooks to pupils for Ghanaian language is about 2:5 (11 textbooks are available). Sixteen and 15 textbooks are available for Environmental Studies and Mathematics, a ratio of 1:5 and 1:6 respectively. Twenty Integrated Science textbooks are also available. The P4 teacher agrees, too, that these materials are not enough and would wish to have supplementary readers, more textbooks and colour chalk. The teacher also said that when pupils use pictures and manipulatives their interest is enhanced.

7. Conclusions and Policy Implications

One of the assumptions of the Ghana Government’s Language Policy is that by the end of the third year of schooling children should have enough English to do their studies fulltime in English. Data collected at Medofo reveals the contrary. The P4 teacher, for instance, who said she did not enjoy using Ghanaian language in P4 because “it is not useful” indicated that she is compelled to use Ghanaian language at times because when she uses the English the pupils do not understand. Observations conducted in her classroom confirmed this. Apart from this, a majority of the pupils (14 out of 16) indicated during their interview that they preferred subjects, such as Mathematics and Environmental Studies, to be taught in Ewe because they understand better when it is the medium of instruction.

Research on language development and proficiency supports our observations at Medofo. Cummins (1994, p. 10) writes, ''On the basis of bilingual education program follow-up and evaluation, different researchers have established that five to seven years of systematic academic instruction in a second language are required to achieve linguistic proficiency.” Pupils at Medofo do not acquire enough English after end of the third year of schooling to do their studies full-time in English. This raises questions about the effectiveness of the implementation and the possible need to examine other policies in the hope of changing the policy.

Another assumption of the policy is that materials are available in the prevalent Ghanaian language. However, analysis of the data reveals that the textbook situation is far from
satisfactory. There were no textbooks for some of the subjects in each class. For instance, there were no textbooks for Religious and Moral Education (RME) in any of the P1 to P4 classes selected and only P4 had Environmental Studies textbooks (16 for 24 pupils). As at the other sites, what surfaces again as a serious issue is the complete lack of textbooks for Ghanaian language.

This raises questions about the ways in which teachers prepare to teach when they do not have materials. Without textbooks and teacher handbooks, do teachers refer to the syllabus and write their own creative lesson plans with the syllabus as a guide? Or do they create lessons “in their heads” or from other sources? The Medofo School has The Way to Knowledge series, the Ghanaian supplementary readers that classes use as a “course book.” However, we did not find sufficient copies of this either, with the average ratio of books to pupils being 3:5.

Altogether, for the classes observed, the average ratio of textbooks to pupils is approximately 3:5 for English and Ghanaian language 3:5, and 1:3 for Mathematics. In P4 there were 20 Integrated Science textbooks for the 24 pupils. As a result of this, pupils are not allowed to take textbooks home. Even more perplexing, however, is that the Mathematics textbooks that are available are written in English and not in the Ghanaian language--the language that is supposed to be used for teaching in P1 to P3. The implication of this is that each teacher who follows the Language Policy is compelled to translate these textbooks into Ewe, something that they have not been prepared to do or to do efficiently in their training.

One belief about proper policy implementation is that, “If we do it right,” the P4 transition will work. The evidence of the study of 51 schools undertaken by the Center for Minority Education and Research of the University of California from 1981-91 showed that pupils from a “late exit bilingual” program performed better than their counterparts in the “early exit bilingual” and “English immersion” programs (Ramirez, 1994). Our research needs to explore this, bearing in mind the fact that while in the California experience the mainstream language was also the ambient language, in the present Ghanaian experience English is non-ambient.

To follow that line of thinking, “doing it right” requires adequate teacher preparation for a teacher who will teach in any grade from P1-6. What would this involve? As we hypothesized what would constitute adequate preparation to prepare new teachers for the bilingual /multilingual school, we agreed that at the Teacher Training College, we would expect future teachers to be studying: (1) content and structure of the Ghanaian language; (2) methodology of teaching Ghanaian language as a subject; (3) methodology of using Ghanaian language as a medium of instruction; (4) methodological preparation in using and teaching English language as a subject; and (5) all content of Basic Education in order to understand and to be able to teach it.

All teachers at Medofo except one have studied the local language at the college they attended, but they did not study the methodology of using Ghanaian language as a medium of instruction. The changes that have been made in the Ghanaian language syllabus and the previously non-compulsory nature of the subject imply that these teachers received a different kind of preparation than we consider adequate now.
What is more, our data show that supervisors at the circuit level (i.e., the head teacher, Circuit Supervisor, and the AD) report that they do organize in-service training programs for their teachers. However, none of these has been in the teaching of or use of the prevalent Ghanaian language in teaching. The implication of this is that any of the teachers who were not exposed in a teacher training college to the use of Ghanaian language in teaching would also not have the support on the job to do that now.

Despite what appears to be the most complete implementation of the school Language Policy of any of the six sites here at Medofo, the data collected also indicate that the attitudes of the teachers, supervisors at the circuit level, and the vast majority of parents and community members towards the Language Policy are negative. While teachers unanimously agree that pupils understand and participate better in their first language, the teachers and the other groups are opposed to the policy and would recommend the use of English language as the medium of instruction if they had the chance. One implication of this is that there is a need to address these attitudes if the policy as it stands is to be implemented successfully.
CHAPTER EIGHT
CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY OPTIONS
by
Joe Dzinyela and Shirley Miske

The case studies in the preceding six chapters highlight the complexity of implementing school Language Policy on mother tongue education in Ghana. The policy itself is worded simply, but the research demonstrates that implementing the policy is anything but simple.

This chapter summarises some of the policy implications discussed at the end of each case. It further develops the implications and policy options for those who make and implement policy to consider as they work to improve the quality of basic education for all of Ghana’s children.

1. Language Policy Document Dissemination

Stakeholders do not have a copy of the School Language Policy document. No one we interviewed--Circuit Supervisors, ADs (Supervision), head teachers, teachers, SMC or PTA chairs--had a copy of the circular or of the policy statement. Supervisors and head teachers generally are aware of the policy, but not all stakeholders--including a head teacher, some teachers and many parents--know what the policy states.

There are several options for policy-makers to consider. The current practice of non-dissemination found in this study can be continued. Expected outcomes are that districts, communities, and schools will continue to follow or ignore the policy, due, in part, to lack of information.

The policy document could be disseminated widely, as with the textbook policy, at all levels of the system and to all stakeholders. It could be sent round to supervisors as a circular, printed in newspapers, continue to be included in the curriculum of teacher training, and disseminated through mass media. In this way all stakeholders will have the same information about what the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service expects regarding language of instruction in primary education.

Alternatively, the policy document could be disseminated more narrowly to select audiences. For example, a circular could be sent to Assistant Directors of Education in charge of Supervision, Circuit Supervisors, and head teachers. If this option is chosen, some stakeholders--such as community members and parents--are less likely to be fully aware of the policy.

Whichever option is chosen, it is recommended that a set of guidelines for policy implementation be developed (see discussion below). In this way, educators at all levels will receive guidance and know what to expect with regard to issues raised in this and other studies.
2. National or Decentralised Policy?

Three out of five public schools in our study decided not to follow the Language Policy and established a *de facto* Early English medium policy. Although we will not make generalisations for the entire country based on our six sites, information from other projects and anecdotal evidence suggest that this non-implementation may not be unusual. Possible reasons for this are explored in detail below; they include deployment of teachers to where they do not speak the language; the absence of textbooks and materials; inadequate teacher preparation; negative attitudes toward the policy; and incorrect beliefs about language learning that run counter to research. Where the policy is not implemented, schools (sometimes together with community leaders) usually have decided to establish a school-based, Early English medium policy. Aside from observations by district and circuit supervisors—who may disagree with and not enforce the Language Policy—no unit or mechanism for monitoring the Language Policy exists, neither do incentives for compliance nor sanctions for non-compliance. Hence, decision-making about language policy has become increasingly decentralised.

The present decentralised arrangement—the “loose coupling” of national policy and local practice—can be continued and similar kinds of results can be expected. For example, pupils will continue to perform poorly because they will have not mastered English neither will they have mastered important concepts that they could have learned first in their mother tongue.

If this decentralised arrangement continues, the following questions need to be asked at the local level: Who chooses the medium of instruction? the teachers? the community? the teachers and community together? Who is best equipped to make that decision? What are the implications for the nation state if districts and schools set their own school language policy?

Another option is for the MOE to adopt a language policy with guidelines. Further, a comprehensive strategy could be developed for implementing and monitoring the language policy that attends to the issues raised below.

3. Resources and Policy Implementation

   a. Textbooks and Materials

One assumption of the Language Policy seems to be that Ghanaian language textbooks and materials will be available to teachers—or that each teacher individually can and must effectively translate English materials into the predominant language of the area. The study revealed a complete lack of textbooks in Ghanaian languages; only dated supplementary readers were available. There are no teacher handbooks to go with these readers. In most cases there were not sufficient numbers of readers available for students to use. In order to implement the policy, content area textbooks, such as Mathematics books, must also be available in Ghanaian languages so that the local language can truly be used to teach the subjects. No such materials are available. Currently teachers and pupils have only English language textbooks available (it was observed that these are often scarce) and each teacher must simultaneously translate materials into local language. This kind of instruction is antithetical to any kind of pedagogically
sound bilingual or mother tongue education. Hence, it could be said that currently it is not possible to carry out the Language Policy, because resources do not exist to support it.

If the status quo is maintained, and if relevant teaching and learning materials are not made available in sufficient quantities, non-implementation or inadequate implementation of the policy can be expected to continue. It could be said that it will not be possible to judge whether or not the policy is working, because without teaching and learning materials the policy cannot be implemented.

Policy options here could include promoting the development of locally developed literacy materials; speeding up the publication of MOE Ghanaian language materials to be accompanied by in-service training; and exploring other options with educators currently working in these situations.

b. Teachers

i. Teacher deployment

In most schools visited, the majority of P1-P4 teachers spoke and were literate in the language(s) of the children. In Nantwi, Greater Accra Region, however, no teacher spoke the predominant language of the area. As a result, Ghanaian language was used neither as MOI nor taught as a subject P1-P6. Pupils were retained in P1 due not necessarily to poor conceptual development but to the teacher’s assessment of inadequate English language skills. (Such retention would not occur if the language policy were being followed, since transition to English is seen as gradual over a three-year period.) Some teachers were trying to learn the local language, others were disinterested and considered it unimportant. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this situation may not be uncommon in areas of northern Ghana, in particular. This situation calls for a critical look at teacher deployment, that is, posting and transfer practices for new and experienced, trained and untrained teachers.

Until this situation is rectified, expectations of teachers currently posted in schools where they do not speak the language need to be clarified. Is it optional for teachers to decide whether or not they want to learn the language of the area? Should teachers be encouraged and given incentives to learn the predominant Ghanaian language?

ii. Teacher Preparation

Successful implementation of the Language Policy requires adequate teacher preparation. Teachers who have not been trained to use the local language as medium of instruction do not have the confidence and, in some cases, the vocabulary to use it.

One way of achieving the goal of the language policy is for the methodology of using Ghanaian Language as medium of instruction to receive attention in the Teacher Training Colleges. Other areas that deserve more attention in Teacher Training College programmes include methodology of teaching Ghanaian language as a subject, methodology for teaching English as a subject, using English as medium of instruction, and methodology for teaching Ghanaian language as a second
language where it is the predominant language of the home but not of the area (e.g., Ahanta and Fante in Awocha). Also attention to the content and structure of the Ghanaian Language--and what this means for children’s language acquisition--are important topics to be considered.

One of the determinants of success of every school program is the language used for instruction. To understand the significance of the languages used at school, there is a need for knowledge regarding languages used in the community and how they are used. If educators are cognizant of the varieties of languages or dialects used in the community as well as the level of proficiency in the various codes, they are better able to select appropriate materials or anticipate language difficulties that come up because of the materials that are available.

Among the areas that could be studied are when and how a language is used, and what demand there is for the language, the level of proficiency of pupils and teachers in the language(s), and the degree of support for proposed language in the schools. Teacher Training Colleges need to be well equipped with the needed facilities to enable them face the challenge.

Some limited evidence in the study (e.g., Noto) suggests that some training colleges do not adhere strictly to the requirements on teaching the Ghanaian languages. It was reported that students are permitted for one reason or another to skip the Ghanaian language requirements.

iii. In-service Training.

The study revealed that some in-service training is organized for the teachers; however, most teachers had never received any in-service training in the area of Ghanaian language as a subject and medium of instruction (MOI). Many teachers in the study had received no training in using Ghanaian language as MOI in Teacher Training College; some expressed discomfort even in teaching Ghanaian language as a subject. This implies that the support that the teachers need to raise the level of their competency in the use of and the teaching of Ghanaian language is lacking. By providing the teachers with that support their level of competency would be raised and then they would feel more comfortable to use the language as MOI and to teach it as a subject.

c. Training for Supervisors

While some supervisors at the district and circuit levels report that they understand, support, and are helping to implement the policy, some do not. Supervisors who are responsible for conducting the in-service training also need some training in this area to enable them to provide the needed support. Although they may not have the technical educational linguistic skills necessary for this kind of training, their exposure to it could assist them in designing appropriate in-service training for the schools in their areas.

The pivotal role of the district in facilitating a strong teaching and learning environment also needs to receive increased attention. This is especially important in the policy and practice of teacher assignments and transfers and of teacher supervision.
4. Attitudes and Beliefs

a. Pupil Understanding

Across sites, the large majority of P1 pupils prefer to ask and answer questions and to be taught in the local language because they understand what is going on. Since understanding is at the heart of learning, this is a most sensible reply. Ghanaian language is also the preference for Medofo and Awocha, the two sites of policy implementation, and for about half the pupils interviewed at Apala where the policy is partially implemented. Pupils in Noto, a resource-rich Early English medium school, said they like the teacher to teach in English, but when asked about an Environmental Studies lesson they had just completed, fully half of the pupils said that they would have preferred Kasem, because they would have understood what was going on.

Despite pupils’--and teachers’--awareness that pupils understand better when teachers use local language for instruction, most pupils continue to hear the strong message from teachers and parents that English is preferable.

Across sites the majority of pupils said they preferred to be taught in English because this is the language that would help them to get ahead in the world--and this is the language teachers said they should use. In this way, teachers influence not only pupils’ attitudes toward English, but their disinterest in Ghanaian language as well.

b. Attitudes and Beliefs About Language Learning

Across sites, parents, teachers and head teachers also generally preferred instruction in English--the language of high status that symbolizes upward mobility. Some parents and community leaders at each site preferred bilingual or mother tongue instruction, understanding that it could help pupils not be so “confused,” make the transition to English instruction more quickly, and help to maintain home language and tradition.

Ironically, the head teacher of Kapa Primary School (private, urban, resource-rich environment) was enthusiastic about the language policy. He said, “when we teach the Ghanaian language in lower primary classes children can articulate in it and it will assist them in the learning of English”. He would have encouraged the proper implementation of the policy if it were not for the school’s own policy of total use of English as medium of instruction in the lower primary.

Not only did teachers and parents prefer English instruction, but the study also revealed the negative attitude of some teachers, supervisors, parents, and community members toward the language policy. A change of attitude cannot be mandated or legislated, but educating these stakeholders and the rest of the public to raise their level of awareness of the sound rationale behind the policy and the benefits to be derived from it is an important consideration.

The popular wisdom across sites among many parents, teachers, community members, and even pupils, is that if teachers use and pupils hear more English in school (beginning at an earlier age in P1) they will then as a matter of course become more proficient in English. In view of what the teams observed in many classrooms, this popular wisdom is severely flawed. If the traditional rote and repetition or lecture in English MOI is the kind of instruction that pupils will continue to receive earlier and longer in an Early English medium school, then the majority of
pupils can be expected to continue to do poorly. These methods do not promote meaningful communication in a second language. Pupils will hear teachers speak more English but they will not necessarily learn more English—and they will not have the opportunity to develop conceptually in their own mother tongue.

5. Language Policy Assumptions

a. Transition from L1 to L2 MOI

One of the assumptions of the Language Policy is that by the end of the third year of primary education, pupils would be proficient enough in English to be able to understand lessons taught when English is substituted for the local language as medium of instruction from P4.

Teams observed in P4 (the transitional grade to English) that some teachers had to use the local language to explain some aspects of the lessons (e.g., Maths and Environmental Studies) for pupils to understand. Some P4 pupils interviewed expressed that they would understand lessons better if they were taught in the local language. Classroom observations confirmed this finding: many more pupils raised their hands to answer questions when the teacher shifted to use the local language.

According to research, it appears the three-year period for the use of the local language as medium of instruction at the primary level is too short for the development of oral proficiency and cognitive faculties that would enable pupils to switch to English as L2 medium of instruction.

Policy options include changing the policy to delay the transition from the local language to English as medium of instruction until a later grade when the children are ready for it. Also, the change from the local language to English as medium of instruction could be phased in as a gradual process, with percentages of language use assigned to different grades. For example, 10% English 90% Ghanaian language in P1, 20% English 80% Ghanaian language in P2, 40% English 60% Ghanaian language in P3, 60% English 40% Ghanaian language in P4. Percentages should be designated according to research studies and guidelines established in successful mother tongue education programmes.

b. Official and Predominant Languages of the Area

The case of Awocha highlights the challenges of implementing the aspect of the Language Policy that calls for the predominant Ghanaian language of the area to be used as MOI in P1-P3. The “predominant” language of the area must be one of 10 (11) languages of the approximately sixty Ghanaian languages. This is problematic in communities where children are fluent in a language (and families are eager for children to maintain the language) that is not officially recognized and may not have an orthography. The Awocha school implements the Language

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6 Two of the languages are in fact dialects of the same language. Fante and Twi are mutually intelligible and linguists count them as only dialects of the Akan language.
Policy through the use of Fante, a language with which most school-going age children are also familiar, but this does not resolve the dilemma for maintaining Ghanaian language and cultural traditions among the Ahanta, or for many other people in Ghana.

This complex reality of Ghana needs to be acknowledged in the policy and/or policy guidelines. Increasing numbers of languages not yet officially recognised in Ghana do have a developed orthography, and materials can be developed locally so that pupils can first become literate in their home language and then shift to English. Becoming fluent first in one’s own language and then learning to become literate in a second language establishes many of the dynamics of the reading process for children.

c. Multilingual sites

The presence of multiple language groups may not be primarily an urban phenomenon as has been assumed. It was observed in some school settings that the pupils come from many different language groups and speak many different mutually unintelligible languages. This problem exists not only in metropolitan settings but also in rural areas, for example, where there are settler communities. One language may predominate, such as Dangme in Nantwi, Kasem in Noto, and Twi in Apala. Nevertheless, according to the policy, individual pupils who do not speak these languages must still learn in them. The challenges of this for pupils and for teachers need to be explored.

In communities (e.g., in metropolitan areas) where enrolment would allow, earmarking schools to serve particular language groups has been discussed as one solution. But implementation of this option has its own implications in terms of costs to individuals and the public. An in-depth study of using a Ghanaian language as medium of instruction in multilingual settings--rural and urban--needs to be conducted if the policy is to be effectively implemented at those centres.

6. Policy Monitoring

The study found no evidence of sanctions against schools that did not implement the policy. The study found that the attitudes of those expected to monitor and support implementation of the Language Policy are mixed. The attitudes of ADs of Supervision, Circuit Supervisors and head teachers’ ranged from very supportive to personally opposed but professionally supportive (“I support it because it’s my job to do so”) to strongly opposed. Supervisors’ actions range from organising in-service training on teaching Ghanaian language to encouraging Early English medium instruction in direct opposition to the policy.

Maintaining the status quo is one policy option. Monitoring the Language Policy through supervisors who do not consistently support (and sometimes staunchly oppose) implementation of the national policy will support the current decentralised approach discussed above. There are other options also. One is to develop a set of incentives to implement the policy, rewarding those who implement it well. Another is to develop a plan that acknowledges the present range of (non-) implementation and establishes a timeline and resource allocation plan for effective

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7 In the course of our research one IEQ team member met a district supervisor (not in our study) who had just sent a circular to all schools in his district mandating Early English medium.
implementation. Increased monitoring is another possibility, e.g., send out guidelines with incentives and/or sanctions to ADs and Circuit Supervisors. Beyond this, the task of monitoring could be assigned a unit in the GES that would be responsible for monitoring language policy implementation.

7. Contextual Support for Language Policy Implementation

a. Policy Guidelines

If the policy document is disseminated widely, issuing succinct statements of the rationale behind the policy and guidelines that acknowledge current realities and problems could bolster implementation. For example, guidelines could address such questions as, in situations where no teacher speaks the language, how can and should a school proceed? What can communities/schools expect with regard to future postings of teachers that will enable them to implement the policy? Since no Ghanaian language materials are available, in what pedagogically sound ways can teachers proceed at present? What printed resources will be available to them in the future? Where public schools have established Early English medium schools in direct opposition to the policy, how should they proceed? Do teachers, SMCs, others, have the option to create their own policy? What in-service training is or will be available to help practicing teachers implement the policy effectively? Guidelines that will help teachers transfer learning from L1 to L2, that is, from the local language to English are also needed.

b. Development Partners/MOE Projects and Language Policy Implementation.

Intervention programmes between development partners (e.g., USAID, DfID) and the Ministry of Education to improve the quality of education in Ghana seem to be concentrating on subjects such as English and Maths. If these Ministry/Development Partner partnership programmes were to include effective implementation of the Ghanaian language aspect of the Language Policy, the Ministry and development partners would send an important message to supervisors, teachers, parents, and communities about the use of Ghanaian language in primary school and expectations of policy implementation.

8. Areas to Consider for Future Research

Phase one of the IEQ research has yielded a wealth of information. It has also led to more questions, some of which the team will explore in phase two of the first year of the project. Some questions are beyond the scope of this study, or call for quantitative studies or for quantitative data to be combined with qualitative data that has already been collected.

In conclusion, these areas are some areas suggested for further research:

a. impact of the Language Policy on student learning;

b. the extent to which the policy is implemented in both private and public schools;

c. the number of years the mother-tongue is most effectively used as medium of instruction before the change over to English;

GTZ is working in the area of textbooks and teacher training in the local language.
d. how schools “choose” their language(s) of instruction;

e. the study of language used for assessment and examinations and the impact of that on choice of MOI;

f. determining when children in different settings are ready to move from learning in local language to learning in English, and the gradual process for change from L1 to L2.
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