



Examining the Effects of Various Language Policies in Ghanaian Educational System

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Abstract

The issue of an appropriate language policy has received prominent attention not only from professional linguists and educationist but also from national governments. In Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America and Australia, language policy issues have attracted keen interest from governments and their people. Through language, social groups are delimited, and the individual is reinforced, since by enabling him to interact with others, language also serves in the expression and development of his own personality (Dzameshie, 2003). It can be seen that language is important not only for interpersonal communication, but also for promoting group identity. Thus, ethnic as well as national solidarity and cohesion can be fostered by a judicious language policy. According to the Australian language and literacy Policy (1991), it is important to develop language policies that ensure the access of minority populations to prestigious forms of national standard languages and literacy's while supporting the intergenerational retention of minority languages, both indigenous and foreign languages. This paper examined various language policies in Ghana and how they influence educational system. Data was collected through observation, interview and use of questionnaire. Analysis was done through discussion.

Keywords: communication, educational system, Ghana, government, language policy



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Introduction

Language policy is a programme of action adopted and pursued on a given language by a given government, an organisation or an institution. This is usually done to give the language a status and a role. According to Bamgbose (1990), "language policy is a programme of action on the role or status of a language community". In multilingual state, language policy decision is the giving of one language a role or a status leaving other languages out. Language policy can also be defined as the means by which governments and other groups set out their intentions to safeguard, develop and exploit the capacity in languages among the people they represent.

Andoh- Kumi (1997) has identified three types of language policies. These are official, educational and general. The official language relates to the language that the government gives recognition for specific functions or purposes. For example, for radio and television broadcast, Regional or District languages are employed. The educational language policy according to him is the recognition of a language as a medium of instruction in schools by the government and institutions for example Ghana Education Service, Non-Formal Education Division, School for Life (in the northern region) and religious bodies. The general language is the unofficial state recognition of a language for use in the mass media, business and organizations.

Significance of the Study

The study exposes the importance of using Ghanaian language as a medium of instruction at the early years of the child's schooling. It might also help the policy makers to be aware of the importance of Ghanaian languages as far as the development of the country is concerned. Since language is seen as repository and tool for expression and communication of socio-cultural, political and economic belief system of the society, a successful conceptualization and implementation of this societal transformation can only be achieved through the use of Ghanaian languages. Again it might explain to parents, and politicians that learning Ghanaian languages as a core subject in the SHS will help the students to be competent in the use of their language and hence building the foundation for studying other languages. It might also motivate students to be proud of their own culture and moral values. Also it might help the researcher to gain more knowledge on how to delve into challenging problems in order to find solution to them. This is because through research you will acquire more knowledge on how to identify a problem, collect data, analyse data and interpret the result to solve the identified problem. Finally, the study might serve as a reference material to any person who will like to conduct a similar study. This can be achieved by reading and taking notice of the wording of the research problem and how the study was conducted. This might help the person to know the measures to take in order to have a successful study.

Statement of the problem

The controversy about the language to use as the medium of instruction in Ghanaian schools, especially, at the lower level dates back to castle schools and missionary era. The colonial governors who came before the 1920's were not interested in the local languages; they were bent on having the schools using English as a medium of instruction and nothing else. According to Issahaku (2002) the first inspector of schools R. Sunter in 1882 criticized the Basel Mission for using vernacular as a medium of instruction in their schools. He pointed out that when Gordon Guggisberg was made the governor in 1919 he became worried about the language situation because there was no clear cut policy on the Ghanaian language. The governor realizing the importance of Ghanaian languages in the school system invited prominent people to help him solve the language problem. The committee came out with 52 recommendation and 53 suggestions of which the majority were put into effect. Macwillian and Kwamena- Poh (1975). It was noted that the language policy between 1920 and 1951 was stable and the policy was the use of Ghanaian language as a medium of instruction in the primary school.

The purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of various language policies in Ghana.

The CPP Government Language Policy

According to Koranteng (as cited in Issahaku 2002) after the convention people's party had won the legislative election, they made Mr. Kojo Botsio the Minister of Education. In that very 1951 the government launched the Accelerated Development Plan for Education. In the plan it has been noted that the aim of the primary course was to provide sound foundation for citizens with permanent literacy in both English and the vernacular. At the beginning of the course, instruction was to be given through the local vernacular with English taught as a new language. As soon as possible there was to be a transition from the vernacular to English as the medium of instruction, and the upper class would receive instruction through the medium of English, except that throughout the whole year course the vernacular would receive special study.

Despite the very good intentions of the CPP government on Ghanaian languages, in 1974 some members of the CPP government made moves to make English the medium of instruction in all primary schools from 1975. This is because some educated Ghanaians felt that the use of the Ghanaian languages as a medium of instruction in primary school during the colonial government era was a calculated attempt to give Ghanaians an inferior type of education.

The National Liberation Council Language Policy

Issahaku (2002) said that the National Liberation Council took over from the CPP through a coup d'état in 1966. When they came to power they were not very satisfied with the Education system as a whole in the country. They, therefore, set up a committee in 1966 known as Kwapong committee to conduct a comprehensive review of the educational system of Ghana. After several sittings the committee recommended that Ghanaian language should be used as the medium of instruction for the first three years of the primary school course, the change to English as the medium of instruction should commence in the fourth year whilst the Ghanaian language continues to be studied as a subject. But this report was not accepted wholly, the government felt the issue on the medium of instruction should be flexible. So the government ruled that Ghanaian languages should be medium of instruction only in the first year and change to English in the second year (Kwapong committee 1966).

The Progress Party Language Policy

On the part of the progress party Issahaku (2002) said they took over from the NLC government when they won the parliamentary elections of 1969. This government also felt that the NLC government's language policy was not good enough, so they formulated their own. In September 1970, the Ministry of Education Culture and Sports adopted a language policy which stated that Ghanaian languages should be used as medium of instruction in the first three years of the primary school course and where the subject makes it possible, in the next three years as well. In the upper primary or higher classes where English is the teaching medium the appropriate Ghanaian language should be properly taught as a school subject. But unfortunately the policy did not really enjoy the light of the day because the PP regime was toppled in a coup in 1972.

The National Redemption Council/Supreme Military Council Language Policy

Issahaku said when the NRC came to power in 1972; they felt that everything about the PP government was not good. So they decided to come out with their own Ghanaian language policy. The ministry of education, therefore, sent circulars to the Regional Directors of Education.

The circular stated that:

1. "Where in an urban school there is a reasonably large number of pupils with a common mother tongue, such pupils should be grouped together during LI periods and taught their mother tongue, if it is a government sponsored language, instead of the indigenous language of the urban area..."
2. "Regional education officers should instruct district education officers to carry out

quick survey to find out the main language groups in the urban schools, and to take this into consideration when stationing teachers the following term..."

3. Head teachers are advised to place requisitions for the different titles of Ghanaian language books they needed for teaching the different LI groups in their schools.

Ghanaian language organizers were to involve themselves in the whole exercise by providing the assistance needed to make the teaching of the Ghanaian languages effective (Min. of Education Cir. 1973 no. e 439/tv2). He noted that reading through the above circular carefully one would have noticed how it resembled the policy of the PP government. The circular however, was issued at the middle of the schools year; this shows how serious the government was.

The government further implemented some decisions, these were:

1. The creation of the School of Ghana Language in 1973 at Ajumako.
2. The post of the Ghanaian Language Organizer was established and made substantive.
3. Ghanaian languages were accepted as an 'A' level subject at GCE.
4. A Ghanaian language was accepted as an under-graduate course in the University of Cape Coast in 1974.
5. In 1976 due to lack of printed books in Ghanaian languages the government ordered that Ghanaian languages manuscripts be sent to Hong Kong for printing.
6. A sub-committee responsible for questions of Ghanaian languages was set up within the National Advisory Committee on Curriculum. The sub-committee was to prepare the curriculum on Ghanaian languages and also advise the government on Ghanaian language policy.

In 1974 the government set up a committee to review the structure of education in Ghana. Rev. Professor N. K. Dzobo headed the committee. The committee submitted its report to the government, which had then changed its name to the Supreme Military Council. The government accepted the reports and the recommendations made. This report was named The New Structure and Content of Education in Ghana. The part of the report that dealt with Ghanaian languages stated thus:

At the primary school stage the child shall learn his own language, and in addition, one other Ghanaian language. However, English shall gradually become the medium of instruction as from primary class IV. In the junior secondary school, the Ghanaian languages or modern classical language will be introduced. Ghanaian languages will be compulsory during the senior secondary lower course and in addition to the other subjects. In the training colleges, to enable teachers cope with the new policy on the teaching and learning of the Ghanaian languages, every student will be required to learn one other Ghanaian language in addition to his own (Dzobo, 1974, p. 3).

In preparing for this new policy, the government put the Training Colleges into groups, and group 'B' colleges were to handle the Ghanaian languages. Students were to be prepared sufficiently to teach the Ghanaian languages in the Junior High Schools. The Supreme Military Council did a lot to restore Ghanaian language to its former place of glory.

The Language Policy of the People's National Party (PNP)

Issahaku (2002) stated that the PNP came to power after the election in 1979. This government did not have any interest in any Ghanaian language policy. The special grouping that was done to the training colleges were abandoned. Ghanaian languages now became an internal subject. This brought about a lukewarm attitude towards Ghanaian languages by both teachers and students. The government did not admire the New Structure and Content of Education by the NLC so they sought to push it aside.

The Language Policy of the Provisional National Defence Council/ National Democratic Congress

On the part of the PNDC Issahaku (2002) said, they came to power in 1981. When they took over, they were initially trying to consolidate their position so for some few years they were using the educational policies that they came to meet. After they got themselves established, they initially adopted the language policy of the Supreme Military Council (SMC) which was partial implementation of Dzobo committee's recommendations.

During the 1987/88 academic year, the New Education Structure of Dzobo Committee was set in motion. So this time the Ghanaian language became the medium of instruction in primary one to three and a compulsory subject of study in primary schools, junior secondary school, senior secondary school and teacher training colleges.

When the NDC won the 1992 elections it continued with the policy of the PNDC. In 1993 when the performance at SSSCE was poor, especially in English, the blame was partly put on the policy of using the Ghanaian languages in the primary and SSS. In 1994 a committee named the Educational Reform Review Committee was set up. The committee presented its report to the government and the Minister of Education decided that Ghanaian language should no longer be a core subject, but as an elective in the SHS.

The Language Policy of the NPP Government

The national patriotic party won the 2000 presidential and parliamentary elections. They therefore took over the governing of the country on the 7th January, 2001. The language policy that was in operation as at their assumption of power was that, the

Ghanaian languages was to be the medium of instruction in the first three years of the primary school education with English taught as a subject. The fourth year, English was to take over as a medium of instruction with Ghanaian language as a subject of study.

The policy operated for few months and there were agitations amongst the NPP members for a change in favour of English as a medium of instruction at all levels of education in Ghana. After the agitation has got to the cabinet, the cabinet came out with a directive that English should be the medium of instruction at all levels of education in Ghana. Linguists and educationist in the country appealed to cabinet to change its decision on the issue. Instead of the government to address the issue, it was turned into a political one. Those who spoke against the decision were branded as enemies of positive change.

Owu-Ewie (2006) has also given some reasons stated by the statesman Thursday July 16, 2002 for changing the language policy in 2002. The following are the reasons:

1. The previous policy of using Ghanaian language as medium of instruction in the lower primary level was abused, especially in rural schools. Teachers never spoke English in class even in primary six.
2. Students are unable to speak and write "good" English sentences even by the time they complete the senior high school.
3. The multilingual situation in the country especially in the urban schools has made instruction in a Ghanaian language very difficult. According to him, the source added that a study conducted by the ministry of education showed that 50 to 60 percent of children in each class in the urban area speak a different language. "It is therefore problematic if we insist that all the children be instructed in Ga, Twi or Dagbani depending on whether it is Accra, Kumasi or Tamale".
4. There is a lack of materials in the Ghanaian languages to be used in teaching. The Minister of Education declared that only five out of the languages that are spoken by our major ethnic groups have material developed on them. Certainly, we cannot impose these five languages on the entire nation and people of other ethnic origins.
5. There is a lack of Ghanaian language teachers specifically trained to teach content subjects in the Ghanaian language. The Minister added "merely being able to speak a Ghanaian language does not mean one can teach it".
6. There is no standard written form of the Ghanaian languages. He says "for nearly all the languages that we have, there is hardly any standard written form".
7. The Minister in order to support the claim for the use of English as the medium of instruction from primary one cited an experiment by Rockwell (1989) and indicated that children transfer from L2 to L1 better.
8. The Minister pointed out that English is the lingua franca of the state and

that all effort must be put in to ensure that children acquire the right level of competence in both the spoken and written forms of the language.

The Effect of Language Policies on Education

According to Hameso (1997), foreign languages lack authenticity. Because they are not the peoples' language, they remain the language of the few, namely the elite who are class of their own and are also alienated both from their own society and from their counterparts elsewhere with whom they are unable to merge. This foreign language as a medium of instruction have been a major force in making education a culturally alienating process. Language is supposed to help in bringing education close to the learner, and therefore, in motivating learners to invest energy and time "in the intrinsic excitement and self-regenerating dynamo of learning". Hameso cited Samof who says, the lack of integration of educational goals with the cultural context and African values has contributed to the present educational crisis in Africa in which education is geared mainly to the production of ruling elites. This is also partly how education has made itself increasingly irrelevant to real issues of the masses and to Africa's development. He further argued that foreign languages are not teachable in the sense that it is difficult to ensure language proficiency of teachers in foreign media. According to him a foreign language is hardly ever experienced outside the educational environment by the learners. It is for this reasons that UNESCO has been in the forefront of promoting the idea of education in indigenous languages.

Yahya-Othman (1990) points out that students enter secondary education without adequate understanding and knowledge of the medium of instruction. Such a system results in individuals, hampered by linguistic deficiencies in their thinking, in their critical observation, in their questioning of ideas and facts, and in the interpretation of what is communicated to them.

According to Andrea-Jeanne (2009) language policies have so many effects on the education of children. He cited the effects of the language policy in Namibia on senior secondary and tertiary education as follows; 80% of the learners from the Karas and Hardap regions who wrote the international general certificate (IGCSE) Grade 12 examination in 2003 did not meet the minimum qualification for admission to civil service and only 11% qualified for admission to local tertiary institutions. He continued by saying that when the University of Cambridge Local Examinations syndicate evaluated more than two million students from 165 countries they found out that Namibia (IGCSE) candidates achieved a worse symbol than the average for all other countries. He said the effect of this state of affairs is a serious impediment to the development of higher education. The number of students who gain access to higher education is too small and the majority is not equipped for competitive and independent study and research.

In a letter published in the New Era of August 19, 2005, Mbaeva, a teacher of history and Otjiherero at a Windhoek Secondary School, complained that;

When kids are taught to speak a second language at the expense of the mother tongue, it creates a semi-lingual society. They do not speak any language properly. Africans, for how long are we going to regard everything African as second best? Our self-image, our culture and our identity are tarnished as we regard our own language as inferior to English. Learners who have gone through the English medium from pre-school up to Grade 12 are still illiterates.

We cannot deny our learners language rights and claim to give them fundamental rights. Rights without language rights are vacuous. Language rights plus Human rights are equal to linguistic human rights. Denying the Ghanaian child the use of his/her native language in education is committing the crime of “linguistic genocide” in education (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). According to Lewelling (1991), the level of first language proficiency has a direct influence on second language development and cognitive academic growth of the child that disruption in the first language development inhibits second language proficiency and cognitive growth of that child.

Research Design

Descriptive approach was used because it sought to describe the problem and its effects. According to Best and Khan (as cited in Amedahe, 2010), descriptive research is concerned with the conditions or relationships that exist; such as determining the nature of prevailing conditions, practices and attitudes; opinions that are held; processes that are going on; or trends that are developed. Although this method is time consuming and demands the involvement of the researcher, the data collected by this design offers detailed information of the study.

Population of the study

The target population for this study was all first year Ghanaian language students of Mount Mary College of Education, Somanya. The group was made up of four different Ghanaian languages. That is; Ewe, Dangme, Ga and Twi. The total number of the students comprised 154 men and 146 women. The researcher also selected three Ghanaian language tutors who were teaching in the college and one retired Ghanaian language tutor to help her in the study.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The researcher sampled the students who were studying Ewe as a Ghanaian language for the study. The researcher sampled the Ewe group because she was more with this group than the others. Since the Ewe group was made up of 72 students with 34 women and 38 men, she took all of them as a sample for the study.

Research instruments

The researcher used three instruments for this study. These were interview, questionnaire and observation guide.

Interview

The structured type of interview guide was the major data collection tool, although the unstructured interview was also used. In order to probe the issue further to identify the effect of the policies on teaching and learning of Ghanaian language, the researcher prepared eleven interview guides for the active tutors and the retired tutor. The researcher had employed this instruments for this group because of their number and also because it can be adjusted to meet many diverse situations. Again, it attracted a relatively high response rate. Even though the researcher found it very difficult to meet the tutors as scheduled, she was able to cover all the items prepared for the interview section.

Questionnaire

An open ended form of questionnaire was used to allow free responses from the respondents. The questionnaires were prepared for the students because of their number and also to allow them to express their views about the problem. Again, because questionnaires could promise wider coverage and were less expensive, the researcher had taken it as one of her instruments. In all, fifteen open ended items were prepared to solicit information on the problem.

Pilot Test

In order to ensure accurate results from the instruments mentioned above, the researcher did a pilot testing with the instruments on students of Government College of Education at Peki. The researcher went there to discuss with the Ghanaian language tutors on the date that would be convenient for the exercise. On the scheduled date, the researcher met both the students and tutors in Ghanaian language class. This gave the researcher the opportunity to interact with the students. After the class, the tutors used the lottery method of simple random sampling to select twenty students for the researcher to distribute the questionnaires to. The tutors wrote the names of the students on slips of paper and put them into a container and after mixing the papers well, they picked the names one after the other until the required number of students

were selected. The researcher then gave them the questionnaires to complete in two weeks' time. After that the tutors were also interviewed.

This measure was taken to verify if the same instruments when used for Mount Mary students could yield the same result. It was also to see the extent to which the instruments could be helpful to the study. It was also done as required in research and as attested by Tuckman (1992) who indicated that it is usually highly desirable to run a pilot test on a questionnaire and to revise it based on the results of the test. Based on what Tuckman postulated, this pilot test was done and it helped to readjust some of the items for easy answering. After the piloting the researcher saw that the instruments were good enough to help her in the study. The researcher therefore, used them to collect data for the study.

Data Collection Procedure

The main source of information for the study came from Mount Mary College Ewe students, Ghanaian language tutors and one retired Ghanaian language tutor at Somanya. To be able to have ample time with the tutors for the information, the researcher scheduled time with them to meet them immediately after classes twice in a week. On the part of the retired tutor, the researcher planned with him to meet him on Sundays after church service. On the part of the students, their questionnaires were administered to them during one of Ghanaian language periods after explaining the rationale behind the questionnaire to them.

Research Design and Methodology

Questionnaire for Students

Almost all the questionnaire given was retrieved. The results have been presented statistically in tables. The responses concerning the language of instruction in the lower primary are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Languages of Instruction in the Lower Primary where Students had their Basic Education

Language	Number of students	Percentage (%)
Ewe	30	41.7
English	24	33.3
French	15	20.8
Ga	1	1.4
Fante	2	2.7
Total	72	100

Table 1 depicts the various languages used for instruction when students were in the basic school. It was realized that only 41.7% had the instruction in Ewe while 33.3% also had theirs in English. 20.8% had theirs in French. This has confirmed their weak knowledge in the subject.

Students were also asked to indicate whether they studied Ghanaian language as a subject in the JHS level or not. The responses are presented in Table 2

Table 2: **Study of Ghanaian Language as a Subject in the Junior High School.**

Responses	Number of students	Percentage (%)
Yes	42	58.3
No	30	41.7
Total	72	100

Table 2 shows that 58.3% studied Ghanaian language at the Junior high school whilst 41.7% did not learn it. It can be realised from the table that, the inability of most students to cope with the teaching and learning of Ghanaian languages has taken its roots from the Junior High level.

The responses on the aspect the Ghanaian languages students were taught are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: **The aspects of the Ghanaian Language Students were taught.**

Aspects	Number of students	Percentage (%)
Grammar	10	13.9
Composition writing	10	13.9
Grammar and culture	22	30.5
None	30	41.7
Total	72	100

In Table 3, 13.9% of the students said that the aspect of the language usually taught by their teachers was grammar while 41.7% said they were not taught any of the aspects.

Students were again asked to tell how often they were having Ghanaian language lessons at the JHS level. The responses are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: **How often did Students have Ghanaian Language Lessons at Junior High Level?**

Responses	Number of students	Percentage (%)
Once a week	30	41.7
Twice a week	12	16.6
Not at all	30	41.7
Total	72	100

From Table 4, 41.7% of the students said they had Ghanaian language lessons once in a week while 16.6% said they had it two times in a week. As much as 41.7% of the students said they did not have it at all. The findings from the table suggest that Ghanaian language was not taken serious at the lower levels.

Students responses concerning the courses studied at SHS is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: **Courses Studied by Students at Senior High School**

Course	Number of students	Percentage (%)
General Arts with Ghanaian Language as option	5	6.9
General Arts with other subject as option	25	34.7
Business Accounting	20	27.8
Home Economics	10	13.9
Social Science	2	2.8
Pure Science	2	2.8
Agricultural Science	8	11.1
Total	72	100

Table 5 shows that only 6.9% of the students studied general art with Ghanaian language as an elective, while 34.7% studied general art with other subjects as an elective. The impression created by the results from the table is that students generally shy away from Ghanaian language. Few of them offer it as an elective subject in the SHS. The choice of courses at senior high school level also has effect on the teaching

and learning of the Ghanaian language at the college level since majority of the students come with either a weak or no background at all in Ghanaian language.

The various reasons given by students for selecting the courses studied at the SHS level are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Students’ Reasons for Selecting the various Courses Studied at the SHS level.

Reasons	Number of students	Percentage (%)
To become a teacher	2	2.8
To become a bilingual secretary	5	6.9
To become a journalist	10	13.9
To become a lawyer	15	20.8
To become an accountant	20	27.8
To become a fashion designer	10	13.9
To become an engineer	10	13.9
Total	72	100

From Table 6, only 2.8% of the students wanted to become teachers while 20.8% would like to become lawyers and 27.8% would like to become accountants. This shows that students were not interested in the teaching profession and because of that did not study courses that could land them in to it.

The students were also asked to tell the effects of language policies on learning of Ghanaian language in the college. The responses are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: The Effects of Language Policies on the Students’ Learning of Ghanaian language in the college

Effects	Number of students	Percentage (%)
Difficult to speak, read and write the language	25	34.7
Difficult to understand what has been taught	25	34.7
Inability to read and understand properly	22	30.6

Total	72	100
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From Table 7, 34.7% said they found it difficult to speak, read and write the language and another 34.7% also said they found it difficult to understand what is normally taught by the teacher. This confirmed that the inability of the students to speak, read, write and understand what was taught were due to how they had been exposed to the language from the beginning of their schooling.

The responses concerning suggestions for teaching and learning of Ghanaian language are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Students Suggestions on Teaching and Learning of Ghanaian Language in Schools

Suggestions	Number of students	Percentage (%)
Ghanaian language should be made core subject in senior high schools to help students to be able to cope well with it at college level	27	37.5
and learning materials in the language should be provided to make learning easy	20	27.8
Ghanaian language should be medium of instruction from lower primary to upper primary to help students acquire the concept of other subjects	20	27.8
The government should create opportunity for teachers to specialize in the language to enable them deliver effectively	5	6.9
Total	72	100

In Table 8, 37.5% of the students suggested that Ghanaian language should be core subject in Senior High School while 27.8% said teaching and learning materials should be provided in the language to promote effective teaching and learning.

Research Findings

It has been realized that using the child’s mother tongue in teaching and also allowing the child to study it has a great benefit to him/her. Some of these benefits are acquisition of communication skills in the language, maintenance of good relationships

with family members, avenue for occupation such as translator, interpreter and trade and commerce. It has also been revealed that the students inability to cope with the teaching and learning of Ghanaian language at the college level were due to where they had their basic education and the language of instruction in those schools.

Also selection of course at the senior high school level has affected the students' learning of the Ghanaian language. Again both the students and their parent's attitude towards the teaching and learning of Ghanaian language in school also affected their inability to cope well with the course at college level. Finally it was clear that the language policy at senior high level was the major cause of the problem students are facing in learning of Ghanaian language in colleges of education.

Discussion of Results

According to the outcome of the study, language policies in Ghana were due to selfishness on the part of the colonial masters and the missionaries, ignorance on the part of the policy planners and preference on the part of government. This was asserted by Issahaku (2002) when he outlined the various language policies of each government in Ghana. Again he said the first inspector of school R. Sunter criticized the use of Ghanaian language as a medium of instruction in Basel schools. Language policies which are supposed to benefit both the government and the individuals should not be taken for granted. It should be done in a way that everybody can benefit and benefit well. Government and policy makers should not think that educating students in their mother tongue and studying it as well would made them to perform poorly in their final examination. Since language forms part of the people's culture, students should be allowed to learn their own language to enable them participate well in their communities. It also came to light that language policies do not normally have clear objectives for their implementation. For everything to succeed there must be objectives on which these things should be based. So, language policies should also have objectives which will in turn help those who are implementing the policies to know exactly what to do. Also, dissemination of language policy document is very necessary because, inadequate knowledge of the policy may lead some schools, communities and even districts to ignore the policies. This can also be responsible for general public's negative attitude toward the policy.

The results also revealed that before a student can participate effectively in a lesson, the language that the learner is familiar with must be used at the early years of the child's schooling. According to Chekaraou (2004) teaching with a language which students are familiar with fostered active teacher-student interaction which enabled students to develop their critical thinking skills which were transferable to all learning experiences even when first language ceased to be the language of instruction in the upper grades. This is very true because, it would help the learner to be able to express his/her views well on whatever she is learning. It is said that the older the age of the

learners the better they learn the second language because they have achieved in high level of cognitive maturity in the first language. Research has also shown that the greater the number of years of primary language grade level schooling a student has received, the greater his English achievement.

Also attitude of both parents and students towards learning of Ghanaian language in schools has made students not to have a firm foundation in the language which in turn affect the students at the college level. Parents and students should change their mind that education can only be given in English because a child whose initial education is given in the first language will benefit a lot. Saville-Troike asserted this when he said teaching pupils in their first language serve as background knowledge, a pre-existing knowledge upon which inferences and predictions could be made to facilitate transfer. According to Brock-Utne (2005) teaching students through the use of their mother tongue will help them to combine earlier knowledge with new knowledge, develop independence and critical thinking, co-operate with others, build self-confidence, and a belief in themselves and their learning potential.

The result also revealed that most students did not study the Ghanaian language at the junior high school level and because of that, studying it at the college is very difficult for them. Also, when some schools were teaching the language once a week, others were teaching it twice. This shows that no serious attention was given to the teaching of Ghanaian at the lower level. Yahya-Othman (1990) said when students enter secondary education without adequate understanding and knowledge of the medium of instruction; they are hampered by linguistic deficiencies in their thinking, in their critical observation, in their questioning of ideas and facts, and in their interpretation of what is communicated to them. If we want students to be perfect in Ghanaian languages, then teachers should handle it with all the attention it deserves. They must make sure they teach all the aspects of the language to make the student knowledgeable in the language.

Conclusion

Language policies are guidelines that the government lays down concerning language use in schools in the country. Language policies continue changing from government to government in Ghana because every government wants its own policy for education and for that matter the changes. How the policies are disseminated also play a vital role as far as language policies are concerned. Because of this what the students are expected to gain from the policy is totally lost.

Most students in colleges of education find the learning of Ghanaian language very difficult because they were not introduced to right language of instruction from the beginning of their education and also the poor handling of the language at the junior high level. Majority of these students did not offer Ghanaian language at the Senior high school level. All these have accounted for their inability to read, write, and speak the

Ghanaian language. It can be concluded that children gain a lot when Ghanaian language is used as a language of instruction as well as learning it as a subject. Some of these gains are development of thought, shaping of experience, establishment and maintenance of good relationships, preservation of culture, avenue for gaining occupation and learning of their mother tongue.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of the study and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made:

1. Language policies that can help the child to be matured in age and in the first language should be introduced. Because if the child is old he/she can achieve a high level of cognitive maturity in the first language to be able to transfer it into the second language.
2. Language policy document should be disseminated to the places they are supposed to go to enable them to adhere to its use.

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