

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION-WINNEBA**

**THE IMPACT OF USING L1 (NATIVE LANGUAGE) IN AN ENGLISH  
MEDIUM CLASSROOM IN THE UPPER BASIC LEVEL (PRIMARY 4  
TO JHS 3). A STUDY AT ST. AIDAN'S ANGLICAN BASIC SCHOOL IN THE  
WA MUNICIPALITY.**



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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED  
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OF EDUCATION IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE.**

**SEPTEMBER, 2018**

## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and dully acknowledged, is entirely my own original works, and it has not been submitted either in part or whole, for any other degree elsewhere.

**Name of student:** Sibri Rahinatu,

**Signature:**.....

**Date:**.....

### SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

**Name of Supervisor:** Dr. Charles Owu-Ewie

**Signature:**.....

**Date:**.....

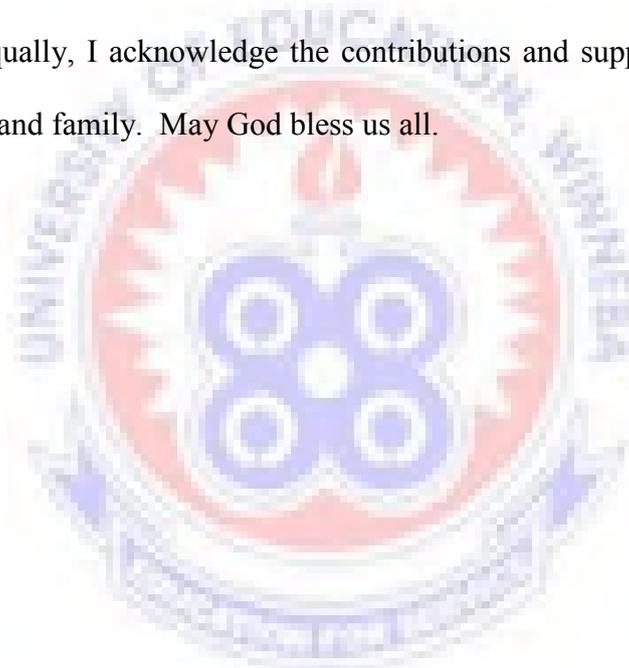
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I am grateful to God Almighty for His unending love and favour. He has been faithful and I thank Him. May His name be praised forever.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work first of all to God Almighty for his love and protection over my life. I also dedicate this work to my mum; Yelpee Prudence for her support and to my entire family and friends.



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## ABSTRACT

This study was set to address the impact of using L1 (mother tongue) as medium of instruction in an L2 (English language) classroom in the upper basic level of St Aidan's Anglican Basic School in Wa, the upper West Region of Ghana. The study focused on the reasons and effects of using L1 as a medium of instruction in L2 classrooms. The study adopted the qualitative research approach and used interviews and observation as tools in collecting and analyzing the data. In all, twenty-six (26) people were interviewed. Six (6) teachers and twenty (20) pupils. The findings showed that teachers used L1 (Waali) where, necessary, especially when clarifying meaning, correcting errors and explaining difficult concepts. The study also identified that the use of L1 (Waali) was useful for effective learning and better understanding. The study recommended that, there should be a balanced use of first language. (L1) and second language (L2) in the classroom and that the L1 can be a useful tool to building a relationship between teachers and pupils in the classroom.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Education is understood to be a total human experience through which knowledge is acquired, faculties trained and skills developed (Knowles, 2014). Education is the backbone of development in every country and Ghana is no exception. Hence, there is the need to attach much significance to education of every citizen in the country. However, the standard of education of a country can be high only if pupils are well-versed in the official language or the language of education. “The use of the child’s first language in education has been shown to enhance the academic, linguistic, and cognitive achievement of learners” (Baker, 2001; P. 84, Inusah, 2016 P. 28 – 54). Education and language issues in Ghana are very complex because of the multi-lingual situation in most places across the country. In every corner of the country, young children are learning languages at home that differ from dominant language used in their broader social world. The use of the child’s primary language in education at least the early stages have been theoretically and empirically confirmed to be beneficial. Dakubu (1988) asserts that Ghana is a country which has several languages. Apart from the Northern and Upper Regions of the country, three main languages namely: Akan, Ga and Ewe are widely spoken, and each of these languages has several dialects.

Language is the ability to acquire and use complex systems of communication, particularly the human ability to do so. Sapir (1921) states that language is a purely human and non- instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols. Bloch and Trager (1942) define Language as a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group communicates. Before the introduction of formal education in Ghana, indigenous languages were used as the media of instruction but later considered as inadequate. The situation, however, changed with the

arrival of the missionaries, who resorted to the development of the local languages in both their educational and conversions efforts. The use of a Ghanaian language during the period 1529 to 1925 had gained root to the extent that when the British colonial government took over the administration of education in the country in 1925, it could not reverse the trend (Bamgbose, 2000).

The language of education in multilingual societies has always been a matter of concern to educators and educational planners. As Ouadraogo (2000 p, 89) pointed out “Education and language issues are very complex in Africa because of the multi-ethnic and multi-lingual situation”. The situation is even more severe when the official language of the nation is different from any of the indigenous languages. Ghana is still grappling with which language to use as the medium of instruction in the lower primary school (grade one to three). Medium of instruction is the language used by the teacher to teach, the 2002 language policy states, “English should be used as the medium of instruction from primary one, with a Ghanaian language studied as a compulsory subject to the Senior High School” (Ameyaw-Akumfi, 2002). The government on 15th August 2002 approved this policy to be implemented in September 2002. Since the announcement of the change of policy, the debate over the language of education has picked up momentum from academics, politicians, educators, educational planners, traditional rulers, and the general populace (Owu-Ewie 2006).

The use of the child’s first language in the classroom has been and will remain an issue that everyone has an opinion on. Some school of thought has frowned on the use of first language while those who are for it also have their own reasons and justifications.

The L1 is the first language a child speaks which is also called the mother tongue. According to Ashworth (1992), mother tongue or native language is the language which the person acquires in early years and which normally becomes her natural instrument of thought and communication.

On the other hand, L2 is the second language a person is learning in addition to his/her native language. L1 use must be banned in L2 classrooms from some researchers' perspective as they follow the basic tenets of English-only policy:

- 1) class must be monolingual;
- 2) a native speaker is an ideal teacher;
- 3) English must be learned as early as possible;

4) the standard of English language teaching drops if L1 is used in L2 classroom (Phillipson, 1992). The notion behind this policy is that the only use of L2 provides the pupils with the experience of a nearly real L2 context in which they think and communicate in L2 (Macaro, 2001). Therefore, L1 use and code-switching reduce the pupils' exposure to L2 and lengthen delays in L2 learning in a classroom (Macaro, 2001).

Krashen (1983) with his Natural Approach to language acquisition, proposed that pupils learn their second language much in the same way that they learn their first, and that L2 is best learned through massive amounts of exposure to the language with limited time spent using L1 (Tang, 2002). However, research has shown that the occasional use of L1 by both pupils and teachers increases both comprehension and learning of L2 (Cook, 2001; Tang, 2002).

Stern (1992) argues that it is impossible to keep L1 and L2 apart and concludes that: "the L1-L2 connection is an undisputable fact of life, whether we like it or not the new knowledge is learnt based on the previously acquired language" (p, 282). A total ban on the use of L1 will hinder the comprehension of the target language effectively. The lack of comprehension will prevent learners from achievement; therefore, L1 should be used when it is needed. As Weschler (1997) puts "use English where possible and L1 where necessary" (p, 5). Nation (1997) puts forth the contribution of L1 to comprehension and points out that the use of L1 has a "small, but important role to play in communicating meaning and content".

Schweers (1999) the teachers should integrate L1 into L2 classes to improve classroom dynamics, and states: "starting with L1 provides a sense of security and validates the learner's lived experiences, allowing them to express themselves". (P. 75)

Currently, Ghana's language policy under the auspices of the National Accelerated Literacy Program (NALAP) makes it mandatory for instruction from grade (1 to 3) and early childhood level to be more of the L1 (90%) and less of the L2 (10%) (Education Strategic Plan, 2003-2015; Ghana). The focus of the policy is to imbibe in the child the love for his/her local language and the ability to communicate in it effectively as a step towards the acquisition of the second language.

The knowledge of the mother tongue has positive effects for the learning of the second language. Teachers can use first language for teaching vocabulary of second language in class. There are some words in English which are not understood by the pupils. So, teachers use first language for better understanding. Hence, the use of first language has positive effects in the acquisition of second language. Many teachers believe that, the use of L1 provides more time to practice L2 because understanding is achieved much more rapidly. The key with teacher use of L1 is that, it is used for clarification purposes, after an attempt has been made to communicate ideas in L2 and pupils still appear not to understand. The idea is that L1 serves as a "supportive and facilitating role in the classroom" (Tang, 2002), and not that it is the primary language of communication.

Pupils who are forced to learn a language they do not identify with or find to be relevant will be more likely to overuse L1 to stay within their area of comfort. Many pupils find the exclusion of their mother tongue to be degrading to that tongue (Tang, 2002). However, if pupils' feel that their home language is a valuable part of the language learning process, they are likely to feel offended about learning a second language. The use of L1 as a medium of instruction during early years of schooling result in improved and faster acquisition of knowledge by pupils.

Andoh-Kumi (2000) highlights some of the reasons given by those who find the policy laudable. These people hold the view that, the LI serves as a bridge between the home and the school and children nevertheless consider teachers as ‘in lo-co parentis’ (on behalf of parents) because they speak their language. A school of thought that believes in the use of L1 asserts that, the use of LI as a medium of instruction enables the child to express him or herself freely in the classroom and, consequently, the child will not perceive any negative impression about school. They also claim that language is a fundamental human right for every individual and children should not be denied the use of the language they speak.

During a visit by the researcher to one of the basic schools in the circuit in which the researcher’s school is located, she observed that the practice of using L1 in an L2 class was not only done in her school. The use of L1 in an L2 class from the upper basic level contradicts the current language policy of education in Ghana. English language should be the medium of instruction from class four (4) while the dominant Ghanaian language is studied as a subject. It is against this backdrop that the researcher developed the interest to research into the impact of using L1 in an L2 classroom.

The study area for this research is Wa, the capital of the Upper West Region of Ghana. It is a multi-lingual society. Languages spoken include; English, Dagaare, Grunne, Mampruli, Hausa, Sissali, Twi but the dominant language spoken by the people is ‘Waali’. The community is a multi- religious society comprising of Christianity, Islam and Traditional religions.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The language to be used as medium of instruction in the basic school level has not only received attention from linguist but also parents, teachers, traditional rulers and the general populace. (Owu – Ewie, 2007).

Globally, instruction is central in the acquisition of knowledge and skills for total human development and more particularly in the wheels of education. Therefore, countries

are very mindful of the language to use to instruct their students. Conscious of this, Ghana has continuously re-designed her language policy since independence in order to bring about ease of knowledge and skills acquisition and development.

Most teachers in Ghana are still grappling with which language to use as medium of instruction especially from primary 4 onwards judging from the divergent views of language scholars on language of instruction.

Some scholars including Miles (2004) and McDonald (1993) have lauded the English only policy. These scholars disagree on the use of L1 in the classroom. They think that if pupils know that the teacher will use L1, they will stop processing information in L2; therefore, pupils will expect the teacher to clear up and explain anything they wish in the L1 accessed and understood, they will quit practicing and passing in L2 and shift to L1 anytime they like. Inusah (2016) and Andoh-Kumi (2000) also believe that Ghanaian languages are not well developed to handle subjects like science, mathematics and social studies. They hold the view that since the child learns language easily in his or her critical period, he or she should start using English as soon as he or she enters school because he or she will need English more than the Ghanaian Language in his or her academic.

The feeling behind this statement is that the sole use of L2 provides the pupils with the experience of a nearly real L2 context and experience in which they think and communicate in L2 (Macaro, 2001). A positive effect of using L2 only is that learners are able to acquire the L2 faster. Also it will provide learners with a nearly L2 experience. Learners generally should be immersed in the L2. This confirms earlier findings by (Wong, 2010) that the use of English as a sole medium of instruction improves students' performance in English, hence, L2 instead of L1 should be used as the medium of instruction in the classroom.

Conversely, there are some scholars who are in favour of the use of L1 in the classroom. L1 according to Cummins (2001) is the language that the child learns from family.

It is described as the child's first language, the language learnt at home from senior members of the family. Cook (2001) states that the L1 provides support for pupils to help each other. Pupils who are forced to learn a language they do not identify with and find to be relevant will be more likely to overuse L1 to stay within their comfort zone. Researchers like (Cook, 2001) assert that for L1 use, it serves as a precious cognitive tool that helps pupils to perceive the concepts and understand the world. According to Anton & Dicamilla (1999), L1 plays a potential role in the classroom.

Learning is mediated by cultural artefacts such as a language. A dialectical relationship exists between the pupils and the social world such as peers and teachers to serve the purpose of learning.

The socio-cultural theory also plays an important role in the cognitive development during learning a language, or the transformation of elementary mental processes into higher orders (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

One advantage of using the classroom atmosphere. Both teacher and pupils are given the opportunity to use L1 in certain situations. Allowing students to use L1 makes them feel less intimidated (Auerbach, 1993).

In addition, L1 is useful in managing the class: explaining grammar concepts through L1 saves time (Auerbach, 1993). Atkinson advises teachers to use L1 when a correlated structure does not exist in L2 such as a verb tense (as quoted in Harbord, 1992). Harbord (1992) asserts that the teachers can use L1 to simplify a complex activity. Eventually, these help teachers to achieve the objective of the lesson.

Some researchers believe that the use of the L1 in the classroom has negative effects. The L1 should be avoided in L2 class. Ellis (1984) claims that more language acquisition will take place if learners do not depend on their L1, or if they do not translate.

Frequent use of mother tongue in second language class may create dependency on using it, which can be an obstacle to learning the target language in an appropriate way. The target language should be used for all purposes in the classroom, even when the reasons for using it remain unclear (Hawks, 2001, p. 47).

Admittedly, it is concretely provable to say that the standard of education of a country can be high only if learners are well versed in the official language or the language of instruction. This adds to the problem in the Ghanaian classrooms as to whether the medium of instruction should be the child's L1 or English language.

The language policy of education in Ghana states that “in the first three years of primary education, the Ghanaian language leading in the local area is to be used as the medium of instruction while English is studied as a subject (Owu-Ewie, 2006). From primary 4 onwards, English language is supposed to be used as medium of instruction while Ghanaian language is studied as a subject. This means that all teachers from primary 4 to JHS 3 are expected to use English in the classroom but this is not the case. Despite the language policy of education and what it states, teachers go contrary to it. There have not been studies documented to this effect but the reality on the ground is that teachers from primary 4 to JHS 3 use L1 in their classrooms. The reason(s) why teachers use L1 in the classrooms when they should not, is unknown. A study like this will therefore help expose the reality on ground; the reasons why teachers use L1 and the effects if any. It is therefore important to research into this to come out with findings that will either affirm what is there or otherwise.

It is against this backdrop that the researcher developed the interest to research on the impact of using L1 in the English medium classrooms in the Upper Basic Level of St. Aidan's Anglican Basic School in the Wa Municipality of the Upper West Region of Ghana.

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The main objective of the study is

1. To identify the reasons and effects of using L1 as the medium of instruction in an L2 class.
2. Identify the impact of using the L1 as the medium of instruction with focus on identifying the impact of using the L1 as a medium of instruction.
3. Address the preferred language of the pupils.

### **1.4 Research questions**

The following questions were set to guide and direct the research work,

1. Why do teachers use L1 in an L2 class in Ghanaian upper primary and JHS classes?
2. What are the effects of using L1 as a medium of instruction?
3. What strategies can be used to encourage effective use of L1 as a medium of instruction in basic schools?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

It is hoped that measures and approaches based on the findings of this study would help pupils to understand what they learn in the classroom and the medium of instruction used by the teachers. It will also be as a source of reference to teachers and stakeholders when they are developing curriculum for academic purpose. Again, it will serve as a reference material to future researchers that will go a long way to add knowledge to the existing knowledge and improve practice.

### **1.6 Limitations**

The researcher generally encountered several challenges during the research work. Any kind of research requires much time, undoubtedly the issue of using L1 in classroom needs more research and much time. The time for the data collection coincided with the examination period of the schools which made it difficult to get the data. It was also difficult

to observe the classes because some of the teachers did not like to be observed during lessons. Again, the researcher encountered difficulties in carrying out the interview sessions with the pupils, as most were young and very indifferent in answering the interview questions. There were inadequate funds to carry out extensive research as well as difficulties in translating some of the technical terms from the local dialect to English language.

### **1.7 Delimitations**

The study is limited to the Upper Primary and Junior High Classes of Saint Aidan's Anglican basic school in the Wa municipality. The study is restricted to the use of L1 in an L2 class in the upper basic level of education, the reason why teachers use L1 in an L2 class and the impact of using L1 in an L2 class. The interviewees are teachers who are teaching at the upper basic level (p4 to JHS3) and pupils from primary 4 to JHS 3. The study was conducted in St. Aidan's Anglican Basic School in the Wa municipality. The school used for the study is a basic school since the language policy of education is obligatory for all public schools.

The choice of the upper basic level emanates from the fact that teachers begin to use English language as the medium of instruction to teach pupils from upper primary 4 onwards after it has been taught as a compulsory subject from Kindergarten to primary 3 and the native language prevalent in the area used as the medium of instruction.

### **1.8 Organization of the Study**

The main body is divided into five (5) chapters. Chapter 1 contains an introduction of the study, the background to the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, limitations, delimitations and organization of the study. Chapter 2 looks at review of literature. This is followed by Chapter 3: methodology, a brief introduction, the study area, research design, data collection procedures, population and sampling, intervention and analysis. Chapter 4 consists of data presentation, analysis, and discussion of the main findings. Chapter 5 includes summary of the study, conclusion and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter seeks to review scholarly work related to this research. Paramount among literature is the language policy of Ghana, the positive and negative effects of using L1 in the classroom, pupil's perspective on the use of L1, strategies to enhance the use of L1, use of L2 as a medium of instruction in L2 classroom and lastly, the negative and positive effects of the use of L2.

#### **2.1 Historical over view of the language Policy of education in Ghana**

After attaining independence, Ghana adopted English Language as the prescribed language of instruction at all levels of the Ghanaian educational setup. This policy was changed with the unveiling of the 1957 language policy of Ghana which states that, in the first three years of primary education, the Ghanaian language leading in the local area is to be used as the medium of instruction whilst English is studied as a subject (Owu-Ewie, 2006). Ghana's language policy has lacked consistency and has fluctuated over time. In the year 2002, the Ministry of Education started a policy of an English only program where English served as the official language of instruction of all Ghanaian educational programs, including early childhood education (Ministry of Education; Ghana, 2002). The policy has suffered many ups and downs with criticism from the public especially from the educated elite. The inconsistency in the language policy of education began even before independence with the colonial masters and their different ideologies in education. The over view of the language policy of education is discussed based on three major political happenings in the country over the years. These are the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras (Owu-Ewie, 2006).

### **2.1.1 The pre-colonial era**

Bilingual education in Ghana started with the introduction of formal education which began with the castle schools and continued by the Christian missionaries (1529 – 1925). Although the castles and forts along the shores of Ghana were built for slave trade it was later turned into schools. The schools were for the children of the missionaries and for the children of wealthy chiefs and clerks they needed to train to help them with their trade (Graham, 1971). The local languages were not used in the schools because the white fathers who were also the teachers could not speak the local language. The languages used were those of the home country (the metropolitan languages). Portuguese, Dutch, Danish, and English were used as media of instruction wherever and whenever the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Danes, and the English respectively were in power. The phenomenon however became different with the coming of the missionaries who depended on the development of the local languages for both their educational and religious needs. The Basel and Bremen missionaries were more successful in this area than the Wesleyans (Graham, 1971). The language policies during this period were as varied as they were independent (Andoh-Kumi, 1994). The use of a Ghanaian language during the period from 1529 – 1925 had gained root to the extent that when the British colonial government took over the administration of education in the country in 1925, it could not reverse the trend (Bangbose, 2000). During this period a systematic pattern began.

### **2.1.2 The Colonial Era**

While the Basel and the Bremen missions encouraged the use of the local languages (Twi, Ga, and Ewe) as the medium of instruction, the Wesleyans and the British government adopted the use of English language as the medium of instruction. The Basel missions committee instructed that the native language of the people should never be suppressed by the English language. This step was taken because they realised that the gospel was best spread in

the language of the convert and therefore made interest in linguistic work in the local language important in selecting the missionaries (McWilliam & Poh, 1975 cited by Kwapong, 2006). The Wesleyans on the other hand stuck to the use of English.

One of the conditions for a public primary school to receive grand- in- aid was that the subject should be reading and writing in the English language. The curriculum did not cater for the teaching or the use of the native language in spite of the work that the Christian missions had done in the native language.

Conversely, when Gordon Guggisberg publicised the 1925 Education Ordinance, the native language was given an official recognition for the first time (McWilliam & Poh, 1975). The policy demanded that the local language of an area be used as a medium of instruction at the lower primary level (1 -3) while English is learnt as a subject of study. At the upper primary level (4 – 6) the native language was to be replaced by English as medium of instruction. It can be seen that the pre-independence saw an encouraging trend in language learning and use. Native languages (Twi, Ewe, Fante, and Ga) became school certificate subjects from the 1930/1931 academic year. In this regard Ghanaian language and English language gained the necessary attention and their deserving places in the Ghanaian education system.

### **2.1.3 The Post-Colonial Era**

The period 1920 – 1950 saw the use of Ghanaian language as medium of instruction but this changed from 1955. The British government by this time was gradually handing over power to Kwame Nkrumah and his Convention People's Party (CPP) government. From 1966 – 1972 there was another change in policy. The National Liberation Council (NLC) appointed the Kwapong Committee in 1967 to look into the use of English as a medium of instruction. The committee suggested that “a Ghanaian language be used as medium of instruction for the first three years of the primary school course, the change to English as a medium of

instruction should start in the fourth year while the Ghanaian language continue to be a subject of study; in the metropolitan and urban areas the change of English as medium of instruction may commence earlier than the fourth year of the course.”(Ministry of Information, 1967, p.54). The suggestion was however rejected by the NLC and instead they proposed that Ghanaian language should be the medium of instruction in primary one class. In 1969, the Busia government came into power and accepted the suggestion made by the Kwapong Committee and in 1970, the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture made Ghanaian language the medium of instruction for the first three years of primary education. It also added that where possible the Ghanaian language could be used for the next three years.

*“it is now a government policy that the main Ghanaian languages at present provided for in the curriculum of primary and middle schools be used as the medium of instruction in the first three years of the primary school course and where the subject makes it possible in the three years as well... (McWilliam & Poh, 1975, p. 119 cited by Kwapong, 2006. p.2)*

Similarly, the Dzobo Committee (1973) recommended the use of the language as a medium of instruction for the three years of the child’s education. The Basic Education Reforms initiated in Ghana in 1987 endorsed the language policy recommended by the Dzobo Committee (Ministry of Education Policy Guidelines on Education, 1988). The Basic Education Reforms Review Committee (1994) also recommended “the intensification of training of Ghanaian language teachers and that posting of newly trained teachers should as far as possible consider their ability to use and teach the Ghanaian language where they are posted to” (Education Reform Review Committee Report, 1994, p. 17).

In spite of the legal backing provided for the language policy by successive governments, the educational system had not observed it to the latter. While in some schools

the local language is used as a medium of instruction in the first three years and in some cases beyond, others especially private schools and urban public schools use English as a medium of instruction from primary one.

In 2001, the Ghana Education Service (GES) in connection with the German Technical Co-operation (GTZ) engaged in production of textbooks for subjects such as Mathematics. Integrated Science and Social Studies were written in selected local languages in support of the language policy that is the use of the local language as a medium of instruction. Based on this, teachers from the teacher training colleges were invited for training on the use of the books. Ironically, as the project was in progress, the minister of education in February 2002 informed parliament of the ministry's decision to change the language policy. He submitted as follows:

The ministry of education present policy on the study and use of Ghanaian language in primary schools is that, all pupils should study a Ghanaian language in school and that pupils in primary one to primary three should be taught in a Ghanaian language. However, much as this policy is desirable, its operationalization needs to be carefully thought out to ensure effective implementation and until then, the following policy will apply: instruction at all levels of primary schools will be in English (Parliamentary Debate, Feb. 28, 2002 cited by Kwapong 2006, p.5). Ghanaians received the news on the new policy with mixed feelings. Some supported the minister's decision that English language should be used as a medium of instruction at all levels of education (Davidson, 2002). They argued that using English as a medium of instruction at all levels would not only improve academic performance but enable pupils to be able to read instructions and answer questions appropriately and also help them develop certain speech habit. Conversely, Boakye (2002), the Linguistics Department of the University of Ghana (2002), Graduate Students Association of Ghana (GRASAG), (2002), and the National Association of Graduate Teachers (NAGRAT), (2002) all cited by Kwapong

(2006), warned the government to reconsider its decision on the language policy because they thought, among other things that the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction for the first three years helps to breach the gap between the home and the school. Okyere (1999 cited by Kwapong, 2006) reported in a research conducted by the Center for Research on Improving Quality of Primary Education in Ghana (CRIQPEG) of the University of Cape Coast (UCC) that pupils in the primary school found it difficult to cope with instruction in English.

Also, the ministry suggested that every child was to learn an approved Ghanaian language from the beginning of 1971. Some of the languages were Akan, Ewe, Nzema, and Ga. Meanwhile, in May 2002, the then sector minister, Professor Ameyaw Ekumfi outlined a number of reasons why the policy had to be abrogated and replaced with a new one. The reasons given included the following:

1. The previous policy of using a Ghanaian language as a medium of instruction in the lower primary level was abused, especially in rural schools. Teachers never spoke English in class even in primary six.
2. Students are unable to speak and write good English sentences even by the time they complete the senior secondary school (high school).
3. The multi lingual situation in the country especially in urban schools has made instruction in a Ghanaian language very difficult. The source added that a study conducted by the Ministry of Education showed that 50 – 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 group, 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 been able to speak a Ghanaian 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

The policy was effected from September 2002 with the then minister indicating that the new policy will improve the pupils’ level of comprehension of the English language which is used in examinations at all cycles of education and expressed optimism that the new policy will improve the result of school children considerably. As at now, the language policy of education states that the mother tongue prevalent in the area should be used as the medium of instruction from kindergarten to primary three and English which is taught as a subject from kindergarten to primary three is used as the sole medium of instruction from upper primary upwards. A diagrammatic representation of the language policy of education in Ghana can be seen below:

**Table 1: Overview of language policy of education in Ghana**

PERIOD	1 <sup>ST</sup> YEAR	2 <sup>ND</sup> YEAR	3 <sup>RD</sup> YEAR	4 <sup>TH</sup> YEAR
1529– 1925				
a) Castle school Era	-	-	-	-
b) Missionary school Era	+	+	+	-
1925 – 1951	+	+	+	-
1951 – 1955	+	+	-	-
1956 – 1966	-	-	-	-
1967 – 1969	+	-	-	-
1970 – 1973	+	+	+	+
1974 – 2002 (Sept)	+	+	+	-
Present	-	-	-	-

Culled from Owu-Ewie (2007)

Key: + means a Ghanaian language was used as the medium of instruction

Means a Ghanaian language was not used as a medium of instruction

## 2.2 Use of L1 in Education

The idea of using English only (L2) policy has been lauded by many scholars (McDonald, 1993; Miles, 2004) who disagree on the use of L1 in the classroom. This is

because they are proponents of English-only policy in a classroom and consider that if pupils know that the instructor will use L1, then they will stop processing information in L2; therefore, pupils will expect the teacher to clear up and explain anything they wish (e.g., The significance of a new word) in L1. Furthermore, most pupils know if their L1 can easily be accessed and understood, they will quit practicing and passing in L2 and shift to L1 anytime they like. Scholars who frown at L1 as the medium of instruction include but not limited to (Andoh-Kumi, 2000; Inusah, 2016).

These scholars suggest that, considering the multi-lingual nature of the country, English Language (L2) should be used as a medium of instruction. They also believe that Ghanaian languages are not developed enough to handle subjects like Science, Mathematics and Social Studies. To them, any education given through the medium of a Ghanaian Language can only be an inferior one. They also further claim the use of the local languages breeds tribalism and holds the nation back industrially, economically and scientifically. They hold the view that since the child learns language easily in his or her critical period, he or she should start using English as soon as he or she enters school because he or she will need English more than the Ghanaian Language in his or her academic life. Consequently, the proponents of exclusive L2 use prohibit L1 use since they know that pupils do not work hard but simply begin thinking in L1 (Ford, 2009). Hence, they suggest that L2 instead of L1 be used as the medium of instruction in the classroom.

The L1 use must be abolish in the classrooms from some proponents' perspective as they see over the basic tenets of English-only policy:

- class must be monolingual;
- a native speaker is an ideal teacher;
- English must be detected as early as possible;
- The standard of English language teaching drops if L1 is used in a classroom

(Phillipson, 1992).

The feeling behind this statement is that the sole role of L2 provides the pupils with the experience of a nearly real L2 context in which they think and communicate in L2 (Macaro, 2001). Thus, L1 use and code-switching reduces the pupils' exposure to L2 and lengthen delays in L2 learning in a classroom (Macaro, 2001)

However, since 1987 there have been educational reviews and interventions like Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) and the 2002 Presidential Education Committee, and none has identified the use of Ghanaian language as a medium of instruction in schools, as a reason for the fallen standard of Education in the country, especially at the Basic level. Rather, the reports of such reviews call for the strengthening of the use of the native language in schools (Ministry of Education 1996, 2003)

Mother tongue according to Cummins (2001) is the language that the child learns from family. It is described as the child's first language, the language learnt at home from senior members of the family. As Cook (2001) states, 'L1 provides support for pupils to help each other'. Pupils' who are forced to learn a language they do not identify with and find to be relevant will be more likely to overuse L1 to stay within their area of comfort.

Many researchers (Meyer, 2008, Cook 2001) assert that for L1 use, it serves as a precious cognitive tool that helps pupils to perceive the concepts and understand the world. L1 use function as a social tool used to answer the role of communication in the lower primary. According to Anton and Dicamilla (1999) socio-cultural theory, L1 plays a potential use in the classrooms. Learning is mediated by cultural art crafts such as a language. A dialectical relationship exists between the pupils and the social world such as peers and teachers to serve the purpose of learning. The socio-cultural theory also plays crucial role in the cognitive development during learning a language, or the transformation of elementary mental processes into higher orders (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

Jones (2013) suggests, "at very low levels", communicative activities can be quite troublesome set up, so using the pupils' mother tongue to give instructions is Warranted.

Utilizing the mother tongue in this way effectively enhance a chance for real communication between the teacher and pupils. Another use of the mother tongue involves learners communicating with one another about a task. This can take the form of comparing answers, explaining grammatical structures within the task (Atkinson 1987, p. 243) or as Eldridge (1996 p, 306) observed in his classroom, using the mother tongue to comment, evaluate and discuss the task at hand. The L1 can be used in the L2 classroom as a tool to reduce affective filters (Meyer, 2008; Norman, 2008). Norman (2008) states “Pupils are often unresponsive, inattentive, and unwilling to speak in class”. However, he observes that the opposite was true when he occasionally used the L1 in class with the same pupils. Often, pupils will not speak out of fear of embarrassment (Nation, 2003; Meyer, 2008).

Furthermore, if pupils want their teachers to use the L1 but the teachers do not perceive or respond to this need, it can lead to an unhappy classroom experience for all (Carson, 2012). Careful use of the L1 can assist pupils to make higher cognitive adjustments while learning a language. Used effectively, the L1 can be a facilitating, and not just an interfering factor, to overcome the assumptions created by the first language (Yamamoto-Wilson 1997). Furthermore, if instructors know both the L1 and L2 languages, they can recognize, anticipate and correct the L1 assumptions by comparing the two languages (Barker, 2003; Nation, 2003; Brown, 1994).

Although a potentially useful tool, how the L1 is used determines whether it is detrimental or helpful (Carson, 2012). This depends on the goals, type of language, materials, method and procedures used in the classroom (Weschler, 1997; & Carson, 2012). Unlike the nearly universal success individuals have in learning their L1, attempts to learn the L2 can fail for many reasons, such as the inability of teachers to make meaningful connections between the L2 and the L1 (Nation, 2003; Norman, 2008). There is no perfect balance or model for using the L1, rather usage should be flexible and adapted to pupils’ needs at appropriate times and ways (Atkinson, 1993; Weschler, 1997; Nation, 2003; Norman, 2008).

Leki and Silva (2010) believes that L1 use helps L2 learning as the mere L2 use in the classroom avoids the advancement of concept developing in pupils' mind because it exercises their mind and disconnect from their formerly developed thoughts and concepts. A teacher, as the origin of knowledge, promotes an active interaction among the pupils and provides meaningful activities to achieve this objective. The instructor holds the agency to check the content and learning through the act of code-switching which is a primarily non-detachable step in second language interactions. By switching to L1 in L2 or bilingual classrooms, the teacher can simplify his meaning, define or elaborate on the concepts and get to the important points understandable.

The L1 must not be barred from the classroom teaching because it is a helpful tool in language learning and the instructors must include code-shifting in their class interactions in a non-damaging Way (Eldridge, 1996).

Atkinson (1987, p. 244) suggests using the pupils' L1 to “discuss classroom methodology”, particularly at early stages. He reasons that, pupil possess a right to recognize what they are doing in the classroom. This can be experienced as particularly useful if the instructor desires to put in close to new communicative type of activities involving pair or group work that is unfamiliar to the pupils. Many pupils have only ever been instructed in a traditional teacher-fronted English language classroom, so there is a potential risk that they will not accept change easily without an explanation.

Andoh-Kumi (2000) talks about some of the reasons given by those who find the policy laudable. These people hold the view that the LI serves as a bridge between the home and the school and children nevertheless consider teachers to act as ‘in lo-co parentis’ (on behalf of parents) because they speak their language. A school of thought that believes in the utilization of the LI asserts that the use of LI as a medium of instruction enables the child to show him or herself freely in the classroom and, therefore, the minor will not perceive any

negative feeling about the school. They further claim that oral communication is a central human right of every individual and children should not be denied the use of the words they talk.

Warford (2007) also states how bad and ineffective a method of education which ignores the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in the early stages of teaching can be, firstly, he claims that teachers set themselves an impossible job. He takes note that children cannot develop thinking powers while struggling to take a strange speech. He further explains that the early years at school should be used to extend the child's background of thoughts and their power of self-expression.

Andoh-Kumi (1994) re-affirms the assertion of that "... The kid should learn to love and respect the mental heritage of his people, and the innate and necessary expression of this knowledge is his language." He therefore warns that there is a crippling and destruction of the pupil's productive power by pushing him to show himself in a language alien to himself and the brilliance of his subspecies. He explains that the local language can be a strong tool in instruction and learning, especially in the very early stages of the school organization. He insists that a secure grounding in the mother tongue of the child helps for the proper instruction and learning of foreign languages.

Shaw (2010) also maintains that the role of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction creates a happy learning atmosphere in the class - lots of laughs and healthy discussions - whereas the use of L2 as medium of instruction makes most learners feel very distressed and very pitiful in class. According to Appel (2010), in school education, the mother tongue with its deep ethnic heritage has an important position. He argues that it should be the medium of instruction at the earliest levels, especially for an introduction to the field of literature. Many components, according to this study, decide which language is practiced at the primary school stage. Some may be political; others may be of a practical nature. The

school should therefore widen the experience of the pupil in a meaningful way through the role of the words he or she talks. He reasons that the mother tongue has an important role to play in the learning of a foreign language.

Fawcett (2016) contends that home and school make highly contrasting psychological demands of a new kid. According to him if the mother tongue is not used, the school becomes a traumatic experience rather than the blank space of pleasure in discovery and creativity that it should be.

Ariza (2002) maintains that the role of mother tongue as medium of education at all layers of instruction provides a confident, non-threatening learning environment for pupils, and they make progress in English comfortably. He emphasized that learners became more active, learn more subject matter, enjoy school more, and improve in English. Even so, the litany of arguments in favor of the role of the mother tongue (L1) as a medium of education, there are equally argument about the demand to use English as a medium of instruction. Inusah (2016) observes that pupils, who have not learnt to read, face the challenge of acquiring the initial concepts and skills of literacy in the English language. English language learners (ELL) in Ghana at the basic level come from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds which can easily influence their L2 learning with interference from their L1 experience

### **2.2.1 Positive effects of Using L1 in the Classroom**

Audio-lingual method, the communicative approach, or task-based learning have advocated L2 only method. One reason of using this method is that the exposure to L2 outside the classroom is rather scarce. As Cook says that “the use of L1 is perceived to hinder the learning of L2 “(as quoted in Zacharias, 2004). On the contrary, many ELT professionals have suggested reexamining the English only approach in the L2 classroom. Bodomo highlights that there is much potential for using L1 in language learning contexts rather than abusing it

(as quoted in Juarez and Oxbrow 2008). Therefore, when not used excessively, L1 is beneficial in L2 classroom.

First, the use of L1 enhances relaxed classroom atmosphere. Both teacher and pupils are given the opportunity to use L1 in certain situations. In such a less threatening classroom, pupils' anxiety can be minimized. Research finds that allowing pupils to use L1 makes them feel less intimidated (Auerbach 1993). In addition, pupils feel free to express their ideas. Whenever they do not know a lexical item in L2, they can switch to the one in L1, for example "How do you say 'menerkam' in English?" Bolitho sees this phenomenon as a valuable humanistic element in the classroom (Atkinson 1987). When this happens, learning takes place.

In addition, L1 is useful in managing the class. Explaining grammar concept through L1 saves time. For novice pupils, grammar explanation in L2 is useless because their language repertoire is limited (as quoted in Auerbach, 1993). Atkinson advises teachers to use L1 "when a correlate structure does not exist in L2 such as a verb tense" (as quoted in Harbord 1992). Checking pupils' comprehension and correcting errors can be conducted in L1. This strategy is believed to be very helpful to avoid misunderstanding (Harbord, 1992). Giving instruction in L1 helps teachers keep the class moving at early levels. Harbord (1992) asserts that teachers can use L1 to simplify a complex activity. Moreover, a research done by Lameta-Tufuga reveals those pupils can fully understand the content of the written task through L1 (as quoted in Nation 2003). Eventually, these procedures help teachers to achieve the objective of the lesson.

Most importantly, permitting pupils to use L1 accelerates pupils' L2 acquisition process. Pupils learn new vocabulary faster through L1. Laufer and Shmueli claim "studies comparing the effectiveness of various methods for learning always come up with the result that an L1 translation is the most effective" (as quoted in Nation 2001). If pupils are aware of

similarities and differences between L1 and L2, they can avoid errors which could be derived from the transfer of their L1. Tan (2015) takes the view that the use of L1 enables pupils to “notice the gap between their inner grammars and the target language and ultimately, through constant hypothesis testing, achieve higher levels of grammatical as well as communicative competence”. This awareness contributes to L2 acquisition process.

Even though many language teachers oppose the issue of L1 use in L2 classroom, literature provide evidence that L1 use in L2 classroom is advantageous if not overused. Due to friendly classroom atmosphere, pupils feel more comfortable so they are motivated to learn. The use of L1 makes it possible for the teacher to manage the class more effectively. Through L1, pupils experience faster L2 acquisition process.

### **2.2.2 Negative effects of using L1 in the classroom**

Some researchers believe that L1 should be avoided in L2 class. Ellis (1984) claims that more language acquisition will take place if learners do not depend on their L1, or if they do not translate. Frequent use of mother tongue in foreign language class may create dependency on using it, which can be an obstacle to learn target language in an appropriate way. Many linguists insisted that the target language should be used for all purposes in the classroom, even when the reasons for using it remained unclear (Hawks 2001, p. 47). Pupils need much exposure as possible to the second or target language to acquire it. This requires them to use the L2. Target language acquisition depends on exposure; the more learners are exposed to a language the better they will acquire it.

### **2.2.3 Pupils’ perspective on the use of L1**

Although pupils’ views on the role of the first language in English classrooms are valuable, they have not been discussed much. When dealt with, the discussion has been usually in connection to the viewpoints of the instructors. For example, Sharma (2006) carried a survey on the usage of the Nepali language in Nepal’s secondary schools. The researcher

looked at the frequency of first language use and the attitudes of teachers and pupils towards the role of the first language. Sharma found that teachers used Nepali to explain new concepts and vocabulary, to give instructions to activities, and to explain grammar rules. Pupils used Nepali more than the teachers did for various reasons, especially to explain new vocabulary and grammatical principles.

Orekan (2011) carried out a survey on the role of the first language in English classes. The outcome of this study was indifferent from the outcomes of the survey conducted by Sharma. The report also claimed that the first language use in English language classes helped the pupils improve both their language learning and their comprehension of other fields and not just English. The researcher thought that pupils should be able to utilize their first language when they need to, as this could be a facilitator of learning rather than a restrictive. Although those studies were valuable, they did not carry much information about the reasons behind the different positions the pupils received.

Atkinson (1987, p. 242) agrees with Bolitho (1983) that allowing pupils to practice their L1 brings a “valuable ‘humanistic’ element” into the language classroom, permitting pupils’ to express themselves clearly and effectively. The premise here is that, in one case pupils expressed what they desire to read in their L1, then the teacher can help them articulate it in English.

#### **2.2.4 Strategies to enhance the use of L1**

It is broadly acknowledged that teaching strategies are multidimensional – how good they operate depends on the context in which they are used. There is no single strategy that can ensure better student results. However, research has highlighted several practices that enable learning among pupils. These include techniques such as strong classroom management, clear instructions, helping pupils engage meaningfully with the learning content, applying creative assessment and providing constructive supportive feedback.

Auerbach (1993) suggests the following possible occasions should be for using the mother tongue: negotiation of the syllabus and the lesson; record keeping; classroom management; scene setting; language analysis; presentation of rules governing grammar, phonology, morphology, and spelling; discussion of cross-cultural issues; instructions or prompts; explanation of errors; and assessment of comprehension.

### **2.3.1 Use of L2 as a medium of instruction in L2 classroom**

The idea of using English only (L2) policy has been lauded by many scholars (McDonald, 1993; Miles, 2004) who disagree on the use of L1 in the classroom. This is because they are proponents of English-only policy in a classroom and consider that if pupils know that the instructor will use L1, then they will stop processing information in L2; therefore, pupils will expect the teacher to clear up and explain anything they wish (e.g., The significance of a new word) in L1. Furthermore, most pupils know if their L1 can easily be accessed and understood, they will quit practicing and passing in L2 and shift to L1 anytime they like. Scholars who frown at L1 as the medium of instruction include but not limited to (Andoh-Kumi, 2000; & Inusah, 2016).

These scholars suggest that, considering the multi-lingual nature of the country, English Language (L2) should be used as a medium of instruction. They also believe that Ghanaian languages are not developed enough to handle subjects like Science, Mathematics and Social Studies. To them, any education given through the medium of a Ghanaian Language can only be an inferior one. They also further claim the use of the local languages breeds tribalism and holds the nation back industrially, economically and scientifically. They hold the view that since the child learns language easily in his or her critical period, he or she should start using English as soon as he or she enters school because he or she will need English more than the Ghanaian Language in his or her academic life. Consequently, the proponents of exclusive L2 use prohibit L1 use since they know that pupils do not work hard

but simply begin thinking in L1 (Ford, 2009). Hence, they suggest that L2 instead of L1 be used as the medium of instruction in the classroom.

L1 use must be abolished in the classrooms from some proponents' perspective as they see over the basic tenets of English-only policy which are:

1. Class must be monolingual
  2. A native speaker is an ideal teacher
  3. English must be detected as early as possible
  4. The standard of English language teaching drops if L1 is used in a classroom
- (Phillipson, 1992).

The feeling behind this statement is that the sole role of L2 provides the pupils with the experience of a nearly real L2 context in which they think and communicate in L2 (Macaro, 2001). Thus, L1 use and code-switching reduces the pupils' exposure to L2 and lengthen delays in L2 learning in a classroom (Macaro, 2001).

According to Nation (2001) where learners have little opportunity to meet and use the L2 outside the classroom it is very important L2 use is maximized in the classroom. One way to do this is to carry out classroom management in the L2 (English). These involves things like giving pupils instructions, (for example), take out your books and write what is on the board into your books, explaining activities (eg get into group of fives) and controlling behaviour eg stop making noise, get seated. This requires a little bit of careful thought by the teacher so that the vocabulary and structures used in the language of classroom management are also useful. If the use of English in the classroom management is done in a carefully planned and consistent way then classroom management can be a very effective for learning through meaning focus input. Learners generally should be immersed in the L2.

### **2.3.2 Positive effects of using L2 in an L2 classroom**

The use of L2 as medium of instruction has both positive and negative effects. One of the positive effects is that learners are able to acquire the L2 faster. The official language of

the country is English and all examinations except Ghanaian language are conducted in English. It is therefore important that learners become conversant and fluent in the language. Using English as medium of instruction at all levels would not only improve academic performance but will enable pupils to be able to read instruction and answer questions well and help them to develop speech habit (Davidson, 2002). Also a positive use of L2 in an L2 class will provide pupils with the experience of a nearly real L2 context in which they think and communicate in L2. This agrees with earlier findings by (Wong, 2010) that the use of English as a sole medium of instruction improves students' performance in English.

### **2.3.3 How to encourage the use of L2**

To encourage the use of L2 in an L2 class, certain strategies will have to be employed to facilitate the use of English as medium of instruction in the classroom. One of these strategies will be the strict enforcement of the language policy of education in Ghana. The lack of enforcement of the policy has been a major factor underpinning the use of English in the upper basic level. There is no supervision to ensure that the language policy is followed strictly. Government, for that matter, the Ghana Education Service (GES) should put measures in place to achieve this. There should also be an improvement in the teaching of English. Teachers need to be trained in using the English language as a medium of instruction so that they can enhance the use of English in the classroom. Teachers of English must also be conversant and confident in the teaching of English language. Another way is the extension of the use of L1 as the medium of instruction. It should be extended to at least primary four or five so that pupil can transfer that knowledge and skills acquired in the L1 to the learning and use of the L2 (English). The use of L1 as medium of instruction just to primary three and the transition process is premature and abrupt respectively. The transition process should be gradual. This is in accordance with suggestion by Owu-Ewie (2003, 2013) that the language policy of education in Ghana should be changed from the early –exit transitional to the late-exit transitional bilingual education model. This suggestion is also in line with Ball (2011)

that for a transition programme to realize its outcome there should be about six to eight years of schooling in the L1 before transitioning to the use of the L2

## **2.4 Conclusion**

"Many researchers now believe that the search for a 'best method' is 'a futile effort (Lewis, 1993 p, 189), because there is no specific method to teach a new language. Teachers need to choose effective techniques and methods which can be beneficial for pupils. Many methods and techniques have their place, depending on the different circumstances of the teaching environment. It depends on the teacher how he/she identify the use of teaching tools or techniques in an efficient manner.

Using mother tongue in a foreign language class is a great source of showing respect to the learners' culture. Thus, they will be encouraged to respect other cultures too. It is important to bring into account the learners' experience and prior knowledge of the universe. Thus, to us, before we think about banning or using L1 in the classroom, we should think about applying it in an efficient manner. It can be another source which is available to assist learners understand what is being said in L2. But whatever other resource we utilize such as images, mimes, drawings, songs, videos, limericks, this resource can be used either poorly or effectively. Just as we're trying to keep improving with all the new technological advances to instruct people who are more and more hooked on technology, we should block up a while and ponder on how to properly use L1 in the school classroom.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This part looks at the methodology of the study. It considers the study area, research design, research method, sampling and sample size, source of data and methods of data analysis.

#### 3.1 Study Area

The study area is Wa Municipal, the capital of Upper West Region of Ghana. The population of Wa according to the 2012 Population and Housing Census is 102,446 representing 38.9 percent of the region's total population. Males constitute 49.8 percent and females represent 50.2 percent. Almost ninety percent (88.4%) of the population is urban. The selected school for the research is Saint Aidan's Anglican school.

#### 3.2 Research Design

The study employed descriptive and explanatory type of research. The descriptive research design served as the basis for the collection of information without changing the environment. Again, the explanatory research design aided the researcher to attempt connecting ideas to understand causes, effects and meanings to explain "what is going on". Qualitative approaches were used to collect primary data. The qualitative method was done using interview guide and non-participant observations. According to Best and Khan (2006) an interview is in a sense an oral questionnaire and the major reason for interview is the fact that many people are more willing to talk than to write and therefore it will provide data more readily and fully than on a questionnaire. In a face to face meeting a researcher is able to encourage participants and help probe more deeply into a problem. Through respondent's facial and bodily expressions and tone of voice, an interviewer acquires information that

would not have been conveyed in a written reply. An attempt was made to keep the interviewing time short; a maximum of five minutes was used.

An observation technique was also employed to find out the sort of interaction that goes on between the students and teachers in the classroom. The researcher observed student and teachers as a non-participant observer by sitting among the students while the teachers taught. Patton (2002) is of the view that observation is very important in research because, it helps to collect data on a nonverbal behavior. It is also important when one wants to study in detail the behavior that occurs in a particular setting.

### **3.3 Data Collection Method**

#### **3.3.1. Interview**

The researcher collected data through interviews and observations. Conducting interviews is a highly recommended method of collecting data in research. In a Face-to-face interview, the interviewee needs to pay attention to the questions to answer them appropriately. This further provides the interviewer an opportunity to pick up cues and enquire for details. The questions discussed in the interviews provided information for the qualitative discussion of the study. The answers of the participants (teachers) provided more details about the use of L1 in English classrooms (L2). Again, classroom observation is a quantitative method of measuring classroom behaviors. After observing each class, the researcher got a clear picture of using L1 in L2 classrooms. The collection of data was based on primary source (Pupils and Teachers). Before administering the interview questions, the demographic information of the interviewee (teachers) used in the study was taken. Basic information relevant to the study was collected from the teachers.

These were:

- i. Class taught
- ii. Academic qualification

- iii. Number of years in the teaching profession
- iv. The native language (L1) of the teacher
- v. Knowledge about the language policy of Education in Ghana.

In all, 26 people were interviewed. Out of the 26, 6 were teachers made up of 3 teachers from upper primary four to six (4-6) and 3 from the Junior High School. Twenty pupils were interviewed, ten (10) from primary four to six (4-6) and ten (10) from the Junior High School, form one, two and three (1, 2, 3). From the information that was collected from the teachers, one (1) out of the six (6) teachers wasn't a native speaker of the dominant Ghanaian language (Waali) in the area. It was realized however that, that teacher understood Waali and could speak it too, but not fluently.

### **3.3.2 Interview Guide**

To capture information that would likely be distorted or withheld with the use of only one method (McNeill, 1990, p. 23), the qualitative method was complemented by a quantitative method such as in-depth interviews to enhance the validity of the data. This was done using interview guide which consisted of series of broad interview questions (semi-structured) such that the researcher was free to explore and review. As a guide, it is to prevent deviations from the issues being discussed. It was used to obtain information from teachers. Questions contained in the interview guide included the following sample

1. Why do you use L1 in an L2 classroom during instructions?
2. What are the effects of using L1 as a medium of instruction?
3. What strategies can be used to encourage effective use of L1 as a medium of instruction in basic schools?

### **3.3.3. Interview of Teachers**

The teachers were interviewed and each interview lasted between 10 to 15 minutes. The questions were prepared to get a clear idea from the teachers about using L1 as a

medium of instruction in the classroom. They were asked whether they use only English (L2) during instructional periods and or Waali (L1). The questions were prepared in a way the researcher could identify the reasons and necessity of using Waali (L1) as a medium of instruction. The teachers were not forced to provide information. The researcher interviewed teachers who showed interest on the topic and were comfortable to express their thoughts about it. They were informed that they are free to stop the interview at any time or not to answer any question if they so wish.

The researcher interviewed the pupils to know their perception about using Waali (L1) in English (L2) class. They were not forced to answer the questions, rather they willingly provided answers. Pupils' were free to stop the interview at any time or not to answer any question. Each interview of the pupil was 1 to 3 minutes long. Before taking the interview, the researcher took permission from the school authority and assured them that, the responses will only be used for research purposes.

### **3.4. Observation**

In the observation, the researcher observed two classes at the upper primary and two at the Junior High School. In all, four lessons were observed. The researcher spent a maximum of sixty minutes at the primary and seventy minutes at the Junior High School. Each participant was observed on four occasions teaching the following subjects: English language, mathematics, integrated science and social studies. These subjects were chosen because they are the four core subjects at the Junior High School and so much importance is attached to them. Out of the four occasions that participants were observed, I picked the last two observations because I felt that the teachers could have fabricated the teaching and learning situation because of my presence but would have gotten used to my presence by the third and fourth observations.

### **3.5. Population**

The study area is Wa municipality. The target population included the teachers. The school selected by the researcher to conduct the research was Saint Aiden's Anglican school. A total of 6 teachers were sampled from a population of twenty-six (26), while twenty (20) pupils were sampled from a total of 205.

### **3.6. Sampling and Sample Size**

Purposive sampling was used to select respondents who are teachers from the school. The basis for the selection of this technique was because I wanted to get an in-depth knowledge of the case using a small population. The school was selected because it is located in the same circuit as the school the researcher teaches in. This ensured constant contact with the school and participant which facilitated the data collection. The teachers used in the study were those with minimum teaching experience of four years and above. This was necessary because I wanted teachers who were conversant with the language policy of instruction in Ghanaian schools. In all, 6 teachers and 20 pupils were involved in the study. The 6 teachers consisted of three from the upper primary and three from the junior high school. The pupils were 10 each from the upper primary and the junior high school.

### **3.7. Ethical Consideration**

To ensure ethical standards, every possible step was taken in completing the study. No one was forced to provide information. The researcher's objectives were clearly explained to the participants before data collection. Only those who were willing to provide information were interviewed. The researcher did not collect data from those who refused or showed any kind of disinterest in providing information. Thus, verbal consent of the participants was taken before collecting data. The researcher was highly committed to the respondents to keep the privacy of their information. Further considerations were sought and granted by the head and circuit supervisor for the school prior to data collection.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.0 Introductions

This chapter of the study answers the three main research questions that were posed earlier in the study. The interview and observation were structured to answer those three (3) questions. The questions are re-stated below:

- i. Why do teachers use L1 in an L2 class?
- ii. What are the effects of using L1 in an L2 class?
- iii. What strategies can be put in place to encourage the effective use of L1 in an L2 classroom?

#### 4.1 Why do teachers use L1 in an L2 classroom?

The researcher used this question to find out why teachers use L1 (mother tongue) in an L2 (English Language) class despite the language policy of Education in Ghana which states “a Ghanaian language be used as medium of instruction for the first three years of primary school the change to English Language as a medium of instruction should start in the fourth year while the Ghanaian language continues to be a subject of study” (Ministry of Information 1967, p. 54). The data from the observation and the interview indicated that, teachers knowing very well the demands of the language policy still go ahead to use the L1 in the classrooms. The study found out that there was no monolingual classroom in terms of medium of instruction. Both English language and Ghanaian language (Waali) were used as media of instruction.

In the classroom, the percentage use of English language was more than Waali, the Ghanaian language. Teachers admitted using L1 for various reasons.

#### 4.1.1 To Facilitate Learning:

One of the reasons teachers gave for using L1 was that, it facilitated learning. By this, the teachers meant that, the use of the L1 in an L2 class made learning easier for the pupils. For example, a class four (4) teacher who has been teaching for 5 years said,

*I use English language only, except that probably there are explanations I want the pupils to understand, then I use the L1. You know, once they are coming from and L1 Class (class 3) to start an English class (class 4), they still usually have the L1 in them. So it is difficult for them to learn the English Version. So I use the L1 to enhance their understanding.*

The class four (4) teacher's reason for using the L1 is similar to that of Atkinson (1987) that the L1 is "a classroom resource" (p. 241), and so it cannot be isolated from the language learning process of the child. This was asserted to by a class four (4) pupil in an interview, he said;

*Madam, the English is not easy. It is difficult, so when our teacher is teaching and our faces are not fine, he knows that we don't understand, then he will speak Waali, and we understand.*

A Junior High School Social Studies teacher also said that, she used the L1 to facilitate learning during her lesson delivery. She stated:

*Per the Ghana Education Service (GES) instructions, I use English to teach my pupils. I also use the Pupils L1 not very often. But once in a while especially when am struggling for them to comprehend something, and they are not getting it. You know, English is basically their Problem. At times when I speak English, the whole Class is silent but as Soon as I explain in the L1 I see them nodding their heads: which means that all that while I was*

*speaking English, they were lost, but when I tried to explain using the L1, then I have brought them home?*

The social studies teacher added that, there were some topics that a teacher could use the L1 intermittently to facilitate learning. She mentioned “Environment” as one of them. This was confirmed when I observed her class. In teaching Environment, she introduced the lesson in English and went on to explain what Environment was.

Tr : Environment consists of all the things around/surrounding us. The teacher sent the pupils out of the class to look around. A few minutes later, they came back to the classroom.

Tr : What did you see when you went out?

Pupils : Tress, stones, houses, goat, sheep, land, human beings, table

Tr : Ok, that is fine.

The teacher moved on. Things in the environment are either living (Boŋ Vuba) or non-living (Boohu aŋ ba vuuha). Teacher asks pupils to categorise the things they mentioned after they came back into the classroom. He wrote them on the board. The pupils did.

I realized that, when the teacher got to the components of the environment (Air, land and water bodies), it was difficult for him to explain the difference between rivers, sea and pond. The class was quiet, then he said; River is what we called Kulaa in Waali, pupils – aaa, Madam, Kaŋa bi ye a daa puori (Madam, there is one behind the market). Sea is called ‘Mani’. Then a pupil said, Madam, sea yeŋ, sie Accra. (Madam, as for the sea, unless in Accra).

Teacher: Yes, we don’t have a sea in this part of the country. A pond is known as ‘tambogu’ in Waali. Ye baŋ ye tambogu? (Do you know a pond?) Pupils – Yes sir .....

I could see that the lesson became lively and pupils understood better. A pupil from the class who was interviewed said;

*Madam, some of the English words are big words that I don't understand, but when the teacher ask "do you understand", I just say yes. When he uses Waali to explain some of them, I am always happy because I understand.*

Zhou (2003) did a similar research on bilingual English classes in China and concluded that the use of L1 in an L2 classroom can facilitate learning.

#### **4.1.2 To Explain Difficult Concepts:**

Apart from using the L1 to facilitate learning, teachers also admitted using it to explain difficult concepts for their pupils to understand.

A class six teacher used L1 in the classroom to explain difficult and unfamiliar words to his pupils. He stated:

*In reading comprehension, the passages always have some key words or difficult words that you the teacher have to explain to the pupils. At this level, their understanding is low. You use the L2 and it is like you are pouring water on rocks. Once you know the person understands the L1, you sometimes chip in that one to ease understanding. There are some words you pronounce in the L2 and the pupils don't know, you use another word and the story is the same, you definitely have to use the L1.*

I observed this teacher's class. He was to teach Reading Comprehension. Among the words he selected as unfamiliar vocabulary was the word vapour. He explained 'vapour' as air, then a pupil asked, sir, is it the air we breathe? The teacher said no, this air is hot air.

The whole class was quiet. Then the teacher said, vapour in Waali is 'uluŋ'. Then a pupil said, sir, when water is boiling and you open the lid of the pot, you see 'uluŋ'.

Teacher : Yes, that hot air is called 'uluŋ' in Waali and vapour in English.

Teacher : Is that ok?

Pupils : Yes sir, we know it, we didn't know it is called vapour.

Nation (2003) observes that a teacher can effectively use the L1 to translate unfamiliar words in class. He further argued that, when the L1 is used, the translations are usually clear, short and familiar. Pupils in this regard are able to make meaning for effective communication in the target language (TL), in this case English Language. The teacher's use of the L1 in translating the word 'vapour' was timely and effective in helping him achieve her teaching objective. It also saved time.

Also, a Junior High School Science teacher indicated that it wasn't a good practice to use the L1 in an L2 classroom but that it was a necessary evil when you wanted your pupils to understand you clearly and when you wanted them to get the understanding of some concepts.

*Sometimes when I am explaining a point and they are not getting it, I use the local dialect. For example, in science, it is not all the terms they understand in English, so I use the L1 for clearer and better understanding.*

A pupil who was interviewed interestingly said:

*"Madam, our teachers use Waali because they know that some of us don't understand English, but we must all understand what they are teaching. So, the Waali is for those who don't understand English. As for me, I understand my teacher when he uses English to teach".*

The teacher added that, in teaching a science topic like soil and the types, he could use the L1 to explain as follows:

"tani" – is soil

"soglaa" - is black

- “tan soglaa” - black soil (loamy soil)
- “yagu” - clay (clayey soil)
- “biihee” - sand (sandy soil)

He added that, the use of the L1 was going to be time efficient that is he will use less time to explain using the L1, and students will understand better as they can easily relate to it.

#### **4.1.3 Active class participation:**

One other reason teachers gave for using L1 in the L2 classroom was that, they wanted pupils to participate actively in the lessons. When English alone is used in the classroom, pupils' participation is low. A primary 5 teacher indicated

*The children we are handling, a higher percentage of them are coming from illiterate homes, because of that; they cannot construct even simple sentences in English. It is only in school that they hear someone speak English.*

The teacher further explained that it was very difficult if not impossible for most of the students to construct meaningful sentences in English on their own. This revelation coincides with findings by Mwinsheikhe (2009) in a study about the dilemma of using English and Swahili as medium of instruction in the Tanzanian Secondary school classroom that the use of English by students in class was a problem. A JHS 3 pupil who was interviewed shared her opinion as follows;

*Madam, English is my problem and a problem for most of my friends. It is difficult for us to speak correct English. Even this one that am speaking, you yourself know that am just trying*

A JHS 1 Maths teacher said “as for me, I use Waali to teach because it makes my pupils to participate fully in the class, after all, GES said, teaching should be child centered”. This was confirmed when I observed his lesson. He was to teach Maths in JHS 1.

The lesson began,

Teacher : Today, we are going to look at a very interesting topic. The topic is very broad, so we will take it one after the other. Is that ok?

Pupils : Yes sir.

Teacher : writes topic on the board. Our topic for today is Capacity, Mass, Time and Money. As I said earlier, it is broad, so we will take it one after the other. This brings us to the sub-topic. The sub-topic is Mass, so we will do Mass today. Is that ok?

Pupils : Yes sir.

Teacher : What is mass?

Pupils : Quiet.

Teacher : Someone should try

Pupils : Still quiet

Teacher : Mass is the measurement of things or objects. Then he says it in the L1, Waali, Ka e naŋ wa woŋ Mass, boohu maahibu la bila (When you hear the word Mass, it means the measurement of objects). Is that clear? Can I move on?

Pupils : Yes sir

Teacher : Mass is closely linked to weight. Do you know what weight is?

- Pupils : Yes sir
- Teacher : Can any of you tell me what weight is?
- Pupils : Quiet
- Teacher : Tiihuu (weight)
- Pupils : Ahhh!!
- Teacher : Mass is measured in kilograms and grams. A kilogram is the bigger measurement while gram is the smallest.
- Teacher : Ba maŋ maaheɛ neŋsaala meŋ (Humans too can be measured). Who can tell me an instance?
- Pupils : Quiet
- Teacher : A daana na baŋ yeŋiyɛ Waali (You can speak Waali).
- Pupils : Raise hands.
- Teacher : Yes, you.
- Pupil : Sir, asibiti (Hospital). Hu maŋ ti doye scale, baŋ maahii. Ba maŋ di ye bibilee meŋ yagli bonka ŋa a maahi ba. (At the hospital, you climb a scale to be measured; they also hang babies on something and measure them).
- Teacher : good. Apart from this, what other things do you see been measured?
- A pupil : Sir, ba maŋ maaheɛ jima aniŋ neni (They measure fish and meat).
- Teacher : Where can you see that?
- Another pupil : Daa, ane cold store. (In the market and at the cold store)

A different pupil: Sir, when you want to buy one kilo, they cut the meat, put it in a plate and put it on the scale, they look at the number, if it is up, there give it to you. If it is not up, they add some.

Pupils still continue to give examples ....

As I sat at the back of the class as a passive observer, I noticed that pupils were actively involved in the lesson because the teacher assured them that they could use the L1, as oppose the silence in the class when he spoke in English and asked questions in English. The class became lively and everybody was willing to contribute to the lesson. “When you use only English, the class becomes quiet but when you use Waali, everybody contributes”, a teacher opined. The use of English inhibits understanding and also obstructs pupils from communicating in class. These comments confirm Andoh-Kumi (1992, 2001) findings that pupils class participation is raised when they understand the language used as medium of instruction. Using the L1 to explain complex grammar concepts has proved to be a beneficial strategy. For instance, Greggio & Gil (2007) examined the use of L1 in Portuguese speaking beginner ELF learners and found that the teacher utilized L1 as an effective teaching strategy for the explanation of grammar rules and the offering of feedback. They further note that students used the L1 as a viable learning strategy to clarify both their understanding of the lesson and as a means of participating in class discussion.

#### **4.1.5 To build rapport and effective classroom management:**

One other reason for the use of the child’s L1 in L2 class is for the teachers to build rapport and create a conducive atmosphere for learning. For example, a teacher indicated that it is very essential to have a bond with your pupils. When there is harmony in the classroom a high level of motivational engagement is obtained (Murray & Pianta, 2007; Reddy, Rhodes & Mulhall, 2003). The teachers explained that pupils identify and get closer to teachers who can speak their language. To this a teacher said “We must let these pupils see us as their parents in

school and to do this effectively you must use their L1. This is the only way you can ensure a cordial and friendly between you and your pupils. They see you not only as a teacher but also a friend and they can easily tell you their problems and worries”. In support of this argument, Low & Lu (2006) also claimed that the L1 can be used to mediate the power relationship between the teacher and students.

At this point, the question to be answered is ‘what strategies were used by both teachers, and pupils in the classroom to disseminate information? It was realized from the data that, the teachers used four (4) main strategies. These were:

4.1.1 Translation

4.1.2 Code-switching / mixing

4.1.3 Concurrent use of the two languages

4.1.4 Safe Talk

Translation is the act of converting text from one language to another. The main aim of translation is to serve as a cross cultural bilingual communication tool among peoples. By this strategy, teachers said something in English and explained in Waali. (Local language). As we saw from the analysis, a teacher pronounced ‘VAPOUR’ IN English and in Waali, ‘ulun’. There was no laid down rule for doing this. Sometimes the teachers used the local language first followed by English or vice-versa.

Another strategy that was used by the teachers was code –switching. This is a change between codes during the same conversation. According to Mesthrie, Swann, Deumert and Leap (2009) “Code switching may be an unmarked choice; in this case, no meaning needs to be attracted to any particular switch: it is the use of both languages together that is meaningful drawing on the associations of both languages and indexing dual identities”. It can also be defined as “When a speaker alternates between two or more languages, or language varieties,

in the context of a single conversation”. This was done by the teachers within sentences and across sentences. It was found to be confusing sometimes to pupils.

There was also concurrent use of the two languages in question. Teachers taught certain things in Waali (local language) and others in English. Jacobson (1990) refers to this as purposeful concurrent usage. According to him, there must be a conscious and planned movement from one language to another in a rational manner.

Teachers who tried to use English most of the time in class used questions to check whether students were following the lesson or not and to check their understanding.

Mwinskheikhe (2009) refers to this as safe talk. This was another strategy used by the teachers. Examples from the data include, is it clear? Are you with me? Students responded ‘Yes sir’ or ‘yes madam’ when in actual sense most of them did not understand because the delivery of the lesson was in English. It must be noted however that, these strategies were not secretly used in a lesson. Sometimes, the strategies were mixed up in one lesson as in the Mathematics lesson excerpt above. In addition, interviewees revealed that they use the L1 to manage their classrooms and to get the attention of their students. The primary four teachers in an interview confirmed that:

*These pupils sometimes forget that they have transitioned from the L1 class to the L2 class and as such behave like they are still in the L1 class. I used it to make them know that they are now in an upper class and should behave as such (P4. Teacher).*

#### **4.2 What are the effects of using L1 as a medium of instruction?**

The rationale for posing this question was to find out the effects of using L1 as a medium of instruction in the upper primary school and JHS which goes contrary to the use of

English at that level. The teachers in the interview said the use of the L1 had effects which could be both positive and negative.

#### **4.2.1 Positive Effects of using L1 as a medium of instruction**

Audio-lingual method, communicative approach, or task-based learning have advocated L2 only method. One reason of using this method is that the exposure to L2 outside the classroom is rather scarce. As Cook says that “the use of L1 is perceived to hinder the learning of L2” (as quoted in Zacharia, 2004). On the contrary, many ELT Professionals have suggested re-examining the English only approach in the L2 classroom. Bodomo highlights that there is much potential for using L1 in the language learning contexts rather than abusing it (as quoted in Juarez & Oxbrow, 2008). Therefore, when not used excessively, L1 is beneficial in L2 classroom.

To this, a JHS teacher asserted,

*As for me, I use English in my classroom. I only use L1 when there are difficult terms I need to explain and get pupils to understand.*

This goes to support the view that, when L1 is used sparingly in the L2 classroom, it is beneficial. Another teacher, a mathematics teacher at the JHS also said that the use of L1 had some positive effects when he was interviewed.

*As for the effects, the positive one is that, the pupils will understand more when you use their local language to explain to them than the English language. When you use the L1 you get a positive response from pupils, because that is the language they understand and you the teacher can see it on their faces.*

A Junior High school three (3) pupil who was interviewed also added her vice. I found this pupil's response rather interesting. Thus,

*Madam our teachers use English to teach. They look into our faces when they are teaching. When it gets to a point, they always see that they have to use the L1 for some pupils to understand because they always look confused. We are not the same in the classroom, so when the teacher uses the L1, those who don't understand English also get to understand and enjoy the lesson. You always see them smiling and they contribute to the lesson.*

According to Atkinson (1993), learning a language can be a difficult and often frustrating process for many students, particularly at lower levels. As a result, if only English is used in the L2 classroom, students are likely to feel intimidated and they may lose interest in the lesson entirely. It is therefore relevant to note that pupils are able to complete their language task better if some L1 is available to them. This is asserted to by Lee, Seng and Hashim (2006) who said that the use of L1 to instruct pupils helps them to understand complicated tasks which would otherwise confuse them if they are explained in only English. A teacher who agrees with this shared his opinion in an interview

*One of the effects, positive of course is that pupils feel comfortable and very relaxed. They feel at home and this makes it easier for you the teacher. I am a class four teacher, if these pupils come fresh from the L1 class, which is class 3 and you just start using English to talk to them, teach them, instruct them, etc, they may feel intimidated and may lose interest in school. Some might start playing truancy, so you have to gradually introduce them to the L2 while you continue to use*

*the L1. This way, you will always have a lively class and your objectives will be achieved.*

This confirms what Auerbach (1993) said that the use of L1 reduces anxiety and tension, facilitates the effective learning environment and promotes integration of learners' life experiences.

One other positive effect of using L1 in the L2 classroom is that, it saves time and makes lesson delivery less tiring. A teacher stated,

*Madam, as for the L1, I cannot stop using it. The policy makers are not in the classroom, I am teaching the children and it behoves me to do my bid to help them. It is very painful and tiring when you are straggling, looking for words here and there to explain something simple for these pupils to understand. You waste time and energy and they just sit there and stare at you. Most of time, the pupils always know it in the L1. So madam, why should I struggle when I can simply just chip in the L1, pupils understand and then I move on? This way, I don't waste so much time in explanations.*

In addition, using L1 accelerates pupils' L2 acquisition process. Pupils learn new vocabulary faster through L1. Laufer & Shmueli claim "studies comparing the effectiveness of various methods of learning always come up with the result that an L1 translation is the most effective" (as quoted in Nation 2001).

A social studies teacher reiterated;

*A positive aspect of using L1 is that, those who are smart in the class can easily relate the two. Also, the pupil can remember in exams to translate it into English.*

A JHS 2 pupil also said that the use of L1 by their teachers helps them to learn the L2 faster.

*All we have to do is remember the L1, and then change it into the L2, that is very easy for us.* He added.

Though many language teachers oppose the issue of L1 use in L2 classroom, literature provides evidence that L1 use in L2 classroom is advantageous if not overused.

#### **4.2.2 Negative effects of using L1 in the classroom**

Some researchers believe that L1 should be avoided in L2 class. Ellis (1984) claims that more language acquisition will take place if learners do not depend on their L1, or if they do not translate. Frequent use of the mother tongue in foreign language class may create dependency on using it, which can be an obstacle to learn the target language (TL) in an appropriate way. Many linguists insisted that the target language should be used for all purposes in the classroom, even when the reasons for using it remained unclear (Hawks, 2001, p. 47). To this, a teacher remarked,

*A negative effect is that, you the teacher will help in reducing the contact hours for the L2. This is because; most of the children we handle are from illiterate homes, so that kind of help in the L2 from the home is not there. Nobody speaks English in most of the homes, it is the L1 and the pupils also speak the L1 wherever they find themselves. You realize that, out of the 24 hours of the day, it is only the school hours that you can force them to speak English. So in using the L1, you the teacher reduces the hours they would have used to learn the L2. This makes acquisition of the L2 very slow.*

Another teacher said that, using L1 in the L2 classroom had some negative effects. She said,

*“When you use the L1 in the classroom, the pupils will understand and at that moment, your lesson objective will be achieved but when it comes to exams, the pupils cannot write using the L1 so it becomes a problem for them. They understand but cannot write”.*

The teacher added that, all the subjects except Ghanaian Language are written in English, so the pupils must learn to speak and write so that they can speak fluently and be able to pass their exams too.

A pupil who was interviewed on the negative effects of L1 said,

*Madam, it is better for our teachers to teach us in English and to speak English to us all the time. This is because; we speak Waali (L1) in the house and in school, especially when we go for break. So the teachers too should not speak Waali (L1) or use it in the classroom. Moreover, in writing BECE, we will use English language to write except Ghanaian Language and French.*

One other negative effect of using L1 in the L2 class is that, “In a class where you have pupils who do not understand the dominant L1 in that area, they may have problems, thus been disadvantaged. They will feel side lined and may be demoralized”. (A primary teacher)

#### **4.3 What strategies can be used to encourage effective use of L1 as a medium of instruction?**

Teaching strategies are multidimensional – how good they operate depends on the context in which they are used. There is no single strategy that can ensure better students results. However, research has highlighted several practices that enable learning among pupils. These include techniques such as strong classroom management, clear instructions,

helping pupils engage meaningfully with the learning content, applying creative assessment and providing constructive supportive feedback.

#### **4.3.1 The use of appropriate teaching learning materials (TLMs):**

From the data collected, most of the teachers indicated that the use of appropriate Teaching Learning Materials (TLMS), eg. Real objects, realia, pictures etc. could help the effective use of L1 in the classroom.

*In delivering lessons, especially a science lesson, the real objects should be brought to the classrooms, the moment you mention them, they will easily know because already they use most of those things at home and are familiar with them. There would not be the need for any further explanation.*

Other teachers said that, pupils should be encouraged to read more. Textbooks and story books should be readily available in the various schools. This will help increase the language repertoire of the pupils.

*There should be more reading materials on English for pupils to read widely and know a lot of terms and words.*

Teachers also said that, each school should try to get a library and make conscious efforts of encouraging pupils to use the library and use it effectively. There should be time on the timetable purposely for reading.

A JHS science teacher also said that science laboratories should be provided at the basic level. This will help science teachers to make lessons very real and practical. The more pupils interact, the better they learn.

Many researchers now believe that, the search for a ‘best method’ is a futile effort (Lewis, 1993, p. 189), because there is no specific method to teach a new language. Teachers need to select effective techniques and methods which can be beneficial for pupils.

#### **4.3.2 Change in the language policy**

The participants in the interview were of the opinion that the language policy of education in Ghana should be changed such that both languages can be used.

*“The government should change the policy. The two languages (L1 & L2) should be used till the end of the basic level. The use of the two languages will enhance understanding, improve academic performance and also make acquisition of the target language much easier”.*

Most of the teachers however, said that after the lower primary, the use of the local language should be controlled. Teachers should not rely solely on they should use it only when it is necessary to do so.

#### **3.4.3. In-Service Training**

From the data, some of the participants were of the view that the government should be organising in-service training for teachers from time to time. Teachers should be trained on how to blend the two languages (L1 and L2) in the classroom for effective teaching and learning. To this, a teacher said:

*Once in a while, the government should organise in-service training for us. We should be given orientation on how to effectively use the*

*two languages in the classroom. This will enable pupils to understand lessons better.*

These were strategies that participants felt if implemented were going to go a long way of ensuring the effective use of L1 in an L2 class.

Several methods and techniques have their place, depending on the different circumstances, level of pupils and the teaching environment. It solely depends on the teacher how he / she will use teaching tools, methods and techniques in an efficient manner.

While conducting interviews with the pupils from the school, they were asked by the researcher the preferred language they wanted their teachers to use as the medium of instruction. Emphasis was laid on only two languages thus Waali (L1) and English (L2). Since humans have different perception and opinion about everything, different ideas and thoughts were said by the pupils but some gave similar opinion and answers. While most were in favor of L1 others were for L2. Almost everyone said they felt comfortable when their teacher uses Waali (L1) in the classroom. They also said, if Waali is used in explaining difficult concepts or illustrate with some examples, they learn better. This is because they can understand everything. A pupil said:

*Madam Wali is our language and I understand it very well. When my teachers use it I understand everything they say and I can take part in the lesson*

Most of them think Waali is a helpful tool to learn English. The results suggest that, should pupil understand everything they will automatically learn English. According to them, when their teacher starts class by using L1 they feel less stressed. If the meanings are clear, they can relate the examples with practical examples described in their own language and hence learning capability improves. They also said it is easier for them to remember words described in L1 which indicate that L1 assists learners in retaining new vocabulary items.

Almost all said they preferred to ask questions in Waali rather than English because while asking questions most of them cannot find appropriate English words to express themselves.

Those in favor of L2 were under the impression that, the continuous use of English (L2) will improve their English-speaking ability. They indicated that their parents encouraged them to speak English in school and at home. Some of them said, too much Waali in the English class is not good for them because it will make them dependent on the language. A student said:

*English is the official language in Ghana so if you are fluent in it, when you get to higher places it will not be difficult for you to speak. It is wrong for our teachers to mix the two (L1 and L2) in the classroom. They should use only English so that we can improve our English. We use the L1 everywhere especially at home and outside the classroom when we are on break so the teachers too should not use it after all, examinations in all subjects except Ghanaian language are written in English (JHS 3).*

In addition, some pupils said they wanted their teachers to use both Waali (L1) and English (L2). A pupil said:

*We are not the same in the class. Some are more intelligent than others so when the teacher uses the two it benefits both intelligent and unintelligent. In this way everybody in the class will understand what the teacher is teaching. The teachers should however use more English and less Waali.*

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

The overall positive comments from pupils and teachers showed their recognition of the significant contribution of mother tongue towards learning in basic schools. From

comments of teachers, pupils' response, data analysis and class observation it was gathered that the occasional use of L1 (Waali) is useful for effective learning. For basic level, L1 can be a beneficial tool to be used by the teachers. Teachers often use L1 when explaining difficult words, simplifying grammar rules, correcting errors and giving instructions.

As a result, L1 saves time and helps to understand the content better. L1 also help teachers to build relationship with pupils and give them a sense of security. Communication is very important for learning a new language. It is very difficult for teachers to effectively communicate with the pupil as they have very limited word stock. Thus, L1 encourages pupils to communicate with teachers.

In the light of these findings, it can be suggested that there must be a balanced use between L1 and L2 whenever the teacher feels the L2 task is beyond the abilities of pupils. A little amount of L1 can be a useful device to overcome these challenges. If the child can understand the medium of instruction he/she may feel more secured and confident to learn English (L2). When a child is banned from speaking L1 in the classroom, especially during free time, he/she may become timid and afraid to communicate even in English.

From the study, it was also discovered that, if the teacher gives instruction in L1 pupils understand better and follow the class more easily. They can also interact with the teacher easily and ask questions in L1 when they need further explanation. This reveals that the mother tongue can work as a linguistic support for those children who do not understand L2. A reasonable use of L1 can improve effective language acquisition, the thoughtful use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction is advisable.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION: SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Summary

This study is an analysis on the use of L1 as a medium of instruction at the upper basic school level in Wa. It provided a background on the effects of L1 as a medium of instruction at the upper basic level of education. It also underlined English as the dominant medium of instruction used by the teachers in the schools with a minimal use of the L1. In the background to the problem, the researcher pointed other studies that considered L1 as a medium of instruction from various scholars. These scholars gave their views on the effects of L1 as a medium of instruction to which they accorded great importance. The researcher used three research questions to guide the study and came up with data on the effects of using L1 (Waali) as the medium of instruction in L2 class.

The significance of the study is that pupils will understand what they learn in the classroom as well as the medium of instruction used by the teachers. It will also serve as a source of reference to teachers, and stakeholders in academics when they are developing curriculum for academic purposes. For example, education and policy planners would use the findings to come up with reasonable and well-versed language policies. The study was conducted in Saint Aidans' basic school in Wa and was delimited to pupils and teachers.

Review of the related literature was done on the effects and reasons why L1 is used as medium of instruction in L2 class. It also showed analysis on the use of mother tongue (L1) and strategies that enhance its usage. The researcher used interview guide and personal observation. Teachers and pupils were sampled to participate in the study. Information was obtained from teachers and pupils through interviews using an interview guide. The data was analyzed through arranging responses into themes and summarized using descriptive reports.

### **5.1.1 Summary of Methodology**

The study area for the research was the upper basic level of Saint Aidans' Anglican Basic School. The upper basic level comprises primary four (4), five (5), six (6) and junior high school one, two, and three. In all, twenty-six people were interviewed; six teachers and twenty pupils. The research was a qualitative one aimed at examining the impact of using L1 (mother tongue) in L2 (English) classroom. The major source of data collection was primary data. This was collected from pupils and teachers. I employed the use of face-to-face interviews and observation. The interview was conducted using a guide. An attempt was made to keep the interviewing time short. A minimum of five minutes was used. According to Best and Khan (2006), an interview is in a sense an oral questionnaire and the major reason for interview is the fact that many people are more ready to talk than to write. An interview provides data more readily and fully. In a face-to-face interview I was able to encourage participants and help probe more deeply in to the issue. Through interviewees' facial and bodily expressions, and tone of voice, I was able to acquire information that would not have been conveyed in a written reply.

An observation technique was used to find out the sort of interaction that goes on between the students in the classroom. The researcher observed students and teachers as a non-participant. I sat among the students while the teachers taught. Patton (2002) is of the view that observation is very important in research because it helps to collect data on a non-verbal behavior. It is also important when one wants to study in detail, the behavior that occurs in a particular setting. The sampling technique that was employed was purposive sampling. This strategy was used because I wanted to get an in-depth knowledge of the issue using a small population. The school was selected because the researcher teaches in the same circuit it is and it is therefore close to the school. This ensured constant contact with the school and participants which helped in the data collection.

### **5.1.2 Summary of Findings**

With regard to information from the data that was collected, all six teachers who were interviewed admitted using L1 (mother tongue) in L2 class. They equally admitted having knowledge about the language policy of education in Ghana which states “a Ghanaian language be used as medium of instruction for the first three years of primary school course, the change to English as a medium of instruction should start in the fourth year while the Ghanaian language continues to be a subject of study (Ministry of Information, 1967. P. 54), but still found it prudent to use the L1. They cited so many reasons for the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom. Some of which were that the L1 was used as a facilitating tool. They explained that the L1 facilitated learning anytime it was used. It helped pupil to understand better and faster. To this a teacher said that using English only confuses the pupils and it is usually clear on their faces so she uses the L1 to make sure that the students understand the concept. Another teacher said he doesn't come to class with the mind of using L1. He does his teaching the L2, but when he realizes from the responses of pupils or their facial expressions that they are not getting him it is there that he chips in the L1. He added that he only assesses the situation and decides as to whether to use the L1 or not to. Habord (1992) is also of the opinion the use of the L1 can facilitate learning. Another reason teachers gave for using the L1 was that it is to explain difficult or complex concepts. The L1 can be used in different situations. These could be explaining grammatical rules, explaining new and unfamiliar words, and checking for understanding. This shouldn't be static. The teacher should be able to use his own discretion to know when and how to use the L1 in the L2 classroom. Other teachers also said that using English only is time consuming and tedious. The use of the L1 makes explanations very short, clear and concise and thus, less stressful. In addition teachers revealed that they used L1 to manage their classrooms and to get the attention of their students. This was confirmed when I observed their classes.

From the above, it is observed that a judicious use of the L1 in an L2 classroom has the tendency of helping pupils grasp concepts more easily; enhancing understanding and making teaching the classroom experience a lively one. When the use of the L1 however is not checked it could lead to excessive dependence on the L1 by both the teachers and the students to the detriment of the L2 acquisition.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

In the light of the research and survey that has been conducted on this issue, the following suggestions might be relevant in this context:

- L1 can be used in clarifying meaning, explaining grammatical terms, correcting of errors and applied as a good tool like other tools for learning a second language.
- There should be a balanced use of first language and second language. Here, referring to L1 might be possible in the areas: introducing concepts, reviewing a previous example, capturing learners' attention and praising them.
- Teachers should be posted to areas where they are familiar with the native language.
- L1 can be utilized to build rapport with the pupils.
- Using first language should not obstruct the learning of a second language.
- There should be better supervision of teachers to help enforce the policy on the use of L1 as a medium of instruction in the classroom.

## **5.3 Conclusions**

All the teachers who took part in this study acknowledged that, the use of L1 as a medium of instruction in L2 class is unavoidable at the basic school levels. Before the research, it was assumed that the use of L1 in the classroom impedes learning, as hypothesised, rather it helps in learning. The results indicated that in the class where L1 was utilized, the pupils showed significantly higher interest in class participation. Confidence, is a mediating factor, and that L1 use helped to foster this trust.

In classrooms where pupils and their instructor share the same mother tongue (L1), there is a tendency for using it in various aspects and activities, especially while clarifying meaning, explaining grammatical rules, correcting the errors and giving instructions. The results of this research can prove that L1 can be a beneficial tool for learning the target language (L2) and can bring a positive attitude and sense of security to the process of learning any subject. It was revealed that L1 is not merely an efficient learning tool, but a useful teaching method as well, if pedagogical activities are well planned.

Even though the frequent use of L1 has been criticized, yet teachers cannot overlook the importance of using it in teaching. Apparently, it is more natural to use L1 with pupils especially kids. Parents of pupils of the basic level also expect that, English would be used by the teacher to teach. Above all, using target language all the time could be a reason of embarrassment particularly for shy pupils. These issues suggest that L1 is crucially important in the process of teaching and learning.

In short, the findings of the present study revealed that teachers had an acceptable belief in the various educational use of Waali (L1) to extend interactions e.g. explaining meaning and new vocabulary, illustrating grammatical rules, transmission of lesson content, correcting errors, organizing classrooms and praising and encouraging pupils. L1 can be a valuable teaching strategy in the classrooms for different reasons. The idea of avoiding the use of L1 in classroom was not supported by all the teachers. The teachers rather suggested a blend of the two with English having the highest percentage. It is believed that, trained teachers can play an important role in developing learners English language skills by using L1 properly. So, to ensure strong basic knowledge of pupils, teachers should be equipped with proper training so that they can use mother tongue in an effective way. Finally, if L1 is carefully used, it may become a teaching and learning resource which can greatly enhance the acquisition process of the second language and encourage and encourage learners to focus in class.

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