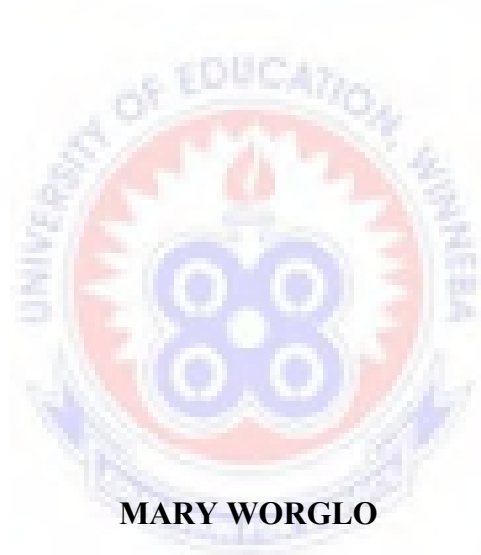


UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**THE USE OF L1 IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS: A CASE STUDY OF
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN AKATSI.**




2018

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**MARY WORGLO
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The logo of the University of Education, Winneba, is a circular emblem. It features a central sunburst or starburst design in yellow and red, with a blue and white face-like shape below it. The text "UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA" is written around the perimeter of the circle.

**A DISSERTATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS,
FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION, SUBMITTED
TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION,
WINNEBA, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
AWARD OF A MASTER OF EDUCATION IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A
SECOND LANGUAGE (TESL) DEGREE.**

AUGUST, 2018

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, **Mary Worglo**, declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

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 dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Name of Supervisor: DR. CHARLOTTE FOFO LOMOTEY

Signature.....

Date.....

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DEDICATION

To my dearest husband, Lawson Samlafo and my children, Paatu, Deladem, Theresa and Thelma whose sacrifice and endurance have made me to come to this soothe.



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ABSTRACT

This study examines the use of Ghanaian language in Junior High School English classrooms. Specifically, it focuses on the use of L1 in different aspects of English language lessons. The tools used for this research work were observation and interview guide. Thirty English language lessons were observed and twenty teachers of English language were interviewed about their views on the use of L1 in the English language classroom.. The findings suggest that the use of L1 in the English language classroom does not hinder learning of the L2 but rather, it plays a facilitating role and can actually help learning. It was also disclosed that the amount of L1 used in the ESL classrooms varies on the educational level of the students and their English language proficiency.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

The chapter one presents the introduction to this research. It includes discussion of the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose and objectives of the study. This chapter also introduces the research questions that guide the study and significances of the study. It further presents the scope and limitations of the study and the organization of the study.

1.1 Background to the Study

Advocates for an English-Only policy has been declining, and some researchers and teachers have begun to support a more bilingual approach to teaching which would incorporate the students' L1 as a learning tool. Others have stressed the use of L1 in the classroom as being necessary (Schweers, 1999). Countries such as China have been successful in experimenting with bilingual English classes (Zhou, 2003). Many researchers now believe that the search for a 'best method' is a futile effort (Lewis, 1993), because there can never be one method that suits all (Pracek, 2003). Each method has its merits and demerits, depending on the differences in the teaching environment. There is a limitation to the number of methods and techniques available to the teacher when students' L1 is excluded. In the process of teaching a second/foreign language, the teachers' use of L1 can influence the learner's acquisition of the target language. Throughout the history of English language teaching and second language acquisition, the use of mother tongue has been an important issue. The various opinions are reflections on the methodological changes in English language teaching, which have brought different perspectives on the use of the mother tongue.

It is argued that the success of a language learning class is positively linked to the degree of L2 use for instruction. If the L2 is not used in the classroom for communication, learners will not use and learn it. The use of L1 may sound ideal in the teaching of African languages but there are dissenting views. As some put it, there is constant debate on whether to use or not to use the student's L1 in second language teaching. Some language teachers think that the L1 should be used in L2 classrooms with some limitations while others feel that it should not be allowed at all. Each of these schools of thought has theoretical and methodological underpinnings. This is a raging language teaching question which is still pursued by theoretical linguists, applied linguists, educators and all concerned with language teaching.

The policy on whether to use or not to use L1 in the L2 classroom in Ghana nowadays is not strictly enforced in schools. Some teachers who have the desire for English-only assume that the only acceptable means of communication in the L2 classroom is English. They insist that the use of the L1 will impede the learning of the L2. The teachers who advocate for the use of L2-only in their classes have a respectable and superior teaching approach. In order to communicate better in English, Ghana's language policy allows teachers to use English-only from the Upper Primary to the tertiary level. This is because the child at this level has reached a stage where he/she needs to become proficient in English. This mono-lingual practice tends to give teachers more tasks to perform in their various classes, creating an impression that teachers of English are 'hardworking'. In many cases for example, teachers of English use the L2 to give instructions, ask questions and receive feedback and encourage students to use it in group discussions to promote proficiency.

Although the L2-only policy may have its merits, especially in developing the students' proficiency, the demerits it presents may supersede its intended merits. Many a

time, students respond affirmatively to a question asked in L2 but give a different response when the same question is asked in the L1. Class management is usually difficult in a monolingual class since students find it difficult to understand the lesson, resulting in them not paying attention. The use of L2-only in teaching usually creates a wall between the teacher and the student due to inadequate communication between them. In Ghana, students who speak L1 with their colleagues are punished. Sometimes, they are made to put strings of snail shells around their necks. This has resulted in a lot of students finding it difficult to speak when they are in school due to the fact that they cannot speak the English Language.

This study specifically focuses on some Junior High Schools in the Akatsi South District of the Volta region of Ghana. Results from these studies reveal two categories of teachers: those who use L1 in L2 classroom and those who do not. Findings suggest that those who support the use of the L1 suggest that it should be used judiciously to reduce total dependency on it by both teachers and the students. They are also of the view that its use has a significant role to play in student's L2 proficiency development.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In the process of teaching a second/foreign language, the teachers' use of L1 can enhance the learner's acquisition of the target language. It is argued that the success of a language learning class is positively linked to the degree of L2 use for instruction. If the L2 is not used in the classroom for communication, learners will not use and learn it.

Complaints about the poor performance of basic school students in Ghanaian schools have been commonly heard from the populace of all sectors. The blame is either placed on the inability of teachers' methods of using L1 to teach the L2 language correctly, learners who do not take their learning of L2 seriously, or the educational policy which is perceived not to be

helpful to the language learning of L2 in Ghana. 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 (2006). While some people are in favor of the use of the mother tongue, others are against it. Those in favor of the mother tongue argue that it enables pupils to learn better and acquisition of the target language is easier. The proponents of the monolingual approach think that the use of the L1 will let people depend on it to the detriment of the second language policy of education which says that English should be used as a medium of instruction from the upper basic level.

Another argument is interference from the mother tongue. Interference can make difficulty in the L2 learning and to avoid that, L1 should be separated in the learning of the L2. (Cook,2001; Richards &Rodgers,2001). Philipson (1992) asserts that the more L2 is taught the better the result. In line with his study, Auerbach (1993) indicates that students will learn more quickly if the more they are exposed to L2; as they hear and use L2, they will internalize it and begin to think in L2. Similarly, Polio & Duff (1994, p 322) show that using L1, “prevents students from receiving input they might be exposed to in social situations outside the classroom”.

All these studies revealed the long-term effects that, poor communication of the English language will automatically limit the students’ chances of attaining better and higher job opportunities. Hence there is a need to investigate into the problem of the use of L1 in the L2 classrooms. Therefore, this research examines the use/non-use of L1 in English language lessons, the frequency of L1 use (if any) and the role of the L1 in English language lessons. The study is undertaken on the use of L1 in the teaching of L2 among teachers in some schools in Akatsi South in the Volta Region. The study is qualitative in nature and employs simple analytical interpretation.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Examine the use/non-use of L1 in English language lessons;
2. Examine the frequency of L1 use (if any) in English language lessons;
3. Examine the role of the L1 (if any) in English language lessons.

1.4 Research Questions

The following questions drive the research:

1. Why is the students' L1 used in English language lessons?
2. What is the frequency of L1 use in English language lessons?
3. What is the role of the L1 in English language lessons?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research is beneficial to students, teachers, policy makers, government and all who take interest in the development of the child's English Language proficiency. The results of this study will assist all those who have interest in the teaching and learning of the English Language to know some fundamental problems confronting the teaching and learning of the language. Teachers of English, especially those in the basic school, will benefit more from this study since their students are in the formative stages of development and impacting a concept in them is less difficult. Findings would guide teachers to adopt more suitable and appropriate methods of teaching which would effectively facilitate the teaching and learning of the L2 and improve upon student's proficiency and performance.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study focused on the use of L1 in English Language classrooms by English teachers. The study is based on teacher trainees in selected Junior High Schools in the Akatsi-South District of the Volta Region of Ghana.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

There was limited number of teacher trainees involved in this study. Due to nervousness of being recorded, some of the responses were not typical. Some of the teachers were not willing to be observed in that the researcher will make fun of them with other colleagues and also report them to higher authorities even though they were assured of privacy and confidentiality. Also, only teachers' opinions were sought on the use of L1 in the L2 classrooms. It would have been valuable if students' opinions were also sought. The study was conducted with teachers of English in Junior High Schools in the Akatsi South District of the Volta region only. Students outside this district were not covered. As the research was carried out together with academic work and other social responsibilities, gathering information in connection was limited due to inadequate time.

1.8 Organization of the Study

Organization of the study is as follows: Chapter one shows the introduction to the study. The relevant literature to this research is indicated in chapter two. The researcher's methods and procedures adopted in collecting data are presented in chapter three. Presentation of data, result and discussions of the data collected are shown in chapter four. The final chapter provides a summary and addresses the findings and also makes some recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses a historical view of L1 use in the English Language classroom, arguments in support of the monolingual and bilingual approaches and the language policy of Ghana. It also discusses students' and teachers' attitudes towards the English-only classrooms and ways of encouraging the use of mother tongue in the classroom.

2.1 Historical view of L1 use in the English Language Classroom

It is argued that the success of an English language learning class is positively linked to the amount of English language used for instruction. If the English language is not used in the classroom for communication, learners will not use and learn it. The use of students' first language (or L1) is ideal for the study of the L1 and the English language but there are dissenting views. As Lewis (1993) put it, there is constant debating on whether to use or not to use the students' L1 in English language teaching. Some language teachers think that the L1 should be used in English language classrooms with some limitations. There are others who also feel that it should not be allowed at all. Each of these schools of thought has theoretical, research and methodological underpinnings. This is a raging question which is still pursued by theoretical linguists, applied linguists, educators and all concerned with language teaching.

For the past two centuries, the question of whether to use or not to use L1 in English classrooms has been a bone of contention. Sometime past, bilingual teaching was the "norm" in second language teaching which had translation as its focus. This was when emphasis on English teaching and learning was placed on writing above speaking. But, as new second language methods were developed with emphasis on speaking, this approach came under

criticism. The use of English only (a monolingual approach) came to the fore with the inception of the direct method (Harbord, 1992). One author who has forwarded argument that L1 should not be used in the L2 classroom is Krashen. He is of the opinion that all English lessons should as much as possible be delivered in the target language (Krashen, 1985). According to Phillipson (1992), the language being studied should be the mode of communication in the classroom. Even with the inception of new approaches like communicative language teaching, Pennycook (1994) and Pachler & Field (2001) think that monolingual teaching with authentic use of English is the best approach. However, the support for English only use in classrooms has declined and researchers are arguing for the use of L1 in English classrooms. They argue that L1 use in English classroom is necessary (Schweers, 1999). Zhou (2003) also indicates that the use of L1 in English teaching in China has proven successful. Though there are researches to support each school of thought, the battles still continue.

Many varied methods and approaches have been put up for both in favor and against the use of the L1 in the English language classroom. The Grammar translation method thus allows the extensive use of the L1 to explain new items in the English language and enable comparison to be made between the L1 and the English language (Richard & Roger, 2001). On the contrary, audio lingual and direct methods reject the use of L1 in the English language classroom and argue that English language should be taught without any reference to the L1. The Communicative approach to language teaching does not forbid the use of the L1 in English language classroom completely. It allows the instructor and the students to use the L1 judiciously where possible (Richards & Roger, 2001. p.156).

Migration of people from one country to the other, particularly from Europe to America was important because it forced educators to refocus their lessons, from smaller

translation-oriented classes to bigger classes, and perhaps more importantly, from students with a common L1 to students with mixed L1s(Hawk,2001). Teachers could no longer rely on using the L1 to help them. In such a situation, the only way to teach is to use the English language. Experience gained by the many teachers who went abroad during the colonial period helped the monolingual approach to evolve (Phillipson,1992). As English became the dominant culture in the British colonies, those who were not part of it were forced to assimilate if they wished to live a better life or be part of the ruling party. This led to the assumption that English is the only language that could be used in the classroom.

The assimilation mindset of English brought about the idea of excluding students' L1 from the classroom. The bilingual approach of education was seen as unnatural and offensive. Teachers caught practicing bilingualism in their classrooms were queried and penalized. One merit for the desire for the monolingual policy was that most of the teachers could not speak the students' L1 (Phillipson, 1992). They could not, neither did they see the need to learn to speak and understand the students' L1. Enforcing an English-Only policy, teachers who could not speak the students' L1 could manage and control their classes effectively. In another view, teachers using the L1 in the classroom risk degrading themselves since the students are more fluent in their mother tongue, they would at times control the communication in the classroom. Schweers (1995) is of the view that the emphasis on the monolingual teaching of English also inherently implied that the native speaker was the ideal teacher. He stressed that this was closely tied not to the political agenda, but also to the economics of the global ESL/EFL field. English speakers were respected and were given control over the employment sector since they were considered the ideal teachers.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, several factors, including rejection and questioning of the Grammar-Translation Method, contributed to the emergence of reforms in

second/foreign language teaching. It is not accidental that so many reformers should have been engaged in the teaching of English. One reason, paradoxically enough, was the rather lowly status of English in the educational pecking order in Europe, which meant that ‘experiments’ were not immediately rejected as threatening to the established order (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004, p. 132). The forms that took place around this time resulted in the development of various methods.

Also pivotal in forwarding the argument that L1 should not be used in the classroom was MacDonald (1993). He asserted that Target Language (TL) use will result in increased motivation as students realize the immediate usefulness. Philipson (1992) also claims that the language being studied should be the mode of communication during the lesson. Such support for exclusive target language use has led professionals, publishers and teachers to accept target language use as best practice in second/foreign language learning and teaching. The idea of maximizing the use of monolingual teaching is to enhance exposure, and thereby learning, is perhaps the key concept of the English-only approach.

During the 1970’s, theories of second language acquisition began to identify errors as a form of ‘inter-language’, which, according to Selinker (1972), is a transfer between the native language and the target language. The proponents of the communicative approach emphatically based their arguments on this and stressed that the students’ L1 should be excluded from the classroom. The Communicative approach firmly believed that monolingual teaching with authentic communication in English is the best way to learn language (Pennycook, 1994). According to Hawk (2001), many linguists insisted that English should remain the language of instruction even when the reason for using it remains unclear. In the 1990s, the Monolingual movement was further solidified by the various versions of the

national curriculum orders in the UK, which established the use of English as the means of communication in the classroom (Pachler & Field, 2001).

Currently, advocates for an English-only policy have been declining, and some researchers and teachers have begun to support a more bilingual approach to teaching which would incorporate the students' L1 as a learning tool. Others have stressed the use of L1 in the classroom as been necessary (Schweers 1999). Countries, such as China have been successfully experimenting with bilingual English classes (Zhou, 2003). Many researchers now believe that the search for a 'best method' is a futile effort (Lewis, 1993), because there can never be one method that suits all (Pracek, 2003). Each method has its merits and demerits, depending on the teaching environment. There is a limitation to the number of methods and techniques available to the teacher, when a students' L1 is excluded.

Ghana is still struggling with which language to use as a medium of instruction in schools. The language policy of education in Ghana has had a checkered history since the colonial era (Owu-Ewie, 2006). The controversy about the use of LI as the medium of instruction in Ghanaian schools especially at the basic level dates back to the colonial and missionary era. Before formal education was introduced in Ghana, traditional education was conducted in the native language (spring, 1998). With the introduction of formal education and the subsequent use of English as a medium of instruction, the indigenous languages were seen as 'inadequate' teaching media (Bamgbose, 2000). Bilingual instruction in Ghana started with the introduction of formal education. It began with the castle schools and continued by the Christian missionaries in the pre-colonial era (1529-1925). The languages which were used were of the colonial masters who were governing at a particular time. This situation was changed by the missionaries, who resorted to the development of the local languages in both their educational and proselytizing effort.

The use of a Ghanaian language during the colonial era had gain root to the extent that when the British government took over the administration of education in Ghana in 1925, it could not reverse the trend. During this period, the first legislation on the use of a Ghanaian language in education was promulgated (Owu-Ewie, 2006). L1 was to be used as the medium of instruction only at the lower primary level, with English used thereafter. This policy was reversed and became unstable after independence in 1957. From 1925-1951, L1 was used only in the first year. From 1957-1966, L1 was not used at all until between 1967-1969 it was used only for the first year and between 1970 and 2002, L1 was used for the first three years. L1 in this case is the language of the locality which are studied in schools. These languages include Akan, Ewe, Nzema, Ga-Dangme, Gonja, Kasem, Dagbani and Dagaare (Owu-Ewie, 2006).

In 2002 a committee was set up to review the education reforms in Ghana. The government's white paper on the report from the committee stated that "where teaching and learning materials are available and the linguistic composure of classes is fairly uniform, the children's first language must be used as a medium of instruction in kindergarten and lower primary school" (Bediako, 2011). This report overruled the law which was promulgated for the use of English only as a medium of instruction at all levels of education in 2002.

2.2 Support for the use of L1

Although the supporters of English- Only remain steadfast in their determination to use English as the target language and the medium of communication, (Auerbach, 1993) there are only few specific references referring to actual benefits derived from excluding the L1 from the classroom (Hawk, 2001). One reason why monolingual teaching has been so readily accepted is due to the language myth of the Europeans and belief in their inherent superiority over non-European languages (Pennycook1994). There is a strong evidence that

pupils tend to prefer teachers who understand their L1 (Briggs, 2001). A study by Schweers, (1995) found 88.7% of Spanish pupils studying English wanted L1 used in the class because it facilitates learning. Tufuga (1994) examined the effects of having learners discuss a task in their L1 before they had to carry it out in writing in the L2.

The L1 discussion of the task had some interesting features. First, the learners were all very actively involved in coming to grips with the ideas. Secondly, the L1 discussion included quite a lot of L2 vocabulary which would be used in the task later. Thus, the discussion not only helped learners to grasp the content, but also helped them gain control of relevant L2 vocabulary in a supportive L1 environment. Based on these findings, the result was that the learners who did the preparatory L1 discussion in groups did much better on L2 written task than other learners who used only the L2 for the preparatory discussion. This means there is a useful role for the L1 in helping learners gain the knowledge needed to reach a higher level of L2 performance.

There are numerous ways of conveying the meaning of an unknown word. These are using a definition in the L2, demonstration, diagrams, real objects, L2 context or L1 translation. None of these ways is intrinsically better than any of the other, in terms of conveying meaning. It all depends on the particular word in focus. However, studies comparing meaning the effectiveness of various methods for learning always come up with the result that an L1 translation is the most effective (Laufer & Shmueli, 1997). This is for the reason that L1 translations are usually clear, short and familiar-which are very important in effective definition (McKeon, 1993). Although there are frequent criticisms raised about learning L1-English language word pairs, these criticisms are not by research. The research shows the opposite, the direct learning of English language vocabulary using words cards with their L1 translation is a very effective method of learning.

Nation (2001) suggests that fluency development tasks need to involve language items that are already familiar to learners; they need to involve largely familiar content, and need to include some kind of encouragement to perform faster than usual. The L1 can have a small role to play in preparing the learners for tasks to make sure that the material they are working with is truly familiar. This preparation can involve helping learners recall L1 stories and information that they learnt then work with it in the English language, or getting learners to use the L1 to discuss and become very familiar with English language input, such as newspaper articles, TV news reports, short factual texts, that is then used as the basis for English language fluency tasks.

The Monolingual Approach also supports the idea of the native teacher as being the ideal teacher. This is certainly not the case as being a native speaker does not necessarily mean that the teacher is more qualified or better at teaching (Phillipson, 1992). Actually, non-native teachers are possibly better teachers as they themselves have gone through the process of learning an L2, acquiring an insider's perspective on learning the language (Phillipson, 1992). By excluding these people and their knowledge from the learning process, we are wasting an important resource. There are many variations of English around the world, and as to what constitutes an authentic native English speaker, is an open debate. With this, there is no scientific clue to support the fact that a native teacher is the ideal teacher.

The belief that exposure to language leads to learning is another problem of the Monolingual approach. There is no evidence that teaching directly in the English language leads to better learning. Even though the quantity of exposure is important, some other factors such as the quality of the text material, trained teachers and a good method of teaching are more important than the rate of exposure. Teaching in the English language does have benefit but teaching in the L1, will guarantee learning among the students (Pachler &

Field, 2001), but excluding it, may impede learning (Auerbach, 1993). In order to discredit the Monolingual Approach, some researchers have attempted to demonstrate the positive effect of using L1 and have attempted to categorize when it should be used. According to Humanistic view of teaching, students should be allowed to express themselves while they are still learning a language. It is only natural that they will periodically slip into their mother tongue which is more comfortable for them. They will also naturally equate what they are learning with their L1 so trying to eliminate this process will only have negative consequences and impede learning (Harbord, 1992).

The use of L1 has been prompted by assumptions that it is essential to integrate it into teaching English language to make teachers feel confident with their daily practice (Cook, 2001). It is a new concurrent language teaching method where teachers switch from one language to another at key points (Richards & Rodgers, 2005), and in the Community Language Learning, students talk to others spontaneously in the English language via L1 mediation (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). The L1 is seen as an initiator of meaning and attaches the English language to L1 and to compensate for students' lack of comprehension (Sawin & Lapkin, 2000). Besides, students find the use of L1 desirable because it facilitates learning (Schweers, 1999). Harbord (1992) sums the rationale for using L1 is to facilitate communication, facilitate teacher-student relationship and facilitate learning. He is of the opinion that sometimes it is essential to use L1 for instructions to tests or ask questions for students to understand clearly what they are supposed to do. The caution these authors give is that English language teachers should use L1 judiciously and have effective lesson planning to minimize L1 use in the classroom.

One often widely misunderstood point which proponents of L1 such as Auerbach (1993) have been criticized for is that they are promoting the indiscriminate and wide use of

L1 in the classroom. Supporters of the Bilingual Approach have been quick to clarify this by stating that they do not support widespread and indiscriminate use of the L1 in the classroom. Many researches have focused on the specific situations in which L1 should be used and in which way it should not be used. Samedí (2001) noted that teachers use the L1 mostly for establishing a non-threatening classroom environment, explaining and translating vocabularies, managing the classroom, and giving instructions. Cook (2001) elaborates further by stating that teachers should use L1 to convey meaning and organize the class. Students can use it for scaffolding and for cooperative learning with fellow classmates. In the view of (Harbord, 1992), the biggest reason for using L1 in the classroom is that it can save a lot of time and confusion. In general, the role of the mother tongue in concurrent teaching is to foster L2 learning through more natural L1-using situation (Cook, 2001). Also, Willis suggests that:

Banning mother tongue use altogether may not be advisable. A study carried out recently in Asia classes with 12-year-olds revealed that in circumstances when the mother tongue was totally banned in group talk, the resulting interaction tended to be shorter, more stilted and less natural. Many weaker students gave up after a very short time. If learners realize they are using the target language to communicate, they will still use their mother tongue on occasions, but they will use it in a way which is systematic, supportive and relevant to the task's goal.

(Willis, 1996:46).

This connection to Willis's suggestion brings back Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, arguing that "when a learner is tense, anxious, bored or angry, the affective filter as a kind of

imaginary barrier, blocks out the available input” (Krashen, 1981, p. 68). The study further stressed that a minimal use of mother tongue can be a facilitating teaching tool however, things that can be done in the target language should be done so.

Krashen (1982) also acknowledges that there is strong influence of the surface structure of the L1 on the structure of the L2. Similarly (Cook, 1992), in support of L1 use, declare that second language learners access the L1 when processing the English language. He stresses teachers that L1 should not be ignored when teaching English language. Because without the use of the L1, it can isolate learners and remains permanently in the mind of English language learners, whether the teacher uses it or not. Auerbach (1993) also agrees with Cook, and adds that “L1 provides a sense of security and validates the learner’s live experience, allowing them to express themselves. The learner is then willing to experiment and the risk using the English” (Auerbach, 1993, p. 191)

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 non-damaging way (Macaro, 2011).

Atkinson (1987, p. 244) suggests using the pupils’ L1 to “discuss classroom methodology”, particularly at early stages. He reasons that, students possess a right to recognize what they are doing in the classroom. This can be experiences particularly useful if the instructor desires to put in close to new communicative type of activities involving pair of group work that is unfamiliar to the pupils (Willis 1997 p, 135). 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 (1997) talks about some of the reasons given by those who find the policy laudable. These people hold the view that the L1 serves as a bridge between the home

and the school and children nevertheless consider teachers to act as ‘in lo-co parents’ (on behalf of parents) because they speak their language. A school of thought that believes in the utilization of the L1 asserts that the use of L1 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 right 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.

Yeboah (2014) also states how bad and infective 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 teacher set themselves as impossible job. He takes note that children cannot develop thinking powers while struggling to take strange speech. He further explains that the early year at school should to be used to extend the child’s background of thoughts and their power of self-expression.

Andoh-Kumi (1997) re-affirms the assertion of Boadi (1976) 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” (p. 206-207). He therefore warns that there is crippling and destruction of the student’s productive power by pushing him to show himself in a language alien to him 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.

Briggs (2001) also maintains that the role of the mother tongue as the medium of teaching 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 painful in class. According to McKeown (1993), 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 student in a meaningful way through the role to play in the learning of foreign language.

Tang (2002) contends that, the home and the schools make highly contrasting psychological demands of new kids. According to him, if the mother tongue is not used, the school becomes a traumatic experience than the blank space of pleasure in discovery and creativity that it should be. Warford (2007) maintains that the role of the L1 as medium of education at all layers of instruction provides a confident, non-threatening learning environment for students, and they make progress in English comfortably. He emphasized that learners become 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. Prodomou (2000) observes that students, 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. In sum, research has found that evidence for the practice of English-only is never conclusive. (Auerbach, 1993). Mother tongue is recommended when it assists students to understand a particular concept (Cook, 2001).

Sawin and Lapkin (2000) note that using L1 to mediate English Language Learning can create more conducive and effective learning environment.

2.3 Advocates for the use of L2 only

Supporters of the Monolingual Approach to teaching foreign language usually organize their argument around three important claims:

- The learning of English language should model the learning of L1. (Through maximum exposure to the English language).
- Successful learning involves the separation and distinction of L1 and English language.
- Learners should be shown the value of the English language through its continual use (Cook, 2001).

According to Cook (2001), who is not an advocate of Monolingual approach the points listed are some of the fundamental principles of the Monolingual approach. It is considered likely that English language acquisition similar to L1 acquisition, which crucially, is based on the notion of exposure as being the determining factor for learning (Lewis, 1993). He argues that children learn their L1 through listening and copying what those around them say and exposure to the language is vital in the development of their linguistic skills

The communicative approach generally favored a Monolingual Approach with adults for similar reasons, justified on the pretext of maximizing communication in English language. (Phillipson, 1992). Many teachers have come to believe that, as the classroom is often the venue for learners' exposure of the English language that exposure needs to be maximized (Burden, 2000). With regard to Cook's second point, supporters of the Monolingual approach have stated that translating L1 into English language can be dangerous as it encourages the belief that there are equivalents between the languages, which is not

always the case (Pracek, 2003). Monolingualists believe that the two languages should be learnt distinctively and separately. Cook's third point states that the use of English language only in the classroom helps to demonstrate its importance and helps the progressive usage of the language being studied.

According to the proponents of English-only ideals, the use of L1 in the classroom is not in accordance with Second Language Approach (SLA), which advocates modified input and negotiation in English language only as a means of learning (Polio, 1994). Another strong area of support for the Monolingual approach is the multilingual setting. Unless the teacher is capable of speaking all the L1s in the classroom, there would seem to be no benefit of L1 use and it would probably hinder learning (Hawk, 2000). Also pivotal in forwarding the argument that L1 should not be used in the classroom, is MacDonald (1993) who asserts that Target Language (TL) use will result in increased motivation as students realize its immediate usefulness. Phillipson (1992) agrees by claiming that the language being studied should be the mode of communication during the lesson. Such support for exclusive target language use has led professionals, publishers and teachers to accept English language use as best practice in second and foreign language learning and teaching.

Whenever possible, the target language should be used not only during communicative activities, but also for explaining the activities to students or in assigning homework. The students learn from these classroom management exchanges and tools, and realize that the target language is a vehicle for communication, and not just an object to be studied (Hawk, 2000, p. 132). The argument for the use of English language in the language classroom is supported by the first language acquisition principles. Lewis (1993) argues that children acquire L1 by listening and imitation and not through any other language. So, English language learning can be done the same way. Another reason for the English

language use is the danger of using L1 for one-to-one translation with the English language. (Parcek, 2003). The monolingual school of thought holds the view that the two languages should be kept separate. English language use in the classroom portrays the importance of the target language. Another argument that supports the use of English only in the language classroom is the multilingual nature of the classroom (Hawks, 2001). It is impossible for the instructor to use L1 when the learners speak different L1s.

Many studies have found evidence of the negative influence of L1; therefore, they insist on the use of only the target language for teaching. These studies found that overuse of L1 reduces the learners' exposure to the L2 (Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Turnbull, 2001; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002). According to Swain and Lapkin (2000), the patterns transferred from the L1 are definitely the fundamental sources of errors in English language learning. Similarly, emphasis on the comprehensible input and meaning by Krashen and Terrel (1983) also demand the maximum exposure to the target language. Some researchers argue that using L1 in the English language class might negatively affect students' learning processes since it reduces the learners' exposure to English language. (Deller & Rinvolucre, 2002; Polio & Duff, 1994). According to Krashen & Terrel (1983), L1 should not be used in the English language classroom to enhance students' exposure to the target language, since students acquire English through the same way they acquire their L1.

Another argument is that, interference from the mother tongue creates difficulty in the English language learning and to avoid it, LI should be separated in the target language learning. (Cook, 2001, Richards & Rodgers 2001). According to Harbord (1992), students may assume that word-by-word translation is a meaningful technique if teachers overuse the L1. In line with his study, Auerbach (1993) indicates that students will learn more quickly if the more they are exposed to the English language; as they hear and use the target language.

Similarly, Polio and Duff (1994, p. 322) show that using L1 “prevent students from receiving input they might be exposed to in social situations outside the classroom”.

Howatt & Widdowson (2004) groups Communicative Language Teaching into strong and weak versions: “There is, in a sense, a ‘strong’ version of the communicative approach and a ‘weak’ version”. The weak version which has become more standard practice in the last ten years stresses the importance of the use of English language for communication purposes. Characteristically, it attempts to integrate many activities in a wider program of language teaching. The ‘strong’ version of communicative teaching, on the other hand, advances the claim that language is acquired through communication, so that it is not merely a question of activating an existing but inert knowledge of the language, but of stimulating the development of the language system itself. If the former could be described as ‘learning to use’ English, the latter entails ‘using English to learn it’.

Halliwell (2000) suggests that second language speakers have been taking risks in using it while operating on partial information. It is not important that we do not understand everything what has been said to us, but that we are able to guess as if we understand everything. However, in the language classroom teachers tend to check every word. They also say one sentence in English and then translate it into the mother tongue. Although this happens with the teacher’s best motives, the constant checking implies that teachers expect the students to understand every word. The fact is that students are unlikely to understand everything. Even in our mother tongue we do not understand everything, since we deal with the whole message.

Real communication demands risk taking; without risks and mistakes we would not learn anything. In this sense, teachers can teach language through the target language itself. All of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing must be involved in the language

classroom, but the biggest contribution is in the interaction among students. Halliwell further proposes that teachers can leave students talking in pairs or groups doing so-called information gap activities without fear that they will totally slip into their mother tongue. These examples of the real language use in the classroom contribute to the learning process by:

- Encouraging pupils to predict meaning of vocabulary items.
- Providing elements of indirect meaning of items in the target language.
- Confirming that language is used for real situations.
- Increasing the amount of exposure pupils get from the language.

This is because classroom talk is very limited so teachers can conduct the whole lesson almost entirely in English on the basis of a small number of phrases and structures (2000, pp. 12-16). Language used by the teacher should be very simple, since students respond very well to context and facial expressions. All the tasks stated above teachers have to perform when teaching writing to students, which is again interrelated to teaching listening, speaking and reading. Teachers have to provide examples and perform the tasks before, during, and after students' writing. Among others, these tasks include demonstrating, motivating and provoking, supporting, responding and evaluating. (Harmer,2004:41-42). As for the other skills, Willis provides a list of classroom language, referring to suitable writing exercises. For example,

Preparation: *before you beg into writing let's see if you can tell me what you're going to write.*

Giving instruction: *you match these sentences. Then write them carefully.*

Detail: *don't forget to write neatly.*

Helping students to spot their errors: *check your spelling of...*

Setting simple homework: for *homework not now, could you finish writing this...*

Some researchers believe that the L1 should be avoided in the English language class. Willis (1984) claims that adequate language acquisition will take place if learners do not use the L1 or if they do not translate the L1 into L2. Frequent use of L1 in the English language class may create dependency on using it, which can hinder the acquisition of the target language. Many linguists insisted that English language should be the main language in the classroom even when the reason for using it remains unclear (Hawks, 2001). Students need much exposure as possible to the second language to acquire it. This requires them to use the English language as much as they could. English language acquisition depends on exposure; the more learners are exposed to a language the better they will acquire it.

2.4 Attitudes of students towards the use of L1 in English language classroom

Some researchers who specifically examined learners' attitude towards English-only policy report that students have varied views on the Monolingual approach. Tien and Liu (2006) found that low proficiency students in Taiwanese EFL classes consider the alternate use between their L1 and English language as helpful towards achieving better comprehension, especially when providing equivalents and giving classroom procedures. However, while lower level students often show their preference for the bilingual approach, more advanced students often feel the use of L1 deter their acquisition of the L2 (Auerbach, 1993). Other studies and findings report that some students have no specific preference for monolingual or bilingual approaches. Low level students prefer a bilingual class while more advanced students have a high preference for a monolingual class.

Crotchety (1999) after studying students in Asia, reveal that students prefer 50% of the lesson to be in their native language. Findings of the same survey showed that about 60% of students do not value the importance of English language exposure since frequent speaking of the language did not guarantee their grades in the language. They showed great preference for code-switching. When it comes to various purposes of L1 use, lower level students expected their teacher to use their native language to explain difficult words but not grammatical terms. L1 use as a means of motivating the lower level students is welcomed by the majority of researchers (Burden, 2000). Findings from a studying in Japan showed that some students have no special preference for either monolingual or bilingual classes. There has been an astonishing limit of studies on the use of the L1 in the English language classroom. There are increasing numbers of teachers' and students' agitations about the English-only classrooms. It is now time to pay more attention to a specific approach of English language learning in classrooms, which cannot be done by universal generalizations and intuitive assumption.

2.5 Teacher's attitude towards L1 use

Although the Monolingual and Bilingual approaches are theoretically opposed to each other, it is known that most teachers fall somewhere in the middle, using mostly the English language, but also made use of the L1 when the need arises. Some teachers of English have a profound sense of guilt using the L1 in their instructions. Even when a study shows that about 80% of teachers did allow some L1 use in the classroom, there was still a feeling of guilt among those teachers due to the prevalence of the English-only context. (Auerbach, 1993). The onset of this guilt is that teacher trainers usually provide little of L1 use in the classroom. The issue of L1 use is ignored in training teachers because it is associated with the grammar/translation method which scared off teacher trainers. Cook (2001) has the view that

the biggest reason for which teachers use L1 in the classroom is that it can save a lot of time and confusion. Teachers of English also have the perception that without the mother tongue in the classroom, students find it difficult to communicate with their friends on an aspect they do not understand. Most teachers admit and use the mother tongue in their classrooms because it helps in inculcating knowledge better using the L1.

There have been a number of researches on the use of the L1 in the English language classroom. Harbord (1992), for example, indicates that many second language teachers have attempted to create English-only classrooms but unfortunately, it leads to students misunderstanding the content. This view is in line with studies conducted by Cameron (2001) and McCann (2005) who proposed that translation can be used positively in explaining the structures of language and giving feedback. Turnbull (2001) also stresses that teachers may use L1 in appropriate ways to help students understand unfamiliar words. In this respect, Al-Nofaie (2010) carried out a study to examine the attitudes of three teachers and 30 students in Saudi schools towards using L1 in English classes. The result showed that the participants' use of L1 seems to be systematic. Teachers preferred using L1 with novices and low achieving students to assist them comprehend the new language and for specific reasons. For instance, L1 was used to explain grammatical terms, introduce new vocabulary and give instructions.

Alshammari (2011) investigated the opinions of teachers and students about L1 in the English language classroom. The findings revealed that the proper use of L1 in English language classes seems not to affect students' exposure to the target language; it may be needed increase students' comprehension. These views are supported by Machaal (2012).

Machaal (2012) verified the attitudes and beliefs of the students, language teachers and policy makers towards the use of the L1 in English language classes. The findings

showed that most participants agreed and supported the use of L1. They accepted that L1 should be used when necessary and it could be useful in explaining meaning of words and facilitating comprehension. In Auerbach's (1993) study, he aimed at investigating teachers' perspective towards the using of L1 in target language classroom. The study found that L1 should be occasionally used to simplify the teaching and learning process.

2.6 Uses of L1 in the English language classroom

Many second language acquisition theories have discussed the significant role of learners' L1 in learning and teaching language. The idea of 'language transfer' by Selinker, (1972) advocates the natural occurrence of L1 in the L2 classroom, where learners transfer elements from their mother tongue to the L2. According to Ringbom (1987), "in all the aspects of English language the existence of elements perceived to be similar to previously acquired knowledge can be assumed to have a facilitating effect on L2 comprehension" (Ringbom, 1987. p. 56) Ferrer (2002) in his contrastive analysis argues that "the principal role of cross-linguistic reference is akin to consciousness-raising" (pp. 166-167). He further cites Rutherford's, "successful learning outcome comes about only when what is learned can be meaningfully related to something that is already known" (1987. p. 56) and recommends "a judicious use of cross-linguistic comparison techniques when doing grammar work in the English classroom". (Ferrer, 2002. p. 6). The affective filter hypothesis by Krashen (1982) claimed that learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, and a low level of anxiety are better equipped for success in second language acquisition. Low motivation, low self-esteem, and debilitating anxiety can combine to raise the affective filter and form a mental block that prevents comprehensible input from being used for acquisition. Again, the use of L1 "reduces anxiety and enhances the affective environment for learning,

takes into account socio-cultural factors, facilitates incorporation of learners' life experiences and allows for learner-centered curriculum development" (Auerbach, 1993, p. 20).

The bilingual approach has been accepted by researchers who believe that specific use of L1 is a helpful technique in the L2 classroom. Thus, many researchers have figured out ways to use L1 in L2 teaching efficiently. For instance, Tang (2002) often use L1 in low and medium proficiency level in English classes to give instructions, explain meanings of words, explain complex ideas, and explain complex grammar points. Students will understand better when the explanations of the subject matter are given in their own language. Alshammari (2011) and Machaal (2012) argue that the use of L1 can save teacher's time of explaining content, increase students' understanding and make the learning process more effective. The use of L1 with novices has been verified to be very useful and valuable device in enhancing student's understanding. Another significant reason for teachers' use of the L1 in the L2 class is to build natural relationship between teachers and their students. There is no obstacle between teachers and their students (Turgut & Irgin, 2009). Communication between teachers and their students become easier (Nation, 2003). Accordingly, they feel free to ask their teachers questions for feedback.

The proponents of code-switching argue that when teachers use code-switching to send messages across, their behavior is similar to naturally occurring code-switching that takes place in various real-life situation (Macaro, 2009). Optimal use of L1 is defined as one "where code-switching in broadly communicative classroom can enhance second language acquisition and /or proficiency better than language exclusivity" (Macaro, 2009. p. 38). A number of scholars seem to share this view (e.g. Atkinson, 1987, Auerbach, 1993, Cook, 2001). Furthermore, the usefulness of the L1 as a cognitive and mediating learning tool has been gaining significance for some time already (Macaro 2009). For instance, Swain and Lapkin acknowledge

that to insist that no use be made of the L1 in carrying out tasks that are both linguistically and cognitively complex is to deny the use of an important tool.

Harbord (1992) concludes that there are three reasons for using L1 in the classroom. They are: facilitating communication, facilitating teachers students relationships, and facilitating the learning of the L2. Cook (2001) elaborates further by stating that teachers should use L1 to convey meaning and to organize the class. Students can use it for scaffolding (building up the basics, from which further learning can be processed) and for cooperative learning with fellow classmates.

2.7 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 students. 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 also. 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 resources we utilize such as images, mines, 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 advancement to instruct people who are more and more hooked on

technology, we should block up awhile and ponder on how to properly use L1 in the classroom.

From the discussion, the study can conclude that those who are against the use of the L1, have strong reasons why they emphasized it to maximize the learners' exposure to the target language. Once students rely on the L1 for help, learning new words or complicated concepts of grammar, they never take risks to look for meaning in the target language. Despite some negative effects of the L1, empirical studies suggest that it is not possible to totally avoid it, especially, when both teachers and students speak the same L1 (Samedi, 2001). Proponents of L1 use in English language classes also have strong reasons to support their findings. They believe that excessive and untimely use of the first language have negative effects on learning L2. However, its minimal use can help learners overcome their confusion and anxiety. By considering the above-mentioned studies, one can realize that there is still great confusion among researchers and practitioners which demands further research on the topic. This current study brings together the perception of teachers and their reflections on their students' demands and needs from diverse background. It presents a universal and holistic view about the use of L1 in teaching English which could have implications for its better teaching.

One can also infer from the literature that the findings of one study investigating reason for and attitudes towards L1 use in an English language classroom might be different from those of other studies. Subsequently, the findings of one study in the review of literature cannot be generalized. But this study is different from the previous ones in many aspects. Here, the participants are teacher-trainees at the tertiary level and study English as a major subject. The research has been carried out in two different contexts-urban and rural schools with an aim to raise the generalizability and acceptability of the findings. Third, in the urban area, the students are from different ethnic groups with different L1, while in the rural schools,

students usually share the same L1. Therefore, it covers a wider range of participants for which the study has got more validity and reliability.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology that was employed in conducting the study. The discussion is done under the following sub-headings: research design, data sources, population, sampling procedure, data analysis, research instruments, validity and reliability, and conclusion.

3.1 Research Design

The design of a research is to show the procedures the researcher employs in conducting the research and the condition in which the research data is obtained. Owu-Ewie (2012) observes that a research design is the procedure the researcher employs to achieve accurate and valid answers to research questions. Research design is the plan, structure and strategy of investigation conceived to obtain answers to research questions and control variance (Kerlinger, 1973). According to Burns and Grove (2003), research design is a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings. Their view is supported by Kothari (2008) who believes that research design is a plan, a roadmap, and blueprint of investigation conceived in order to obtain answers to research questions. Thus, research design is a model or action plan upon which the entire study is built. It dictates the manner in which a study is conducted and provides the roadmap of study in terms of sample, data collection instruments and analysis procedure.

The overall purpose of this study was to identify teachers' use of L1 in the English language classroom, the rate at which the L1 is used, and the role of the L1 in the English language classroom. The researcher adopted the qualitative research design. Creswell (2008,

p. 92) describes qualitative research as “a research design that begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning the importance of assumptions and the worldviews that provide the basis of the design”. Lincoln and Guba (1989) refer to this type of research as ‘naturalistic inquiry’, which implies that participant observational techniques result in a more natural approach than do those tests and surveys used in the more traditional quantitative approaches.

Marshall and Rossman (1999) suggest that qualitative research offers opportunities for conducting exploratory and descriptive research that uses the context and setting to search for a deeper understanding of the person(s) being studied. Qualitative research is a way of assuming that the researcher gathers, organizes and interprets information (usually in words or in pictures), using his or her eyes and ears as filters. It is a way of doing that often involves in-depth interviews and observations of humans in natural and social settings (Lichtman, 2006). Basically, qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people construct, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world (Merriam, 2009).

3.2 Data Sources

The data source for this study were teacher trainees practising in five Junior High Schools (JHS) in the Akatsi South District. They constituted the accessible population. The schools were Avenorpeme R.C JHS, Avenorpedo E.P JHS, Xavi D.A JHS and Logotey D.A. JHS, all in Akatsi South. The researcher chose teacher trainees because they are practising to become teachers of English language and have studied current policies on language teaching.

3.3 Population

Population is a group of elements whether individuals, objects or events that form a specific area and to which a researcher intends generalize the results of the research. Agyedu

(1999) explains that population is the complete set of individual, objects or events having common observable characteristics in which the researcher is interested. A population is also defined as a group of individuals or people with the same characteristics and in whom the researcher is interested (Blanche, 1999). Kusi (2012, p. 80) also defines population as “a group of individuals that the researcher generalizes his/her findings”. For this study the population was 20 teachers from Four (4) basic schools in the Akatsi South district of the Volta Region. The reason for the selection of these schools and teachers was that these schools are in the same circuit as the researcher and the researcher has observed the teacher trainees teaching English language very often.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample of the study was 50 people made up 20 male and 30 female teacher trainees in English language. Purposive sampling method was used in drawing the sample. Shaughnessy and Zechmeister (1990) are of the view that purposive sampling method is used when the respondents selected may be either judged to have certain characteristics or more commonly to those who are likely to give the most valid ideas for the reason for which the study is done. For this research, 20 teacher trainees (mentees) were chosen as the sample size. All of them are studying English Language at Akatsi College of Education.

These future teachers spent nine years in the basic school, three years in the secondary school of which English is taught and examined. And now in the College of Education, these teacher trainees are taught how to teach the language effectively. One group of teacher trainees had their practice in a school in the 2014/2015 academic year and the second group in a school in the 2016/2017 academic year. During the practice, teacher trainees were required to establish working relationship with teachers (mentors) and work as a team with them. At the College, mentees were given information, timetables were

organized for them with support from their tutors and were asked to complete daily journals. One aspect of this journal is the methods of teaching English language that has a great importance for this research.

3.5 Research instruments

The main source of data used to find answers to the research questions were observation and interview.

3.5.1 Interview and Observation

As a tool for data collection, the researcher chose observation and interview since “observation plays a crucial role not only in classroom research, but also more generally in supporting the professional growth of teachers and in the process of school development” (Hopkins, 2002, p. 69). This technique is focused on phenomena directly accessible to senses with no planned intervention. The researcher created a focused and structured observation sheet based on a list of prepared categories, situations and phases of the lesson when the L1 would be used. The offered possibilities are based partially on Schweers’ (1999) and Tang’s (2002) number of possible applications of the L1 use and on other theoretical findings that would be described in Chapter 4. It should be mentioned that Schweers and Tang carried out related investigations connected to native language use. The content and structure of my observation sheet is determined by the rate at which the L1 and the L2 were used by the trainees in lessons. According to Denscombe, there are several advantages of systematic observation: direct data collection, systematic and rigorous, efficient, pre-coded data and reliability (2003).

On the structured observation sheet, data was collected using a *tally system*, which is a situation when “an observer puts down a tally or tick *every time* a particular event occurs” (Hopkins, 2002, p. 89). Permission was sought from the Headmasters of the five schools

under study and the nature of the research explained to them. The participants were not given details of the topic under study so that they would provide only what they practice naturally. The participants were assured of their confidentiality. Each recorded lesson was shorter than a regular lesson, approximately 20 minutes long. For the purposes of the research, the researcher observed these recorded lessons and completed the observation sheet with findings.

The amount of L1 usage was the main concern of the observation. Thirty (30) lessons of English conducted by the trainees were observed and recorded to find out what situations and how frequently the L1 was used. None of the trainees was informed of the observation purpose before-hand. During the whole process of data collection procedure, the researcher was aware of the fact that the questions regarding the use of L1 could lean on the subjective view of the observer. However, a list of prepared categories and a tally system ensured the validity and reliability of the data collected. These two also increased by the fact that analyzing audio recordings enables rewinding the tape whenever needed and thus the possibility to listen to it again. Detailed record keeping of the teachers' L1 used in the listed situations and phases of the lesson provided a base for a data analysis procedure. Before the observation, some of the trainees were interviewed and asked if they sometimes use the L1 in their lessons. It was a structured interview which was recorded. It was a formally prepared set of questions and all the participants answered the same questions. The questions were planned and written on paper for the participants to respond to and also serve as a guide to the participants and the researcher.

3.6 Validity and reliability

To ensure validity and reliability of the findings, the responses of the participants were recorded and played back to them to make sure that what were recorded were really

their views. The participants were given a fair opportunity to listen to their versions of the interviews as a true reflection of their opinions.

3.7 Data analysis

As already stated, 20 teacher trainees were observed and interviewed to find out the amount of L1 use in the English classroom. To do this, the researcher had to note the exact amount of time when trainees will use the L1. It is the assumption of the researcher that the L1 should not be used more than ten percent of class time, based on Tang's (2002) and Bawcon's (2002) research findings. The researcher supposes that the use of L1 has got a normal probability distribution. My task was in four parts:

- a) To test, whether the assistants use L1 in the L2 classroom.
- b) To test the rate at which they use the L1
- c) To test, in what situations they use the L1
- d) To test the role of L1 in L2 classroom

After data collection, the recorded class observations were transcribed and grouped under themes. The interviews were also transcribed and the responses grouped under the themes: trainees' LI use in the English language classroom; rate of L1 use; when L1 is used; and the role of L1 in the L2 classroom. The patterns and the frequency of use of L1 were identified and grouped as discussed in Chapter 4.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has given details of the method used in the conduct of the study: research design, data source, population, sample and sampling procedure of the study, data analysis, and research instrument. The next two chapters present the analysis of the data collected and conclusions drawn.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents results obtained from the analysis. In all, 20 teacher trainees were interviewed and observed. All the aspects of English were observed and points at which L1 was used were noted. The analysis showed that while some teachers use L1, others do not. The reasons for using L1 ranged from helping students to gain better understanding of the lesson, class management, and explanation of complex grammatical points. Those who do not use L1 do so because either they are afraid that they will be penalized by the school authorities, want to go strictly by the principles of teaching English or they cannot speak the students' L1. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section discusses the themes captured from the interviews. These themes border on the usage of the L1 in the classroom, reasons for using L1, and the frequency of the use of L1 in the English Language classroom. The researcher realized from the teachers' responses that most of them use the L1 in the English Language classroom. They also gave various reasons for its use when teaching. When asked how frequently they use the L1 in their English lessons, they replied that the frequency depend on the students English Language proficiency level. The second section shows the analysis of the classroom observation. The observation shows that teachers use L1 in almost all aspects of L2 learning. The analysis of the results reveals that teacher use L1 to elicit response from the students. In all the classes observed, it was established that L1 use in L2 classroom played a supportive and facilitating role. It was also revealed that some teacher trainees use L1 to facilitate students understanding of the lesson and others do not use L1 because they cannot speak the students L1 and it is against the teaching policy. Based on this discussion, it is argued that students' L1 plays an important

role in the L2 acquisition process. With this, teachers are entreated to determine when, why and how much of L1 they need to use to facilitate the teaching and learning of L2.

4.1 Interviews

Before the classroom observations, 20 teachers were interviewed. The interview questions were based on usage, when to use as well as the role of L1 in L2 classroom. The interview questions are presented in the appendix. The following are the themes obtained from the responses to the interview questions.

4.1.1. Usage of L1 in the classroom

The teachers were asked to present their views on the use of the L1 in class during the interview session. Almost all the trainees agreed that the L1 should be used during English Language lessons. For those who endorsed that the L1 should be used, they see the L1 as the child's natural language that cannot be decoupled from the individual. In line with this, Phillipson (1992) observes that excluding learners and their knowledge of their L1 from the learning process is like wasting an important resource. Seventeen (17) trainees who support the idea of using the L1 opined that teachers should plan their lessons in a way to minimize the use of the L1. They further explained that since students need to acquire requisite skills for effective communication in English, teachers must decrease the use of the L1 in order to achieve this goal. They also stated that teachers should use all the available techniques, methods, materials, and opportunities available to expose the students to the L2. They further argued that the L1 should only be used as an alternative if all attempts to get them to get them to grasp the concept failed. They contended that the L1 must be the last resort because students would be examined in English and they are supposed to provide their responses in English.

According to Cook (2001), who is not an advocate of the Monolingual Approach, it is considered likely that L2 acquisition is similar to L1 acquisition, which crucially, is based on

the notion of exposure as being the determining factor for learning (Lewis,1993). He argues that children learn their L1 through listening and copying what those around them say. As such, exposure to the language is vital in the development of their linguistic skills. Three (3) out of Twenty trainees were of the view that the use of L1 in the English Language classroom is not a good practice. According to one of these trainees, the main reason for students to be in school is to learn how to communicate in English so teachers are not expected to use the L1 to neglect the target language. To this teacher, it will not help them in any way since at the end they do not acquire the required skills in the English. He noted that many parents and colleague teachers would consider such a teacher as being lazy.

For this reason, this teacher advised that teachers should endeavor to expose their students to as much English as possible. He emphasized that judicious use of the L1 can be occasionally beneficial to students, especially in the lower primary but not always in the upper primary and in the JHS. In addition, most of the suggestions follow current communicative approaches and thus replace the use of mother tongue with other techniques if possible. A description of each of the four skills also provides a sample classroom language that teachers might use instead of native language. If teachers use the same language all the time, they will develop language routines that contribute to students' understanding. As stated, there are some cases when the mother tongue maybe occasionally used, but teachers must keep in mind that exposure and practice of the target language is the main thing if they want to reach their teaching goals. Concerning students, the trainees advised that they should use their L1 only when the teacher permits it. In effect, teachers should lead students to recognize the target language as the means of communication and to use it in real-life situations.

4.1.2 Rate of L1 use in the English classroom

In answering the interview questions, most of the trainees agreed that the L1 should be used only when needed, but not frequently. They all supported the limited use of the L1, not its overuse. To these teachers, the rate of L1 use depends greatly on the proficiency level of the student, the aspect of English taught as well as the duration of the lesson. The rate at which L1 is used may differ from one teacher to another. A teacher in one of the JHS 1 classes was of the view that the L1 should be used when students are confused with grammar rules and terms. He further stated that the rate at which the L1 would be used depends highly on students' proficiency. There have been suggestions to maximize the use of English language in the foreign language classroom.

With regard to this, Duff and Polio (1990) intimate that English Language teachers should teach common expressions, make input comprehensible through non-verbal means, and establish an English-only policy from the start. Besides, they should institute a brief period when teacher and students can use English to clarify material from a lesson, let student use L1 when necessary, explicitly teach the use of grammatical terms in the English, and provide supplementary grammatical terms in the L1. In addition, teachers should keep things simple in the English Language, assign L1 readings for homework and then explain the grammar in the English Language. With reference to this, one JHS teacher participant indicated that:

For me these children are from class 6 so when I use the English small, I turn to Ewe a lot because they can't follow the lesson if I use plenty English.

When asked why he does not use teaching learning material (TLM) to do some of the explanations, this was what he said:

Me I use TLM and other ways to teach my lesson but if I see that the children are not following me, I use Ewe. Let me tell you I use Ewe in half of my period.

4.1.3. Reasons for the use of the L1

The teachers who used L1 are of the view that it is used as an instructional tool. They gave various reasons for the uses of L1. One of these reasons is the explanation of complex concepts in the lesson. A teacher interviewed was of the view that L1 is very useful in explaining complex Grammar rules and terms. She further remarked that if English Language alone is used in explaining complex concepts the students feel confused and lost throughout the lesson. To facilitate the understanding of grammatical concepts, the teachers resort to the use of the L1. The L1 can be used in different situations, among them explaining new words and checking understanding. Based on the specific situation, the teacher can decide on which when the L1 should be used. Explaining terminologies in only English is time consuming and ineffective. Giving an L1 equivalent can help students understand the words better and more clearly. In the same vein, using the L1 in explaining abstract words and grammar points is extremely effective. It will make students understand what they are being taught clearly. A participant also contributed that she uses L1 to explain alien words and terms to students. She remarked:

Using Ewe in explaining abstract and complex points is effective.

It makes students understand the teaching better. Me my aim is students should understand what I teach, other than that I need not to go to the classroom at all.

She also stated that when her students are lost, she turns to say a funny statement in the L1 just to bring their attention back to the classroom to enable her achieve her objectives. She said that she uses the L1 to limit the time spent on explaining rules and concepts, and switches to English when she realizes that that concept is well understood. She said:

Sister I use Ewe a lot if am teaching grammar. You see grammar has many rules. I want my students to understand and use these

rules correctly so I use the Ewe. When I see that they understand the rules and can use them correctly, I use the English to teach.

One other teacher indicated that the use of the L1 to explain grammar rules and complex points is extremely effective. It makes the students to understand the lesson better. He stated that the students usually understand the lesson better and enjoy it if the L1 is used. This idea is supported by a study carried out by Greggio and Gill (2007). In this research, they examined the use of L1 in Portuguese-speaking ELF learners and found that the teachers utilized L1 as an effective teaching strategy for explaining grammar rules and giving feedback. Another teacher was of the view that he uses L1 in JHS3 to explain meaning when he sees that his students are confused. Again, the same teacher said that in JHS1 class, he uses the L1 to give instructions about what he wants them to do since the L1 would help them to understand and carry out the activity better. He explained that:

In the JHS3 class, I use Ewe when am teaching vocabularies. I pronounce the words in English and guide students to explain them using Ewe before explaining it in the English Language. I do this if I see that they are confused. You know JHS1 class is a problem. For them after giving them work, you have to explain it in Ewe before they can do the right thing.

Another trainee when remarked that:

I resort to the use of Ewe to control my class when shouting “stop talking” yields no positive results.

Trainees in the JHS1 classes stated that they use the L1 to sustain students' attention and concentration because they still have the primary school short attention span. Teachers V, T and U indicated that they use the L1 to create rapport in class. Murrey & Pianta (2007) and Reddy, Rhodes and Mulhall (2003) observe that when there is harmony in the classroom, a

high level of motivational engagement is obtained. Low and Lu (2006) also claim that the L1 can be used as a mediation power between the teacher and students to create good relationship. Responses from most of the teachers during the interview show that the L1 is used in the classroom to facilitate teaching and learning. For example, one of them said:

I use Ewe to let some stubborn students in my class pay attention. Some of these children are always disturbing in the classroom so when I use the L1 to tell them that I will punish them, they know I'm serious and they quickly stop disturbing.

When asked why she would not do that in English Language, she answered with a smile:

Madam, these children are very stubborn, they will just laugh at you.

It was also revealed in the interview that teachers use the L1 to cater for the diverse needs of the students. Students from different homes make up the school environment. Teachers must therefore cater for their individual abilities since some are slow learners and others are not. A participant in one of the JHS2 classes commented:

Any time I use the English Language to teach; the high average pupils catch up with the lesson easily and want me to proceed while the low average ones usually lag behind. When this happens, I turn to Ewe to enable them to be up with the lesson.

Edstrom (2004) and Franklin (1990) affirm this in their studies suggesting that the L1 is used to cater for the students' diversity so that no student will be deprived of the opportunity to learn. Another teacher with learners of diverse cultures had this to say:

Am sorry to tell you this most; of my students are from illiterate homes and a few of them are from educated family. If I use English throughout only the few will understand leaving the

majority. I make sure I use the two languages for everyone to benefit.

4.1.4 Reasons for not using the L1

A participant indicated that he can speak the students' L1 but would not use it to teach because the language policy of Ghana, the Headmaster and the Circuit supervisors are strongly against it and consider the use of the L1 as a way of lazy teaching. He emphasized that:

Am working under authority so what they require is what I will give to the students. I am not ready to answer a query on this issue. I always use the English Language to teach. If the students do not understand the lesson, I do not care, that is the policy. Madam, I do not want any problem.

Another teacher also asked:

I am a teacher as well as a head of department, how could I violate the teaching policy?

One other teacher who cannot speak the students' L1 also asked:

How could I use the L1 to teach if I can't speak it well?

A teacher strongly argued and said that:

I'm trained to teach English. Why can't I use it to teach effectively? Me I can't use L1 in my class no matter what. I will use the English that is what am trained for. Let me tell you; for me I can speak Ewe like something but so far as my tutor of English back at college said that an English teacher is not supposed to use the L1 in his classroom, walai I will not use it.

He further stated that:

Let me ask you Madam, in how many languages do you set your English exam questions? Only in English. Why then should I use L1 and English together in teaching? There is no point there.

One of the participants is of the view that with her TLM, she thinks the L1 is not needed.

She pointed out that:

I prepare enough TLMs and make sure I use them well so I don't use the L1 in my class.

4.1.5 Role of the L1 in the classroom

Most teachers agreed that they use L1 in the classroom to improve students understanding of the lesson hence to facilitate the learning process. A participant stated that using the L1 in explaining complex grammar points is extremely effective and makes students understand the lesson better. Thus, the L1 is a springboard and an important key to understanding. Thus far, the discussion suggests that the L1 has an important role in the English Language development. However, it must be noted that it should not be the main language in the English Language classroom. Anton and Dicamilla (1998), through their study, espouse some positive effects of L1 in foreign language learning. In their study, five pairs of Spanish-speaking EFL adult learners were given English writing task and it revealed many functions of the L1. Some of these functions include the fostering and maintenance of interest in the task and development of strategies and approaches for making difficult task more manageable. The authors believe that the use of the L1 is beneficial for language learning for many reasons. Some of which are that it helps both in the process and completion of the tasks and creates a social and cognitive space in which students will be able to provide

each other with assistance throughout the duration of the task. Thinking in the L1 results in the production of more elaborated content. Zhou (2003) also conducted a study in China on bilingual English learners and concluded that the use of the L1 can facilitate learning.

4.1.6 Summary of interview

There are some findings based on Atkinson (1987) suggesting that appropriate use of mother tongue positively affects pupils' attitudes toward the target language and may facilitate language acquisition. This does not mean that teachers should use the mother tongue any time they feel like. The results from the interview suggest that the use of the L1 in the English language classroom does not hinder the learning of the L2. Here, a sense of confidence is developed between the teacher and the students and this naturalizes the classroom environment. The barring of the L1 creates lasting insecurity among students and that can contribute to slow acquisition skills in English.

The results from interview have some similarities with the study conducted by Zhou's (2003) and Schweers's (1999) studies of Chinese and Spanish learners of English. Both studies indicate that the majority of teachers investigated used the L1, and most of them responded positively towards its use. Minor discrepancies exist concerning the instances when L1 should be used. Some of these can be accounted for by the participants' different levels of proficiency. Based on this, some serious reflections are needed. There are several possible reasons for the apparent failure of the target language use. One reason is nervousness or students' weakness in English. Another could be the length of practice, and the level of teaching experience. Since the teacher trainees' practice lasts only a year, they may be assigned to classes that have already learnt some. These classes could not have had teachers using too much of the target language. However, in these classes it is okay to use only the mother tongue; but it is good initially keep to simple vocabulary that student come across and later start to use more complex structures (Willis, 1991, p. xiv).

On the contrary, if L1 use is unguided, it could lead an excessive dependency by both the teacher and the students. Consequently, students may lose their confidence in their ability to communicate in English. Unprincipled and unjustifiable L1 use by English teachers is one of the worries of the supporters of the monolingual approach. Similar results were obtained from Tang's (2002) study, which investigated the role of the L1 in the English language classroom in China. In classes she observed, the Chinese language played an important role in the lesson delivery. The primary medium of communication in class was still English. In addition, the L1 was used only as an aid in improving students' English proficiency. Her observation of three classes suggests that learners will tend to make unguided and often incorrect translations themselves if the teacher does not provide them with translation of some abstract words and complex ideas. Facilitating teacher-student rapport, communication and learning are reasons why the teacher used the L1. Pachler and Field (2001) posit that when a concept is not understood and it is clarified using the L1, the barrier and tension between students and teachers can be reduced and removed. Laufer and Shmueli (1997) also note that an L1 translation is the most effective. According to Pracek (2003), by excluding the students' L1, we are severely limiting the number of methods and techniques available to teachers.

4.2 Observations

Tables 1 and 2 show the results of the classroom observation. Table 1 shows the number of teachers, their schools, and the aspect of English Language they taught. The table also shows when each teacher used the L1.

Table 1. Schools and teachers observed.

Schools	Teacher	Aspects	Class	No. of students
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	trainees			
Avenorpeme	A	Grammar	JHS1A	20
R.C. JHS	B	Reading	JHS 3	35
		Comprehension		
	C	Composition	JHS2B	30
	D	Literature	JHS1B	21
	E	Composition	JHS2A	40
Avenorpedo	K	Grammar	JHS1A	30
D/A JHS	L	Reading	JHS1B	35
	M	Comprehension		
	N	Composition	JHS1C	20
	O	Literature	JHS2A	20
Xavi D.A J HS	P	Composition	JHS 1B	30
	Q	Literature	JHS 2B	25
	R	Reading	JHS1A	15
		Comprehension		
	S	Grammar	JHS1B	25
	T	Composition	JHS 3A	30

Logotey	D/A	U	Composition	JHS 1	15
J.H.S		V	Grammar	JHS2	12
		W	Reading	JHS3	20
			Comprehension		
		X	Literature	JHS1	15
		Y	Composition	JHS2	12
Total: 4schools	Total:	20 teachers	Total:	4 aspects	Total:
			Total:	18 classes	Total:
					450 students

In all, 20 teacher trainees from 4 junior high schools were observed in four different aspects of the English Language. These aspects are Grammar, Reading Comprehension, Composition, and literature. Each of the 20 teachers taught one of these aspects in one of the classes in the four different schools.

4.2.1 When is the L1 used?

In teaching grammar, teachers who used the L1 were of the view that grammar has sets of complex rules. To guide the students to understand these rules, the L1 was resorted to when all suggested methods failed. Much research has focused on when the L1 should be used and in which way it should be used. Samedi (2001) notes that teachers use the L1 mostly to explain and translate vocabulary. They also use it to manage the classroom and give instructions. Cook (2001) elaborates further by stating that teachers should use L1 to convey meaning and to organize the class. Grammar classes are mostly rigid and boring. Hence, teachers usually use the L1 to create a conducive environment for easy teaching.

In composition lessons, teachers who use the L1 do so to help the students understand the various features of a particular essay. A participant used the L1 in explaining the various

features of a friendly letter to her JHS1 students before guiding them to write the letter using English Language. This actually enabled her to accomplish her objectives before the period ended. Lameta-Tufuga (1994) examined the effects of having learners discuss a task in their L1 before they carry it out in writing in the English Language and notes that the L1 discussion of the task had some interesting features. First, the learners were all very actively involved in coming to grips with the ideas. Secondly, the L1 discussion included quite a lot of English Language vocabularies that would be used in the task later. Thus, the discussion not only helped learners to understand the content, but also helped them gain control of relevant English vocabulary in a supportive L1 environment. Based on these findings, the results showed that the learners who did the preparatory L1 discussion in groups, did much better on the English Language written task.

Reading and Comprehension lesson involves reading a passage and understanding it in your own words. Teachers are tasked to guide students to read and answer questions based on a particular passage. According to Hermer (2007), when teaching reading or pronunciation, it is often useful if students can find an equivalent sound in L1 for the English one they are trying to produce. Teachers observed used the L1 to help students for correct pronunciation and intonation in their reading. For example, to teach them how to pronounce the word '*base*', the teacher used the L1 equivalent sound /b+e +s/ to help the student pronounce the word correctly and not as '*bus*'.

Teachers who taught literature used little or no L1. Literature deals with contextual analysis of a piece of writing but not translation or vocabulary learning. Teachers used L1 at this time just to give order but not as an instructional tool. There was no instance where L1 was used in teaching literature. Teacher U did not use L1 in his lesson because he was teaching pronunciation and students needed more exposure to the English Language. Pronunciation deals speech sounds where the students learn the sounds of English. To avoid

V	15	5		15	8	10	10	63
W	15			15	5	4	10	49
X								
Y	5	5	2	20	5	5	10	52

From the table it is realized that not all the assistants used the L1 during their lesson delivery for the same purpose. For example, out of the 25 assistants, five did not use the L1 at all. The twenty who used it did so for different reasons. Some of these reasons are discussed as below:

4.2.3 Reasons for L1 use in the English classroom

Despite the fact that educational policy and monolingual method of teaching language frown upon the use of L1 in the classroom, teachers perceive it to be useful in their classroom interaction. They give various reasons for the use of the L1. Some of these are:

4.2.3.1 For explaining of grammatical rules

According to Atkinson (1993), learning a language can be a difficult and often frustrating process for many students particularly, at lower levels. It is therefore important to note that students are better able to complete their language task if some L1 is available to them. Assistants N, J, G, O and D used the L1 to give explanations and to highlight grammatical rules. They started teaching in L2 but as the lesson progressed, they switched to the L1. This was done to enable them to throw more lights on some concepts and grammar rules, which students found difficult to understand in the L2. Assistants J and O for example, in teaching a grammar lesson, started with the topic on *Adverbs* in English but subsequently switched to L1 when trying to explain the various forms of *adverbs*. They used many techniques to explain the concept but the students could not understand the lesson. They then

used the L1 to guide students to grab the concept. Assistant D, in the process of teaching *quantifiers*, resorted to use the L1 to explain why some nouns use the article *many* and others use *much*. This teacher brought different TLMs to the class and used them during the lesson, but when he asked questions to recap the lesson, the students could not provide the correct answers. He quickly switched to the L1 to re-echo what had been taught.

During the observation, assistant N taught *conditional sentences* and used the L1 to explain the rules involved in the use of verb structure in conditional sentences. The teacher presented the rules on a chart with different examples. She explained and guided students to understand and apply the rules in their own sentences. After doing this for about 25minutes, none of the students was able to form the sentences on their own. At that point, he used the L1 to explain the rules. Assistants Y, C and A used L1 throughout the lesson: from the beginning to the end in particular, to explain difficult syntax rules. Students in this classes have a very low L2 proficiency levels so the teachers have no choice than to teach them using the L1. The assistants used the L1 to explain challenging tasks, making it easy to understand and enjoyable. Wescher (1997) opines that using L1 in teaching complicated tasks, particularly for lower level students, is a justified one. As they use the L1, it makes the explanation of rules much easier and easy to understand by the students. This confirms the evidence that the use of L1 is a valuable tool for facilitating and enhancing teaching and learning of the L2.

According to Kang (2008), teachers would use L1 for pedagogical reasons. The results of the observation suggest that the use of the L1 by the 11 assistants to explain complex grammar rules proved quite effective, judging from students' responses. Class participation was very high since they understood what the teacher was teaching. Co-switching was necessary because students found it difficult to understand the rules in grammar that the teacher was teaching. With this, Kang (2008) advises that teachers should

use L1 for pedagogical reasons such as explaining grammar in order for their students to respond favorably to the lesson and to improve their understanding of complex grammar points.

4.2.3.2 Giving instructions

Assistants “Y, C and A” used L1 throughout the lesson, from the beginning to the end. They used it to give instruction to students. Assistant Y used to instruct pupils to go into their reading groups. He did that after many attempts to do same in English were ignored. Students complied immediately when the same instruction was given in the L1. Assistant C used the L1 to guide students to write the various features of a formal letter during a composition lesson. This happened because after the use of English accompanied with TLMs failed to produce the desired results. This use of L1 is confirmed by Lee, Seng and Hashim (2006) who note that the use of L1 to instruct students helps them to understand complicated tasks which would otherwise confuse them when English Language is used.

Assistant A used the English to instruct students to clean the chalkboard, pack their books and pick items from the office. The class prefects were reluctant to carry out the instructions but when the teacher used the L1, they quickly packed the books and prepared for the next lesson. The assistant used the L1 in this case, to facilitate response to their instructions. Mattson and Burenhut (1999) confirm this that the L1 has different functions as far as the teaching and learning process is concerned.

4.2.3.3 Class control and motivation

The teacher trainees used the L1 to create a conducive and attractive atmosphere in the classroom to enhance teaching and learning. Learners feel intimidated and usually lose interest in the lesson when L2 is used as the sole medium of expression. Atkinson (1993) emphasizes this by arguing that learning a language can be a difficult and frustrating process for many students, particularly at the lower level, emphasizes this. In using English only in

English classroom, students are likely to feel intimidated and lose interest in the entire lesson. Students feel comfortable to complete their language task if some level of L1 is available to them. With all these, one can say that to reduce anxiety, tension, and to promote good environment for teaching and learning, L1 always plays an important role. The use of L1 to motivate in the form of jokes is a great benefit to the class. It makes students feel at home and coordinate with the teacher during lessons. Mattson and Burenhult (1999) state that, L1 has different functions in the classroom, one of which is to build rapport between the teacher and learners. It was observed that the assistants' use of L1 to motivate the learners was good since its value was felt during the lesson.

One of the participants who taught a reading lesson asked the students to sing a song in the L1. He then used the L1 to ask them about their parents and many more. He did this in order to ensure a relaxed environment for learning. Edstrom (2006) indicates that she uses L1 on moral grounds, to establish rapport with learners, and to help students realize the difficulty of learning English Language. The use of L1 has been prompted by assumptions that it is essential to integrate it into teaching English to make teachers feel confident with their daily practice (Cook, 2001). In Community Language Learning, students talk to others spontaneously in the English Language via L1 mediation (Cole 1998). L1 is seen as an initiator of meaning. It attaches the English Language in order to compensate for students' lack of comprehension (Cummins, 1979). Besides, students find the use of L1 desirable because it facilitates learning (Schweers, 1999). Harbord (1992) sums the rationale for using L1 as facilitating communication, facilitating teacher-student relationship, and facilitating learning.

4.2.3.4 Evaluating Lesson

Assistants used the L1 to check pupils understanding of the concepts taught. Teachers gave oral evaluation questions to students using the L1. For example, to check whether

students understood a story-telling lesson, the teacher asked them to do oral summary of the story in the L1. To test their understanding, some of the assistants used L1 to ask questions. Cook (2001) is of the opinion that sometimes it is essential to use L1 for instructions to test or ask questions for students to clearly understand what they are supposed to do. Assistant K: one of the assistants who indicated that, he would not use the L1 because it is against the language policy of Ghana, used it to ask students questions at the close of his lesson. His students, after a well-taught lesson, could not identify the difference between the relative pronouns *who* and *whose*. He then used the L1 to rephrase the question and the students quickly gave him the correct responses. This instance clearly shows that there is conflict between policy and practice. That is, while a teacher may want to uphold the dictates of policy, there are situations where it would no longer be tenable to do so, creating a conflict between what you believe in and what you actually practice.

4.2.3.5 Maintaining disciplining in the classroom

Assistant C, T and Y used the L1 to ask students questions and for discipline. They used L1 when teaching to ask questions and manage student's behavior. According to Frankline (1990), one of the many responsibilities of a teacher is to create a non-interfering and conducive learning environment. He reports that most teachers preferred to use the L1 for discipline for two main reasons: to show that the threat is real rather than imagination, and for efficiency of comprehension. As for managing student behavior, two of the assistants used many techniques to discipline their students. They most of the time tell them to pay attention, stop talking, look forward and sit up. However, as they refused to listen, they used the L1 to sound a strong warning to them and they quickly obeyed. In one of the classes, while the teacher was busy teaching, some of the students were playing with a toy. She stopped and asked them to put the toy on her table but they could not listen. She then looked at them and used the L1 to tell them *I said put this thing on my table*. They quickly complied.

4.2.4 Summary of the observation

During the observation, it was realized that all the teachers who used L1 used it to explain meaning of words and to elicit responses from students. Teachers can effectively use the learner's L1 to translate vocabulary items in class (Nation, 2003). Nation further argued that when the L1 is used, the translations are usually clear and familiar. The audio recordings were taken during the month of March, which was the sixth month of the teacher trainees' practice. Consequently, they had enough time to introduce other useful phrases in the target language but could not do so due to the students' English proficiency. The research also revealed that the mother tongue in English Language classroom does not play only a supportive and facilitating role, but instead, often helps in understanding the English, which remains the main language.

The fact is that learners of a second/foreign language need a motivated environment to enable them to understand and use the only little chance to meet up with the language outside the classroom. For this reason, the trainees used L1 to give them a peaceful classroom atmosphere for learning. The observation revealed that the L1 was used most for highlighting grammatical rules, explaining complex ideas, and explaining meanings of words. These findings may lend further credence to the fact that the participants used the mother tongue to achieve a purpose that gears towards the effectiveness of the English Language. Most of the trainees who did not use the L1 did not do so because of their low level of proficiency in the student's L1. It was evident that learners in general need to hear the mother tongue to help them feel at home with the teacher.

Results from the search suggest that the use of L1 in English Language classroom did not hinder the learning of the English Language. Rather, it created rapport between the teacher and the learner, which enhanced a sense of confidence and a relaxed atmosphere for better teaching and learning. With L1 in the classroom, students have the confidence that if

they do not understand something in English, their teacher would explain it in the L1. This makes them feel relaxed in attempting to speak the English Language with the hope that their teacher is there to support them. There is strong evidence that learners tend to prefer teachers who understand their L1 (Briggs, 2001). A study by Schweers (1995) found 88.7% of Spanish pupils studying English wanted L1 used in the class because it facilitates learning. Lameta-Tufuga (1994) examined the effects of having learners discuss a task in their L1 before they had to carry it out in writing in the English Language.

The L1 discussion of the task had some interesting features: First, the learners were all very actively involved in coming to terms with the ideas. Second, the L1 discussion included quite a lot of English Language vocabulary, which would be used later in the task. Thus, the discussion not only helped learners to understand the content, but also helped them gain control of relevant English vocabulary in a supportive L1 environment. There are numerous ways of conveying meaning of an unknown word. These are defining it in English, demonstration, diagram, real object, English Language context, or L1 translation. None of these ways is intrinsically better than any other does in terms of conveying meaning. It all depends on the particular word concerned. However, studies comparing the effectiveness of various methods for learning usually conclude that an L1 translation is the most effective (Laufer & Shmuel, 1997). This is the reason why L1 translations are usually clear, short and familiar-which are very important in effective definition (McKeown, 1993). Although there are frequent criticisms raised about learning L1-English Language word pairs, these criticisms are not by research. Research suggests the opposite; the direct learning of English vocabulary using word cards with their L1 translations is a very effective method of learning.

Nation (2001) suggests that fluency development tasks need to involve language items that are already familiar to learners, as they need to involve largely familiar content. They need some kind of encouragement to perform faster than usual. The L1 can have a

small role in preparing the learners for tasks to make sure that the material is truly familiar. However, when the use of the L1 is not checked, teachers and learners can solely depend on it and this could hinder the confidence in their ability to communicate in English. The unstructured and unlimited use of the L1 can present a great worry to those who support the English-only method of teaching and learning. One often widely misunderstood point which proponents of L1 use such as Auerbach (1993) have been criticized for is that they are promoting the indiscriminate and wide use of L1 in the classroom. Supporters of the Bilingual Approach have clarified this by stating that they do not support widespread and indiscriminate use of the L1 in the classroom (Auerbach, 1993).

Research has shown that evidence for the practice of English-only is never conclusive nor pedagogically sound (Auerbach, 1993). The L1 is recommended if it assists students' understanding of a particular concept (Cook, 2001). Sawin and Lapkin (2000) are also of the view that using L1 to mediate English Language learning can create a more conducive and affective learning environment. The L1 has some merits when integrated into teaching. It assists the teacher to present meaning of abstract grammar rules and complicated vocabulary in no time but in a more effective manner. The mother tongue also creates an amount of naturalness in the classroom. To create a friendly and a natural classroom environment, the teacher uses L1 to express care and concern, which makes it valuable, then expressing it in the English Language. To motivate students, the use of L1 in praising students helps to create an interpersonal relationship among them and between the students and the teacher. In conveying the meaning of new words, the students' experience in L1 may be beneficial to them since it can be exploited to increase their understanding of the English Language. Monolingual instruction can be frustrating, rigid, and complicated, but intermittent use of the mother tongue has a positive effect on English teaching and learning.

4.3 Conclusion

The results of this study show that there are two groups of teachers in the JHS in the Akatsi South district: those who use the L1 and those who do not. From the study, one can see that the trainees used the L1 in teaching English Grammar in order to guide students to understand complex grammatical rules. In Reading Comprehension, the trainees used the L1 to explain the vocabulary items in the passage before leading students to read the passage. The assistants used the L1 in teaching Composition lessons; in doing this, they explained the features of what type of essay the students were supposed to write. They then assisted them to write the essay in the English Language.

One reason for using the L1 is to explain complex grammatical concept in the lesson. Teachers finding it difficult to explain grammar rules and concepts in the English Language, resort to the use of the L1. This is supported by Cook (2001) who explains that the L1 is recommended when it assists students' understanding of a particular concept. The L1 is used to create a friendly atmosphere in the classroom. Teachers who use the L1 do so to create a stress-free atmosphere for learning. Sawin and Lapkin (2000) note that, using L1 to mediate English Language learning can create a more conducive and affective learning environment.

Assistants who used the L1 did so to facilitate the learning of the L2. The data collected show that assistants' use of L1 was purposeful. They used L1 when they thought their objective was becoming very difficult to achieve using the English Language. From the researcher's observation and interview from the five schools, it was observed that without co-switching, teachers were likely to use incorrect and unguided English Language. It was also observed that L1 played only a supportive and facilitating role in teaching and learning of English Language. English is always the master communication tool in the classroom, the L1 is a classroom technique used by the teachers to improve L2 proficiency. Teachers who did not use the L1 had many reasons for not doing so.

One of such reasons is that tutors in the Colleges of Education have warned the trainees against the use of the L1 when teaching English, and that anyone who violates that rule is penalized. The language policy of Ghana that is strictly adhered to by the Ghana Education Service also barred every teacher of English from using the L1 in the classroom. Teachers would not like to answer query from their Headmasters and their Circuit Supervisors so they will not use the L1 in their English lessons. Evidence from the study suggests that the target language should remain the main language to be used in the English language classroom with the appropriate and judicious use of the mother tongue in some cases. The study also encourages teachers to employ the communicative approach. It also suggests that students should be exposed to as much as possible to the target language use to allow its acquisition. Nevertheless, it stands strongly to argue that without the mother tongue, language acquisition and development will be invalid.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The summary of findings of the study is discussed in this chapter. The role of the mother tongue in teaching English language is presented here and also some suggestions for future studies are pointed out. As already mentioned, the aim of this thesis is to discover whether teachers of English in the Junior High School use L1 in their lessons. In what ways it is used, the amount of L1 used, and the role of L1 in English language. Interviews and observations were used as research techniques.

5.2 Summary of findings

Most teachers have misconceptions about the use of L1 in the English language classroom. There are two schools of thought regarding this issue. The Monolingual Approach which is not in favor of using L1 in the English Language Classroom and the Bilingual Approach which supports the use of L1 in the English language classroom. The desire for every teacher is to impart knowledge in the students but not the medium through which it is done. Therefore, if the teacher feels the students would understand the concept better if it is explained in the L1, he does no wrong using a pinch of it to facilitate the lesson. This study is not to exaggerate the role of L1 in ESL classroom but to rectify the misconception created by the proponents of the monolingual approach of teaching English which has troubled both the learners and teachers of ESL. The population in this research was teacher trainees in the Akatsi District of the Volta region.

The study aimed at finding answers to the following research questions:

1. In what situations do the teachers of English use the mother tongue instead of English?
2. How frequently is the mother tongue used in English language classroom?

3. What is the role of the L1 in the English classroom?

The first research question sought to identify the various situations in which the L1 was used by the participants in their delivery of English language lesson. According to Atkinson (1993), learning a language can be a difficult and often frustrating process for many students particularly, at lower levels. It is therefore important to note that students are better able to complete their language task if some L1 is available to them. Participants used the L1 to give explanations and to highlight grammatical rules. After they used many techniques and available TLMs to explain the same concept but the students could not understand the lesson. They then used the L1 to guide students to grab the concept.

Some of the participants used the L1 to give instruction to students. This use of L1 is confirmed by Lee, Seng and Hashim (2006) who note that the use of L1 to instruct students helps them to understand complicated tasks which would otherwise confuse them when English Language is used.

The teacher trainees used the L1 to create a conducive and attractive atmosphere in the classroom to enhance teaching and learning. Learners feel intimidated and usually lose interest in the lesson when L2 is used as the sole medium of expression.

It emerges from the findings that, assistants used the L1 to check students understanding of the concepts taught when the students cannot provide them with the feedback, the sort to the use of the L1. As for managing student behavior, the assistants used many techniques to discipline their students. They most of the time tell them to pay attention, stop talking, look forward and sit up. However, as they refused to listen, they used the L1 to sound a strong warning to them and they quickly obeyed.

The second research question explored the rate at which the trainees used the L1 in their teaching. Some of the trainees thought that L1 should *never* be used in the English language classroom. Others were of the view that the L1 can be used *very rarely* in the English language

classroom. For this study a good number of teachers from all the schools studied agreed that L1 can be used *sometimes* in the classroom though none of the participants think that L1 should be used frequently. The finding also identifies that majority of the participants disfavor the two extreme paradigms of L1 use – *never and frequently*. Rather they support the moderate use of L1 depending on the occasion, context, students' proficiency level and other necessities of the learner.

The third research question sought to find the implications of the L1 in the teaching and learning English language. That is the role of L1 in the English language classroom. This is presented below.

5.3. The Role of L1 in English Language Classroom

This study indicates that appropriate and judicious use of mother tongue can play a significant role in English language teaching. Also, it enhanced successful target language acquisition. One of these is comprehensibility. Exposure to comprehensible input is crucial for successful language acquisition. To make input comprehensible, the use of mother tongue is generally necessary. Also, the use of the L1 creates naturalness in the classroom. It helps the teacher to create a conducive and friendly atmosphere in the classroom by using L1 to interrupt with the students. Teachers use L1 as an instructional tool. There are various reasons for the uses of L1. One of them is: explaining complex concepts in the lesson. L1 is very useful in explaining complex Grammar rules and terms. If L2 alone is used in explaining complex concepts the students feel confused and lost throughout the lesson. L1 is used just to bring students' attention back to the classroom to enable teachers achieve their objectives. Frantically L1 is used to limit the time spent on explanation of rules and concepts but it is advisable to switch to L2 when sentences and concepts become simpler.

5.4. Implications for teaching

The L1 has some merits and these can be integrated into teaching. One is efficiency. For instance, L1 may help present the meaning of abstract and complicated vocabulary items

in less time consuming but more effective manner. Another is naturalness. It may be very easy for teachers to create a conducive atmosphere in the classroom by showing concern for their student in the L1 than it would be in the English language. The use of both languages meets students' communication needs in the society outside the classroom. The teachers can use the L1 in the classroom to convey meaning of complex grammar rules and managing discourse. For example, organizing tasks and disciplining. In terms of conveying the meaning of new words, the students L1 may be beneficial to them because it can be exploited to increase the understanding of the L2. A Monolingual instruction can be frustrating, but occasional use of the L1 can have a positive result.

However, teachers need to restrict the use of L1 explanations to abstracts, complicated words or sentence that would otherwise confused students if explained in the L2. If a word or a sentence is simple enough, it is worthwhile to take the time to define or explain it in the L2.

5.5. Recommendations

To make this study complete the researcher gives the following recommendations based on the findings:

The merits of planned and judicious use of L1 in ESL classroom should be intricate to language learners and teachers in the Colleges of Education and in the Universities.

The government should give a clear-cut policy on language teaching in Ghanaian schools since the current policy is uncertain. More community libraries should be built to enable students read more books in English in order to build their vocabularies.

Schools should encourage student to use the English language in their conversations to help them build self-confidence in the use of the language. Debate, drama and scribblers' clubs should be set up in schools for students to join to develop their speaking, writing and vocabulary skills.

At home, parents should advise their wards to listen to news in English on radio and on the television. They should be encouraged to use their cell phones to goggle Wikipedia for meaning of words. Parents and guardians should try and buy dictionaries for their wards to assist them check meaning, pronunciation and usage of words on their own.

5.6 Conclusion

The current study has revealed the role, amount, reason and situations of L1 used in English Language Classrooms. In this study, the interview and the observations used and analyzed showed that effective use of L1 played an important role in the studying of the English Language. The primary role of the L1 is to supply scaffolding to lower affective filters by making the English language classroom comprehensible. The medium of communication in the classroom in no doubt remains the English language. As with other techniques, the mother tongue is only a means to the end of improving students' English language proficiency. Based on this findings, the researcher advocate here for the principle, guided and purposeful use of L1. Since, the unplanned use and randomized practice of students' L1 may impede achievement of expected outcomes in the target language teaching and learning

5.7 Suggestions for Future Research

In future, a survey should involve both teacher and students from different region in the country. The use of L1 and its effect on students' proficiency should also be looked at. The learners' views on the use of L1 also need to be critically examined.

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APPENDIX

Interview Questions

- a. Do you use L1 in English Language classroom?
- b. If yes, under which conditions do you used L1 in English Language classroom?
- c. Why do you use L1 under these classroom conditions?
- d. How often do you use L1 in English Language classroom?
- e. What is the effect of the use of L1 in English Language?
- f. If no, why don't you use L1 in English Language classroom?
- g. Do your pupils have common L1?
- h. Do you speak your pupils L1?
- i. Do you think the use of L1 in English Language classroom will hinder or enhance the learning of the English Language?
- j. Do you punish your students for using L1 in the classroom?
- k. How do you feel when you use the L1 in the classroom?
- l. Do you think that teachers should use L1 in the English Language classroom?

Individual Interview Questions

1. What is your level of education?
2. How long have you been teaching English Language?
3. Do you ever write an examination in English Language?
4. Do you speak L1 outside the classroom with your students?