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**Postcolonial Theory and Early Literacy
Development for 4-8 year-olds: A Life History Study
of Ghanaian Teachers**

By

Philomena Osseo-Asare

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the degree of doctor of philosophy of the School of Education**

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Dedication

*This thesis is dedicated to the loving memory of my parents
Emile and Agnes Vorgbe for educating me and to all the
teachers who took part in this study and who continue
to educate young children in Ghana.*

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Abstract

This life history study examines how the changes in language and literacy policy in lower grades impacted on teachers' classroom practices from independence in 1957 to 2014. As a result of British colonial rule, English is the official language in Ghana and other sub-Saharan African countries; English is also used in many schools, yet most young children enter school with no prior knowledge of the English language. Consequently, the language of instruction in lower grades has always been a contested issue. There are some who prefer the use of local language and see the use of English as inculcating Western values and culture in the African, thus depriving children of the knowledge of African traditional values. On the other hand, those in favour of English, argue that the use of local language was a means of providing inferior education to Africans by colonial governments. These differing views have led to changes in the language policy for lower grades since the country's independence in 1957.

Although there have been a number of studies on the language policy in lower grade, there is a gap in the literature on understanding how colonial rule and Western education influences the language/s used in Ghanaian schools to support children's literacy development. In addition, there is little or no research to understand how policy changes in language and literacy have affected lower grade teachers' classroom practices. This study therefore adopts a postcolonial theoretical perspective and has used in-depth interviews to collect data from seven lower grades teachers on the use of different language and literacy policies over the past six decades. The findings suggest that teachers' personal values, beliefs and teacher training play a significant role in their attitudes towards language and literacy policy and their classroom practices. Though teaching in the local language helped in classroom interaction, making children more active, the study found that teachers' knowledge of local language was hampered by the fact that local language was an optional subject in Senior High School. The English-only policy was seen as being responsible for children's inability to understand and communicate freely in class, thereby making teaching difficult for teachers. The findings also show that, though the National Literacy Acceleration Programme (NALAP) was seen as a positive move to make children literate in both local language and English, the question of the use of a particular local language and the place of English in lower grades remains unresolved. This study concludes that young children's literacy development depends to a large extent on an individual teacher's language expertise in the local languages and English and their ability in using and teaching both efficiently in the classroom.

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List of Abbreviations

AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
CPP	Convention People's Party
CRDD	Curriculum Research Development Division
GES	Ghana Education Service
GNAT	Ghana National Association of Teachers
JHS	Junior High School
KG	Kindergarten
L1	Language One
L2	Language Two
NALAP	National Literacy Acceleration Programme
NDC	National Democratic Party
NESAR	National Education Sector Annual Review
NLC	National Liberation Council
NLS	New Literacy Studies
NPP	New Patriotic Party
NVivo	Software that supports qualitative and mixed methods research
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PBME	Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation
PIRLS	Progress International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)
SHS	Senior High School
UNESCO	United Nations Education and Scientific Organisation
USAID	United State of America Aid

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Map of Ghana

Source: <http://www.reportghananews.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Ghana-10-Regions-Map.png>



Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Young children's literacy learning in Ghana has long been associated with their ability to read, write and express themselves in the English language, as a result of British colonial rule. Researchers in the area of children's reading, including Cunningham and Stanovich (1997), have argued that good reading skills lead to success in future education, as children with such ability do better than those with poor reading skills. A number of reports from UNESCO suggest that children with good literacy skills have better prospects of finishing school, getting good jobs and contributing meaningfully to their communities, while those with poor literacy skills could drop out of school or finish school without the ability to read and write, ending up in lower paid jobs (UNESCO, 2016, 2006). For these reasons, children's literacy is a matter of concern for many countries across the world, especially in Ghana. Literacy is not only about an individual's ability to read and write but closely linked or connected with a person's language and cultural experiences (Whitehead, 2010; Street, 1984).

However, in Ghana and other Sub-Saharan African countries, the language used in literacy is often seen as a hindrance to children's literacy development and future progress in school because the language used is European and foreign to many children (Graham, McGlynn and Islei, 2015). Perry's (2008, p.60) argument that, although literacy has an important role in South Africa 'it is nonetheless a post-colonial phenomenon that carries post-colonial implications', is equally true for other post-colonial countries like Ghana. This appears to suggest that research into education in Ghana ought to consider the role of colonial rule and its implication on education, as in Salifu and Agbenyega's (2013) work on postcolonial theory and teachers' motivation and Mfum-Mensah's (2005) study on language policy from a post-colonial perspective.

The language policy in Ghana, which is concerned with the language of instruction in school, is a matter of worry for many because of the relationship between education and a person's development as discussed above. The language policy, especially for lower grades, is of much greater importance because the medium through which learning takes place is, in a way, linked to the mode through which children's literacy develops. For many years, the issue of which language to use as the medium of instruction for younger children has been met with difficulties, resulting in changes in policy from independence to date (Ansah, 2014; Owu-Ewie,

2006). Although much has been written about the changes in language policy in lower grades, there is little research on the impact of the changes in language and literacy policy on teachers' classroom practices. Research in this area is likely to have huge implications for teachers, policy makers and children in general, as some children leave school without achieving much success (Tagoe, 2011). This places new demands on early grade teachers in terms of how to improve their classroom practices to meet the literacy needs of their children; an area that, Perry (2008) argues, remains underdeveloped in scholarly research. This study is, therefore, narrowed to include teachers working within the early childhood period of 4-8 years, which in Ghana covers children in school from Kindergarten one and two and Grade one, Grade two, and Grade three referred to in this study as lower grades. I have chosen to focus on this age group as it is a crucial stage in a child's language and literacy development, yet there also appears to be considerable contention within lower grades with regard to the language of instruction.

The study uses a postcolonial theoretical perspective to explain the issues surrounding the need for a language policy in lower grade classrooms in Ghana. As a former British colonial country, Ghana adopted English as its official national language and language of instruction in school. However, since many Ghanaian communities use their own local languages at home and within the community, many children go to school without having any prior knowledge of English, which means learning in that language can be difficult, if not impossible, for them. This resulted in the promotion of local languages in lower grades to help children acquire literacy skills in English for use in upper grades and other higher levels of education in the future. The use of local language has, however, been contested since the colonial period when it was first introduced, with some against its use and others for it (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1975). Those who were against its use saw it as a means of providing inferior education to Africans, and those for it argued that using English in learning was a means of alienating children from their culture and tradition and for perpetuating the supremacy of the English language (Owu-Ewie, 2006; Wakerley, 1994; McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1975).

The use of life history in researching teachers' lives has gained popularity in recent times because of its ability to obtain an authentic understanding of teachers' professional lives (Dhunpath, 2000). By using a life history methodology, the study traces the changes that have taken place from independence until the present time, through the life experiences of seven teachers who taught lower grades in the last six decades.

I will now introduce the reader to Ghana, a country in West Africa where the study took place. I will also give some background information on the beginning of Western education in the country to set the scene for the reader to understand the context within which the language and literacy policies exist. The aims and objectives of the study are also discussed together with the research questions which have been refined over time. The general structure and organisation of the thesis is given to provide a good overview of the whole thesis for the reader.

1.2 Background to the study

The study is situated in Ghana, West Africa, as seen in the map of Ghana (p. xii of this thesis). The country was formally known as the Gold Coast and it adopted the name Ghana, which was an old empire in West Africa, at the time of independence in 1957 (Arowolo, 2010; Nkrumah, 2001). The country prides itself on being the first Sub-Saharan African country to have gained independence from Britain (Buah, 1980). Ghana lies along the Gulf of Guinea and shares borders with three French speaking countries: Togo to the East, and to the West is the Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso to the North (Briggs, 1998). Ghana uses English as its official language and has a variety of local languages (Ansah, 2014). At present Ghana has ten regions and some of its major cities include Tema, Kumasi, Takoradi, Cape-Coast, Koforidua, Ho, Wa, Sunyani, Tamale, Bawku, with Accra as the capital (see map of Ghana, p. xii). Ghana is very diverse in culture, ethnicity, religion, language and geography. However, large towns and cities reflect the multicultural and multilingual elements of the country and education has bridged the gap between different tribes and people. This was made possible through the secondary school boarding system, whereby children from different regions and towns learned to live with one another (Fentiman, Hall and Bundy, 1999).

The history of Ghana's Western style education can be traced to the 'castle schools' of European traders from Portugal, The Netherlands, Denmark and Britain, for the education of European children and other children from prominent families (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1975). Mass education and literacy learning started with missionary activities for the training of catechists and training of teachers to instruct students in reading the Bible and prepare them for life in missionary schools (Asare-Danso, 2014). Since independence, Ghana has made significant progress in the provision of education through a number of educational reforms and donor support for both teachers and students (Kuyini, 2013). In addition, there has been a focus on adult literacy to promote literacy learning for school 'drop-outs' and adults who have not had any formal education (Yates, 1995). Today, Ghana can boast an increased

number of schools and high enrolment of students from basic to secondary (including vocational and technical institutes) and tertiary level, including Training Colleges (now Colleges of Education), Polytechnics and Universities (Akyeampong, 2007).

Despite the achievements in education, there is concern about the use of English as a medium of instruction in upper levels because of the inability of some children, particularly those in rural areas, to access higher education due to their poor performance in the Basic Examination Certificate Examination (BECE) at the end of Junior High School (JHS) (Ansong, Ansong, Ampomah and Afranie, 2015). The use of English rather than local language is seen by some indigenes as providing inferior education while for others, the use of English rather than the local language was perceived as a colonial influence, a form of perpetual domination and a means of eradicating indigenous cultures (Babaci-Wilhite, 2013; Owu-Ewie, 2006). However, some Ghanaians seem to prefer the use of English because of economic benefits and the global status of English, which is seen as a source of opportunity and participation in the wider world (Pennycook, 1998, 2013). The dilemma of ‘which language to use’ as the medium of instruction in schools during the colonial era especially in lower grades, continued to make headlines after several years of independence (Owu-Ewie, 2006, p.76). The former Minister of Education, Professor Opoku-Agyeman, was once quoted as advocating the use of local language as the medium of instruction in all levels of education, amid cheers from the audience (Ghana News Agency, 2015). The response from the audience seems to indicate agreement with such a move. Indeed, the question of language policy in lower grades is very significant because of the implication it has for children’s progress in school and their ability to contribute to any society in future.

Most children, especially those in rural areas, come from homes and communities where English is hardly spoken or used in everyday conversation at home. In other words, for these students English is hardly used outside the classroom or school. The lack of previous knowledge of English before the start of school or during the early years of school means that most children do not possess an adequate command of English to follow lessons taught exclusively in English by the time they get to Grade 4. This deficit in the use of English continues to be a problem through the Junior Secondary School, resulting in many students failing the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), which is a gateway to higher education. This means that without a good knowledge of the English language, children’s classroom participation is diminished and they are unable to make significant progress in the future, as studies and reports on Ghana have shown (NESAR, 2012).

However, research has shown that children learn better when they are taught in their first language or mother tongue, as they understand their lessons and are able to interact better in the local language (Cummins, 2001). The situation in which the official languages in African countries and the language of teaching is different from citizens' everyday language, and the inability of government to change policy, has become a contested issue in many Sub-Saharan African countries to date (Chimbutane, 2011; Brock-Utne, Desai, Qorro, 2004; Ball, 1983). Wakerley (1994) appears to suggest that European languages became by and large the official languages of African independent states because of African elite who had been schooled in these languages and gained employment in colonial administration. Over the past decades, many sub-Saharan African researchers have written extensively on the language in education policy, with the aim of drawing the attention of policy makers to difficulties faced by teachers and children in school (Mfum-Mensah, 2005; Perry, 2008).

The language of instruction in school, especially in lower grades, which is the foundation for children's learning and future success, is of importance as it encourages meaningful learning experiences for children in school. This demands a focus on children's language and literacy development, so that children do not drop out of school or complete education without the ability to read and write, either in their own language or in the English language. However, this can happen if there is stability in the language and literacy policy in lower grades and if teachers are given the necessary training and resources needed to do the job. As Edu-Buando and Otchere (2012) argue, there is a need to revise educational policy formulation and implementation to reflect the experiences of practitioners and stakeholders. However, there is little research on children's literacy development, as suggested by Perry (2008).

This has resulted in renewed interest in language policy in post-colonial African schools; for example, this can be seen in the works of Oduor (2015) on the use of multilingualism in Kenya; Makoni, Dube and Mashiri (2006) on colonial and post-colonial language policy issues in Zimbabwe, and Brock-Utne et al. (2004) on the language of instruction in Tanzania and South Africa. In Ghana, writers on language policy issues include Ansah (2014), Edu-Buando and Otchere (2012) Opoku-Amankwa (2009), Owu-Ewie (2006) and Mfum-Mensah (2005). Although the issue of a language policy appears to be a challenge for post-colonial Africa and some Asian countries, language policy is in fact becoming an issue in other parts of the world, including Scotland and the United States (Phipps and Fassetta, 2015; Liddicoat and Curnow, 2014). This is evident in the work of Phipps and Fassetta (2015), who examined language policy issues in the different countries in the United Kingdom, with particular reference to

Scotland and the Gaelic language. What is clear from the debate on language policy is that it is a global issue, with huge implications for governments.

My interest in postcolonial theory and early literacy development in lower grade children also originates from my background as a former teacher and head teacher of two schools in Ghana. I was exposed to the challenges faced by teachers of lower grades in terms of language policy and the lack of a common classroom language in a school outside Accra. I realised that the majority of teachers in this school, which was a public one, had a problem with the use of Ga as the language of school because they could not speak it and, as a result, used English, which was new to the children. I realised I had to come up with new strategies to help both teachers and children cope with the situation. I could speak a number of the children's languages so I sometimes went to the classes to do some activities with the children. This situation was in complete contrast to my past experience in a private school, where children were taught exclusively in English from Kindergarten. The problem in the private school was that the majority of children in the school could not speak their local languages. The fundamental difference between the two schools was that those children in the private school, unlike the public school, achieved better grades in the final examination at the end of Junior Secondary School. This contrast between the two schools posed a big challenge for me and I became interested in finding solutions for how children could learn both English and the local language and wished to encourage teachers to do their best for the children so that they do not get discouraged and drop out of school.

One of the biggest educational problems in Ghana is the number of students who go through school without achieving their ultimate goals. This problem has resulted in many students failing their final examinations and becoming low wage earners. A World Bank report on Ghana (World Bank, 2009) indicates that:

...although enrolment in education is raising at all levels, 9 out of 10 youths aged 15-17 are not enrolled in senior secondary education either because they have dropped out of school or because they are behind in their curriculum due to repetition. Many of them have altogether left formal education to find work or to acquire skills through traditional apprenticeship or by learning on the job. (p.ix)

This assessment appears to be an indictment of the quality of education provided by the government and the Ghana Education Service for children in Ghana. Many reasons are given for the poor academic performance of children in school. Among these is the poor quality of classrooms, lack of trained teachers, insufficient teaching and learning materials, teacher

absenteeism, poverty etc. (NESAR, 2012). Others, however, believe the main cause of the problem is the language policy in education, where teaching is conducted in the English language (the colonial language), which is unfamiliar to the majority of children in Ghana. For example, The Ghana News Agency (2010) reported that Mrs Daaku (Literacy Programmes Manager of National Literacy Acceleration Programme) attributed the failure of many students at the Basic Examination Certificate Examination (BECE) to their inability to understand enough English language to answer the examination questions, which are in English.

Although there have been a number of studies on language policy in the country, as discussed above, it appears that little attention has been paid to the role of teachers in children's literacy learning and the impact of language and literacy policy changes on teachers' practices since Ghana became independent in 1957. In addition, recent changes and emphasis on children's literacy development through the NALAP policy, which seems to be a compromise between the English-only and local language policies, calls for a critical examination of language and literacy policy changes in lower grades and teachers' practices. NALAP is a biliteracy policy, where children are taught in the local language and are introduced gradually to the English language, with the aim of making children literate in a Ghanaian language and in the English language.

Furthermore, it that appears the challenges of the English-only and local language have not been resolved, as some children continue to do poorly in the BECE. As Ansah (2014) argues, fluctuations in language policy may be due to a lack of appreciation for the linguistic situation in the country. In addition, these challenges appear to be partly due to the inability of successive governments to find lasting solutions to a problem, which is deeply rooted in colonial politics. Although the debate on language policy issues in Sub-Saharan Africa, and Ghana in particular, is about the use of European languages as the medium of instruction in schools, not much attention is paid to the link between language policy and children's literacy learning (reading and writing) and teachers' classroom practices. These considerations led to my research questions and objectives.

1.3 Research aims and objectives

This study is concerned with the changes in language and literacy policy for lower grade (4-8 years) children and the impact of this on teachers' classroom practices. As indicated earlier, literacy learning is closely associated with the language policy operating in lower grades in Ghana, which makes the role of teachers very crucial. More specifically, this study is based on

the fact that the different and frequent language and literacy policies initiated by the government could impact both negatively and positively on teachers' practices, with consequences for children's literacy and future progress in school. Although much attention has been paid to language policy in Ghana, there appears to be a gap in the literature on how policy changes in language and literacy have impacted on lower grade teachers' classroom practices since independence. There is a need to study language and literacy policy changes and how they influence teachers' practices, in order to know exactly what the language and literacy policies are, what problems exist with their use and why, what impact they have on teachers and children and how future policies and teachers' practices can be improved for the future. This study, therefore, aims to achieve the following research objectives:

1. To critically examine different language and literacy policies for early grades from independence to the present day.
2. To assess the effectiveness of different policies on classroom practices from teachers' perspectives.
3. To identify and understand the ways in which certain socio-cultural factors affect the language and literacy of 4-8 year olds in Ghana.
4. To develop a conceptual framework aimed at supporting lower grade teachers in Ghana.

Based on the above aims and objectives, the three research questions below have been formulated.

Research questions:

- What have been the key language and literacy policies since Ghana's independence, as seen through a postcolonial lens?
- How have teachers experienced changes in language and literacy policy in terms of their classroom practices?
- What are teachers' views on how language and literacy policy has been developed and implemented?

1.4 Structure and Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into six chapters, starting with an introduction and ending with a short summary. This opening chapter provides an introduction to the whole study and presents an outline of the remaining chapters. This is followed by the literature review, where readers are introduced to postcolonial theory and the reasons why Ghana's language and literacy policies need to be studied from postcolonial perspectives. In the methodology chapter, a detailed

account of the study's research design, the choice of life history and how data was collected from seven teachers and three officials (Ghana Education Service, Ministry of Education and National Catholic Secretariat) is presented in order to gain a better understanding of the impact of language and literacy policy changes on teachers' practices. The fourth chapter provides an overview of the seven teachers through the use of their voice vignettes, to enable readers to become familiar with them. Chapter Five presents the findings of the study in the form of a narrative analysis, based on the themes that emerged from the data. The final chapter provides a conclusion and recommendation to policy makers, the Ghana Education Service (GES) and training institutions for teachers. A summary of each chapter is given below.

Chapter Two: Literature review

This chapter reviews literature on key issues relating to the study. It introduces the reader to postcolonial theory and explains how language and literacy policies in lower grades are direct consequences of Ghana's colonial history and its aftermath. Literature on literacy is reviewed, followed by a review of teacher education and the further professional training available to teachers in Ghana. The chapter ends with a critical examination of the different language and literacy policy changes from independence until the present time. This includes a discussion of the three main policies, which are English-only, local language and National Literacy Acceleration Programme (NALAP).

Chapter Three: Research methodology

This chapter is structured around the different phases of my research process and provides a justification for each of the steps I took to complete the work. In considering which theory and tools to use for this study, I realised that the choice of a qualitative and interpretivist life history methodology was best suited to what I was aiming for. Life history has previously been used as a successful research tool to study teachers' lives (Goodson and Sikes, 2001). As Armstrong (1982, p.5) argues, life history 'assigns significance and value to a person's 'own story', or to 'the interpretation that people place on their own experiences as an explanation for their own behaviours'. The use of multiple life stories of teachers in Ghana made it possible to achieve the aim of this study, by tracing the historical changes in language and literacy policies since the time of independence to see how these changes affected teachers' practices throughout this period. As this study is focused on policy changes in school, I sought to identify the policies governing these teachers' practices and understand how they influenced the teachers' day-to-day practice in the classrooms. The life stories of these seven participants formed the core of

this study and were accepted as a valid account of the teachers' professional life experiences (Smith, 2011).

The chapter describes how the participants were recruited and how data were collected through three in-depth semi-structured interviews with seven teachers, and unstructured interviews with government and religious officials. The use of a life history approach also informed the process of analysing, interpreting and presenting the results in a way that will be meaningful to the reader. In addition, ethical issues such as confidentiality and anonymity are addressed in this chapter. Although some participants felt there was no need to anonymise their names because the information they provided was not confidential, I have nevertheless used pseudonyms to protect their identity. Furthermore, the management of my data, and difficulties I faced in the fieldwork and how I dealt with them, are all discussed. The methodological approach used in this study is underpinned by an interpretivist or a social constructionist view. Finally, the chapter ends with a reflection on my positionality as a former head teacher, who was confronted with teachers' use of language policy in lower grades and how this might have influenced the interpretation I made of participants' narratives.

Chapter Four: Profiles and voice vignettes of participants

This chapter serves as an introduction to the main participants of the study and provides a link between the methodology and findings chapters. This research was carried out with seven participants, who had experience of teaching in lower grades (kindergarten 1 and 2 through to classes 1, 2 and 3). Some of the participants were retired teachers, others are no longer teaching lower grades and only one participant is still teaching Class 1. Since the beginning of the study, two participants have been promoted to head teacher, but they continue to support literacy activities in their respective schools. Apart from giving some background on each participant, I allowed them to introduce themselves to the reader by employing a participant's voice vignette based on Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner and Steinmetz' (1991) use of vignettes. This allows the reader to have a personalised relationship with each participant as they tell their own stories regarding their education, beliefs and perceptions of Ghanaian society, through the context of three in-depth interviews with each participant. The chapter also helps the reader to have a deeper understanding of some of the decisions and actions of the participants, with regard to language and literacy policy issues in the country. Although other government and religious officials also contributed to this study, they are not introduced in this chapter because they are not my main participants but rather contributors.

The use of voice vignette gives a voice to the Ghanaian teacher so that can they tell their own stories, within the social, cultural and historical settings of the country. This allows the reader insight into past and contemporary issues about teachers, and teaching in Ghana.

Chapter Five: Findings

This chapter provides an interpretation of the results with the help of the literature. In this chapter, I combined the presentation of participants' verbatim transcribed data, analysis and interpretation to make it easier for the reader to follow without having to go back and forth through different chapters. The use of a thematic narrative was a means of presenting the findings in a coherent way for the reader to engage with the data. As Clarke and Braun (2016, p.1) explain, 'thematic analysis is a method for identifying analysing and interpreting patterns within qualitative data'. In this vein themes such as teachers' training and preparation as teachers, the impact of the different language and literacy policies on teachers' practices over the past six decades as well as their views on language and literacy policy formulation have been identified, analysed and interpreted. The chapter also highlights some historical and socio-cultural occurrences and their influences on language and literacy policy formulation. The chapter considered a number of key benefits and limitations for each of the three language and literacy policies, namely the English-only, local language and NALAP policies.

Chapter Six: Conclusions and recommendations

This conclusion and recommendation chapter discusses the study's findings on the changes in language and literacy policies and their effect on teachers' practices. The benefits and limitations of each policy were discussed and compared to the present language and literacy policy, NALAP, to see how NALAP has or has not resolved the limitations of the previous policies. A number of implications for the government, donor agencies, Ghana Education Service (GES) and teachers are highlighted. A framework for teachers is developed to support them in teaching practices, their professional career and their well-being. The chapter considers the study's limitations and assesses its contribution to knowledge on the topic of postcolonial theory and education in general and, more specifically, on language and literacy policies in early childhood education in Ghana. It also makes a number of recommendations for the government of Ghana, the GES and donor agencies. The chapter concludes with my future research interests and a postscript.

In terms of the objectives set for this study, I believe the study has achieved its aim of using the experiences of teachers to track policy changes in language and literacy from independence

in 1957 to date and to provide a better understanding of the impact of policy changes on teachers' individual practices. The use of postcolonial theory helped to understand educational settings in Ghana, the need for language policy in lower grades and the need to find some form of solution to the current situation.

1.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has served as an introduction to the main study. The research background was discussed followed by a review of issues relating to the need for a language and literacy policy in lower grades. The reader was introduced to the objectives and research questions for the study followed by a summary of the other chapters in the study. The next chapter will provide a theoretical review of literature.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This study attempts to trace language and literacy policy changes in Ghana, a former British colony, from independence to date and examines how these changes have affected teachers' classroom practices as they attempt to support the literacy development of 4-8 year-olds in lower grades. As a result, I will be reviewing literature that relates to this study, namely postcolonial theory, literacy, language and literacy policies in lower grades and teacher training in Ghana. The review of relevant literature on the above areas of interest aims at providing background context for the research questions of this study.

As has been discussed in the introduction, the theoretical perspective used in this thesis takes the view that lower grade children's language and literacy policy issues in Ghana are not only shaped by teachers in the classroom, but by colonial and postcolonial conditions. Consequently, this review starts with a theoretical perspective on postcolonialism. The review begins with an overview of colonial rule and imperialism as background knowledge for the understanding of postcolonial theory. The second part of this review examines literacy, its definitions and meanings, and how the understanding of literacy might inform Ghanaian children's literacy development (reading and writing). Literature by Ansah (2014); Rosekrans, Sherris and Chatry-Komarek (2012); Opoku-Amankwa (2009) and Owu-Ewie (2006); McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh (1975), among others, on the historical reasons for a language policy and the changes made to language and literacy policies in Ghana, was further reviewed to provide a better understanding of the problems relating to young children's literacy development. Since the study seeks to understand how teachers have coped with changes in language policy in their classroom practices, the third part of the review examines teacher training in Ghana and its influence on teachers' classroom practices.

Sederberg (1971, p.181) asserts that British rule and influence in Ghana, for a very short time, however, 'ebbed and flowed according to the native opposition, and competition from other European powers, and home interest in the colony'. The consequences of this rule, politically, culturally and socially, are the subject of interest for this study. Although postcolonial theory is mostly associated with literary works, history and politics, there has been an increasing interest in its application to education and, specifically, within the field of early childhood, as seen in the works of Gupta (2013), Viruru (2013) and Salifu and Agbenyega (2013). Gupta for

example, used postcolonial theory in her work on early childhood education and teaching practices in India (Gupta, 2006). Viruru (2013) looked at postcolonial perspectives on early childhood literacy, while Salifu and Agbenyega's work is focused on early childhood in Ghana.

2.2 Postcolonial theory and colonialism

A postcolonial theory starts with an analysis of colonialism or colonisation, which took place in different forms throughout history. In Africa, for example, colonisation took the form of the partitioning of the continent among European countries, as part of the expansion of their rule or empires and for access to trade links across the world (Craven, 2015). Austin (1984) describes the partitioning as follows:

There was nothing unusual in the seizure of other people's territory as the consequence of war, but the partition of Africa was on a truly grand scale, reminiscent of papal pronouncements which halved the new world between Spain and Portugal. Now it was another continent and many more partners to the enterprise, each with a sharpened appetite, each fearful of losing what might be gained. (p.260)

Similarly, Sanderson's (1974) article on the partitioning of Africa provides an in-depth insight into how the scramble took place and how the internal borders of the continent were determined. By this act, Great Britain, along with many other European countries, extended its rule beyond its own geographical boundaries and subjugated some African and Asian countries under its rule, contributing to the so-called British Empire. This partitioning and appropriation of African lands included drawing boundaries between tribes, families and clans, who found themselves under the rule of different European rulers with different languages. Rassool and Edwards (2010, p.277) argue that 'the arbitrary borders drawn resulted in the fracturing of previously cohesive ethnic communities, creating fragmented language clusters around border regions'. These arbitrary borders appeared to create problems between governments and indigenes; with governments trying to protect their borders and indigenes trying to preserve cultural links between their people. Indeed, the result of artificial border creation is people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds living with others with whom they share no common identity. Blanton, Mason and Athow (2001) explain the problem as follows:

In dividing Africa among themselves, the colonial powers showed little regard for the natural boundaries of existing ethnic groups. Each colony encompassed multiple ethnic groups within its newly imposed territorial boundaries, and many ethnic nationalities were divided between two or more colonial entities. (p.476)

The division of Africa and the occupation of its artificial boundaries created what have become African countries, marking the beginning of colonial rule in Africa and in Ghana in particular. One important aspect of colonial rule in Africa is the role of missionaries who followed European traders, with the sole aim of converting natives to Christianity through education. As a result, Ball (1983) observed that the educational curriculum and policy of most African countries are deep-seated in colonial and missionary history and activities.

Missionary activities, in the form of education and proselytising of the Christian faith, together with colonial rule, resulted in the psychological colonisation of traditional cultures and impacted on the self-identity of many. Hassan (2015, p.195), in his article on Christian missionary attitudes towards African traditional religion, for example, says ‘the missionaries who operated in Buganda were, by and large, predisposed to consider themselves as bearers, not only of a superior religion but a superior culture, the two being inseparably intertwined’. This appears to show that the intention of European leaders in partitioning Africa was not only for political ends, but also to impose European religion, culture and education on Africans.

Having described the context within which African countries became colonised, I will now proceed to give a wider concept of colonial rule by examining some of its definitions.

2.2.1 Colonial rule

According to Loomba (1998, p.2), colonisation is ‘the conquest and control of other people’s land and goods’. However, Hiddleston (2009) defines colonisation as not only conquering and taking over what belongs to others but that which ‘involves both subjugation of that country’s native peoples and the administration of its government, economy and produce’ (p.2). Both Loomba and Hiddleston seem to agree that colonisation is about control of other people’s countries and their economy. However, like Blanton et al. (2001), Hiddleston appears to be suggesting that colonisation was also about bringing the colonised under the jurisdiction of colonial rule or subjecting them to the rule of a foreign superior power. Povey (1976) argues that, what one sees as Africa today is the result of ‘a series of meetings in Europe organised by competing and covetous European powers which decided the boundaries of Africa as seen on the map’ (p. 14). Indeed, Craven (2015) appears to suggest that African states accepted European claim over their territories without much objection. These assertions seem to show the coercion of African leaders into accepting the control of their people and goods, and the day-to-day administration of towns and cities. In an article on French and British rule in West Africa, Firmin-Sellers (2000) argued against the division between the Akans of the Ivory Coast

and Ghana and the treatment meted out to local chiefs, which undermined their traditional authority and rendered them ineffective in their own communities.

As mentioned earlier, colonial rule was also about the control and subordination of people, and closely related to trade and the exploitation of the natural resources of the colonised for the economic benefit of the West (Appiah, 1992). This view is supported by Craven (2015) who noted that Europeans used colonial rule as a means to trade and also to exploit minerals and other resources from African countries. The exploitation of Africans' minerals and trade in human labour, in the form of the slave trade, appears to have been done with little regard for the impact of these activities on the indigenous people. Indeed, the colonial name for Ghana, the Gold Coast, together with the slave castle of Cape-Coast, bear witness to the exploitation of the physical workforce of Ghana for the benefit of America and Europe (Buah, 1980).

Furthermore, Sederberg (1971), in his article on colonial rule in the Gold Coast, noted that the purpose of British built rail lines was not to provide transportation for the indigenes but solely to transport minerals like gold and bauxite and crops like cocoa and other products from Ghana to Europe. Apart from the exploitation of the country's natural resources, Ghana and other former British colonial countries had to make further contributions through taxation and providing soldiers to fight alongside British forces during the Second World War (Thomas, 1983). Today, globalisation continues to be the driving force for many Western companies in promoting their national economy within a global market. However, for many African countries, globalisation appears to favour the West as many trade talks and agreements are made not by Africans but Europeans (Akindele, Gidado and Olaopo, 2002). This appears to suggest globalisation is the entrapment of African countries and their economies.

Colonial rule is also associated with psychological and cultural oppression of the colonised through education and religion, with the portrayal of European culture and religion as superior to that of the indigenes, thus creating a distinction of class, race and gender between the rulers and those they ruled (Loomba, 1998). Said (2003) argues that 'the major component in European culture is precisely what made that cultural hegemony...the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and culture' (p.7). Colonial rulers saw European culture as superior and promoted it in such a way as to make non-Europeans feel inferior about their own culture. Among the number of measures taken to achieve this was segregation from the local people. Myers (2003), for example, describes how Europeans planned distinctive and separate community areas for Europeans only, away from

local people. McLeod (2007) further argues that, whilst European colonisers saw themselves as 'civilised', 'rational', 'reasonable', 'cultured' and 'learned', the indigenes were seen as 'barbaric', 'illogical', 'awkward', 'naïve' and 'ignorant' (p.2). This appears to suggest that anything non-European was unacceptable and scorned; a situation which could create division and confusion among the indigenes, educated in European schools. Okon (2014) explains this further, as follows:

In colonial Africa, colonial mentality was the outcome of intensive European propaganda, brainwashing and psychological warfare against Africans and anything African. Colonial mentality has affected all the segments of African society. Anything that is indigenous is looked down upon as unimportant. Unfortunately, Africans including the elites are ready to accept anything. (p.205)

Thus, colonisation was not only political but also a social and cultural transformation of the colonised, based on Eurocentrism and the civilisation of non-European cultures.

This ideology, perpetuated by missionary activities, appears to show supremacy of European cultural values over those of the colonised and an attempt to undervalue the traditions and cultures of others. Different missionary groups started Western education in some African countries and, as Gallego and Woodberry (2010) explain, missionaries provided about 90% of Western education in Sub-Saharan Africa during the colonial era. Thus, Ball (1983) argues that the intention of Christian missionaries, who accompanied Europeans in their conquest of Africa, was to make Africans good Christians through civilisation and conversion. However, Okon (2014) argues that:

Although there is a glaring absence of scholarly consensus on the role of the missionaries in the colonization of Africa, the argument seems to favor the view that some missionaries cooperated essentially with colonial authorities in the exploitation and cultural subjugation of Africa. (p.199)

The above quote points to the fact that, though many Africans accept the work carried out by missionaries, they do however hold them responsible for the colonisation of their countries by justifying the actions of colonial rulers and playing an active role through their missionary activities and educational institutions.

The works of Bhabha (2012) suggest an integration of cultures between the colonised and the coloniser as direct consequence of colonial rule and education. The differences in these two cultures means that the colonised find themselves in a dilemma; how much of the other culture to absorb and how much of their own to abandon? The long-term effect of this cultural hybridity

seems to be the alienation of individuals from their culture, identity and language and the reliance on Western style culture. Indeed, Higgs (2012, p.38) asserts that ‘African identity, to all intents and purposes, became an inverted mirror of Western Eurocentric identity’. This means the loss of cultural identity, which is likely to cause tension for the individual and present a constant struggle to maintain what it means to be African or Ghanaian. Therefore, some Africans including Ghanaians tend to look down on their own values. This happens in the presentation of history and culture in the education of children, where some aspects of traditions receive the label “unchristian”. In this respect, Del Mar (2012, p. 6) argues that ‘the curricula and books used in its schools are often critical of its indigenous heritage and positive about the impact of colonisation’, which has been contested by Ghanaian intellectuals.

2.2.2 Neocolonialism/Imperialism

Although it may appear that Africans accepted colonial rule, it is important to add that it was not always so and that many countries resisted European rule, unwilling to give away their sovereignty. Sederberg (1971) argues that the Ashanti in Ghana, for example, resisted British rule and fought many battles against it until the Ashanti kingdom became part of the Gold Coast after it was defeated in 1900 and its king taken into exile. In addition, Ramone (2011) and Babou (2010) take the view that the resistance to colonial rule gave rise to nationalist movements in Ghana and other parts of Africa fighting for independence. Although colonial rule ended with independence for many countries, there is a belief that colonialism still exists in the form of neo-colonialism and imperialism, with newly independent countries feeling exploited by their former colonial rulers on several fronts, including foreign policy and economic control of their markets (Adanhounme, 2011; Hiddleston 2009; Nkrumah, 2001; Loomba, 1998; Appiah, 1992). Nkrumah (2001), for example, noticed that foreign aid and global trade, offered as incentives at the time of independence, were a way of continuing the exploitation of the country’s resources. Offering aid and trade links in lieu of independence seems to suggest a form of a permanent co-operation between former colonial rulers and newly independent states.

As suggested by Adanhounme (2011), colonialism has left many economies of independent countries in Africa still tied to that of their former colonial rulers and the operation of Western multinationals in the economies of formerly colonised countries makes it difficult for these countries to operate independently. Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012) appear to suggest that Europeans obligated Africans to grow crops for export, resulting in a dependency of the West on raw materials found in Africa. In addition, it appears the presence of multinational

companies and trade blocks, determining the terms of trade and other agreements, makes it difficult for formerly colonised countries' interests to be fully met, thus leading to inequalities. Thus, Hiddleston (2009) describes imperialism as a form of capitalism that deals with economic or political control and dominance of Western powers in global markets. Young (2003) supports this argument that international companies in the world use their influence to exploit local farmers in the global market and degrade the local environment in pursuit of large profits. Indeed, Loomba (1998) argues that:

Modern colonialism did more than extract tribute, goods and wealth from the countries that it conquered - it restructured the economies of the latter, drawing them into a complex relationship with their own, so that there was a flow of human and natural resources between colonised and colonial countries. (p.3)

Loomba's argument suggests that, although colonialism is formally over, there appears to be some form of domination, on the one hand, by Western countries and, on the other hand, dependence on the formerly colonised countries through international trade and donor agencies in modern times. Similarly, Nkrumah (2001, p.162), in a speech to his party members in Ghana, seems to challenge British rule and dominance in the economy of Ghana in the following statement:

With the political power vested in the people, we are now in a position to launch an offensive against the remnants of economic imperialism which have entrenched themselves in our country over the past hundred years under the benevolent protection of British political power.

In the above statement, Nkrumah appears to show strong opposition to British colonial rule and continual influence in Ghana's economy even after independence. The action and inaction of multinational companies, which appear to have too much business power, makes trading difficult for African countries. Subsequently, the inability of African governments to compete favourably in the global market appears to suggest a continuation or extension of a colonial state (imperialism) - the exploitation of the colonised for the economic benefit of the West.

The domination by Europe and the consequences of colonialism on the political, economic, linguistic and cultural identity of the colonised peoples, together with the supposed refusal of the West to acknowledge the influence of colonial rule on the colonised, has given rise to postcolonial studies (Mclaughan and Srivastava, 2015). Postcolonial theory aims at revisiting these issues to understand and reconstruct them from the perspective of the colonised. In this

study, postcolonial theory is used to attempt to shed light on changes to language and literacy policy in lower grade classrooms in Ghana.

2.2.3 Postcolonial theory

Literature on postcolonialism and postcolonial theory gives different perspectives on what it is and what it means. This review explores some of the meanings attached to the theory and its use in education. Lazarus (2011, p.4) asserts that postcolonial studies as we now know it started in the late 70s in response to the political atmosphere of the West, which was against the ‘anti-colonial nationalistic insurgency and revolutionary anti-imperialism’ of the third world. This situates postcolonial theory with issues relating to what people experienced during the colonial period and their experiences after colonisation. Rattansi (1997, p.481) also notes that postcolonialism is ‘a period in global time-space in which most of the former colonies of Western imperial powers gained formal independence’. Although this period could refer to a particular moment in time, postcolonialism has come to be associated with the periods before and after colonisation, as indicated by Lazarus above.

Literature on postcolonial studies shows that postcolonial theory is an academic field interested in the issues surrounding colonial rule and its aftermath. These issues relate to the racial, political, economic and social discrimination of the colonised and how the colonised offers different narratives to the European account of these matters (Andreotti, 2011; Quayson 2000). Thus, postcolonial theory is a means by which the colonised provide an alternative to colonial representations of the ‘other’ and presents another side to the European vision of the world. Writers, including Bernard, Elmarsafy and Murray (2015); Andreotti (2011); Adanhounme (2011); McLeod (2007) and Quayson (2000), define postcolonial theory as an attempt to raise the awareness of colonial rule and the oppression of non-Europeans politically, economically and culturally. Quayson (2000, p.2) is of the opinion that postcolonial theory is concerned with the effects of colonialism on Africans and people from the Middle East and elsewhere, in order to ‘formulate non-Western modes of discourse as a viable means of challenging the West’.

Although many controversies surround postcolonial theory, because of its broad definition and seemingly no single school of thought, writers, including McLeod (2007), believe that postcolonial studies, like other academic fields, seeks to question human history, in order to find answers to things and happenings in the world. Thus, Adanhounme (2011) suggests that postcolonial theory developed as a result of the struggle against colonial rule and the desire of former colonised countries to present a philosophy different from that of colonial rulers.

Although much literature exists on postcolonial theory, a review shows that there is no agreed origin or beginning to the study of postcolonialism. Lazarus (2011, p.6) explains that this has come about because the term postcolonial is sometimes used to mean a historical period ‘immediately following decolonisation...’ and other times is seen as a concept or a theoretical ideology.

Andreotti (2011, p.13) asserts that ‘the term ‘postcolonial’ was first used in Commonwealth literature to refer to cultural interactions within colonial societies in literary circles’ and how the colonised were represented by colonial writers. Andreotti asserts that the works of these Commonwealth writers were to counter the presentation of culture, history, language etc. of the colonised in Western writings, which tend to portray the non-European and particularly Africans, as unintelligent and without culture. In this vein, Quayson (2000) refers to the work of the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe’s book, ‘Things Fall Apart’, as a response to the cultural representation of Achebe’s people by the West. Although postcolonial theory started within literary circles, today the discourse is explored in other academic disciplines, such as education, geography, economics, history and so on.

Viruru’s (2005) work appears to suggest that postcolonial theory is about:

...the legacy of colonialism imposed by western attempts to dominate the globe over hundreds of years. This particular ‘will to power’ is particularly remarkable as it attempted to essentialize diverse societies into one universal form, and to impose a narrow economic path on cultures that conceptualized not only economics but human experiences, from a range of diverse perspectives. (p.8)

In this definition, Viruru sees postcolonial theory as an attempt to examine the issues or legacy of colonialism, the self-acclaimed power of Western countries over other nations, and a further attempt to create and impose a universal knowledge and ontology based on Western culture. Pennycook (1998) seems to concur with Viruru’s revision by suggesting that postcolonialism deals with issues concerning the influence of colonial rulers on the culture and identity of the colonised and how these have affected colonised societies to the present time. Loomba (1998, p.12) on the other hand, sees ‘post-colonialism not just as coming literally after colonialism and signifying its demise, but also as the contestation of colonial domination and the legacies of colonialism’. Thus, to Loomba, colonialism may be over but the effects of colonialism on a country’s culture, economy or education may have far reaching consequences. Quayson (2000) also claims that postcolonialism is a study dealing with how the colonised experienced colonialism, its effects on the past, the present and the place of the colonised people in the

global world today. From these definitions, postcolonial theory can be seen as an academic discourse that attempts to understand and explain problems facing former colonised countries, by reflecting on the effect of colonial rule and imperialism on their socio-cultural and economic life.

To understand postcolonial theory, Said's (2003) work on 'Orientalism' brings to mind the experiences of the colonised and how the West exaggerates and distorts differences in the culture between the West and the East. Such exaggeration and distortion is intended to point out not only differences in culture but also the superiority of one over the other: the West over the 'others'. In addition, Spivak's (1988) 'Can the Subaltern speak' seeks to question Western knowledge and its construction of the truth, Western representation of others, and Western academic thinking as a means to support their economic interest in the world. This seems to suggest the questioning of Western ideologies and the recognition of other voices and philosophies.

Furthermore, Bhabha's (1994) 'Hybridity' discusses the cultural tension within an individual or society, as a result of the intermingling of colonial culture and indigenous culture, as essential to the formation of the theory. It has been argued that colonial rule is responsible for presenting European culture and civilisation as superior to other cultures, thus creating elites who are alienated from their culture (Woolman, 2001). It is for this reason that Lunga (2008) sees these individuals as the experts in the theorisation of the field. Similarly, Quayson (2000) argues that the development of postcolonial studies is primarily due to Said's work, which Mani and Frankenberg (1985, p.175) claim has 'provoked controversy and self-questioning' among scholars.

Although postcolonial theory developed around the literary presentation of the colonised, there has been a shift among academics to study the effects of colonialism on different disciplines, including education, history, geography, religion, economics etc. over the years. I opted to use the term 'postcolonial' rather than 'post-colonial' to show that Ghana's attainment of independence in 1957 did not bring an end to the debate and difficulties on the choice of the appropriate language to support children's literacy learning. Independence appears to have brought with it more problems and disagreements among Ghanaians on the issue. Using the term 'post-colonial' would suggest the difficulties with the language and literacy policy came about as a result of the country gaining independence. The choice of the unhyphenated term

‘postcolonial’, in this study is therefore an attempt to explain the current problems in lower grade classrooms in the light of colonialism and its aftermath.

2.2.4 Justification for applying postcolonial theory to this study

The introduction of Western education in Ghana was through the castle schools established by European traders for their own children and the children of prominent people in society (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1975). With the stepping up of British rule, coupled with the training of catechists and teachers by different missionary groups, the expansion of education provided opportunities for many children to attend school. Although education is desirable because of its benefit to society, the intention of European colonial education appears to be about bringing Western civilisation to the colonised. Western education was a means of achieving civilised society and a way to advance the interest of the colonisers. As a result, Christianity and Christian moral teaching became another gateway to civilisation and Western culture. This appears to suggest that colonial education was a means by which indoctrination and transformation of the minds and attitudes of the colonised took place. Indeed, Abu-Shomer (2013, p.265) argues that ‘colonial education institutes were used to augment the perceived legitimacy and propriety of colonial rule and to help maintain its rule’.

With the gradual move to independence and the shift of power from the British colonial rulers to Ghanaian politicians, education received major attention under the Accelerated Development Plan of 1951 with the election of first Ghanaian legislative council, under Dr Kwame Nkrumah (Antwi, 1992). The emphasis on universal and free education for all children further increased school enrolment to six years of primary school and four years of middle school, after which students could work, do a vocational training or five years of secondary education and two years of sixth form (Little, 2010).

Education received a further boost at independence and later with ‘The Education Act of 1960’ and the establishment of more primary, secondary and technical schools, as well as new teacher training colleges and the shortening of the training period to allow the training of more teachers for the newly opened schools (Nkrumah, 2001). Other governments following the CPP regime continued with the expansion of education for all levels. For example, the PNDC government reduced elementary education from ten years to eight years with the introduction of the Junior and Senior Secondary School (now Junior High and Senior High School (Little, 2010). Among the different educational reforms undertaken by the NPP government is the two-year Kindergarten for all 4-6 year old children (Agbenyega, 2008). The reforms marked the

government's commitment towards early childhood education and care and it paved the way for the future training of early childhood educators in universities.

For many years, parents and relatives in Ghana cared for young children at home. This changed with the advent of Western education and formal schooling and sociocultural changes, resulting in some mothers working outside the home (Morrison, 2001). The traditional way of providing childcare, therefore, shifted from the home to school, where children were now under the care of teachers and nursery attendants instead of their parents or relatives. This development could affect not only what children learn, as the school's curriculum is often underpinned by what the state wish them to be taught, but by the values, beliefs and behaviours of the teachers who teach them. Most of the policy and practice in early childhood education in Ghana is shaped by international ideas, which is a clear indication that the education of young children in school is undoubtedly influenced by a Western understanding of childhood. Indeed, Pence (2011, p.114) argues that in the quest for ideas to drive forward education in early childhood, 'best practices are typically imported from Western sources, often through the support of Western donors'. There is a need for African scholars to raise concerns and offer solutions to the impact of Western understandings of childhood and children's learning with regard to literacy.

The history of Ghana's education, therefore, provides sufficient evidence for the use of postcolonial theory in early childhood studies and research. The literature also appears to suggest that postcolonial theory has received much attention in the field of education, as it reconsiders the role of colonial education on the culture and identity of countries with a colonial past (Abu-Shomar, 2013; Viruru, 2005). Indeed, Abu-Shomar's (2013) argument that the educational systems of colonised countries are rooted and still embedded in the after effects of colonialism appears to be justifying the application of postcolonial theory to this study. This argument further shows the need to broaden the scope of postcolonial theory in disciplines other than politics, literary works and history, in order to seek social change (Viruru, 2005) through education (Macedo, 1999; Young, 2003). Indeed, Macedo (1999), in referring to the effects of Western education on the colonised, is of the opinion that 'our minds, if not our hearts will remain colonized' (1999, p.xv), if researchers do not apply postcolonial theory in the field of education to enable society to understand the effects of colonialism on the development of a nation after independence.

Jacoby (1995), questions the application of post-colonial theory to disciplines other than literary works and asks how these disciplines could justify the use of postcolonial theory. On

the contrary, Quayson (2000) makes a strong argument for an interdisciplinary approach in postcolonial studies to challenge and inform the understanding of those subjects in their colonial contexts. Furthermore, Lavia (2012), in her work on Eric Williams and education in the Caribbean, argues that for Williams:

the anti-colonial struggle was not only about getting rid of colonialism as a system, it was also and more importantly about recognising and resisting the deep implications of the experience of colonialism on the inner being of the people, and therefore, promoted a process of inner and intellectual decolonisation as imperative for the postcolonial agenda. (p.10)

The above statement appears to suggest the need for Caribbean people to reconsider their lives within the context of colonialism, in order to undo the effects of colonial rule and find a positive outlook. Lavia further argues that Williams' aspiration was for the people of the Caribbean to be educated, be able to write their own history and make a difference in the world. This is particularly important even today, as most of the things learnt and taught in post-colonial schools presently still retain a Western influence. Such an influence is due mainly to the colonial legacy of education and the fact that education was used as a step towards the civilisation of others (Ball, 1983).

Postcolonial theory and early childhood studies

With an increase in postcolonial theory in educational studies and research, early childhood education also seems to be another new area where researchers have applied the theory. For example, Gupta (2013), Viruru (2005) and Kaomea (2003) have applied postcolonial theory to their work on different aspects of early childhood development. The application of postcolonial theory to the study of early childhood education appears to consider how research on children takes a different path away from the dominant Western understanding of childhood. Pence (2011) argues against the dominance of Western perspectives on early childhood, as if no other knowledge exists on childhood and childcare apart from this viewpoint. Like Pence, Viruru (2005, p.11) also questions the Western presentation of childhood and describes how reconceptualist or new scholars like Hauser and Jipson (1998), Walkerdine (1997), Kincheloe, and Steinberg (1997) challenge the dominant traditionalist views within early childhood education and have 'looked at how early childhood education can be recreated in ways that are most socially just and representative of diverse knowing'. In addition, Super, Harkness, Oumar and Zeitlin (2011) observe that 'it is enlightening to learn that there are other ways to rear children successfully; and the rich variety of paradigms across cultures alerts us to the fact that "successful" development is always relative to some set of locally defined goals' (p.122).

Although Pence's (2011) work on early childhood education does not specifically use postcolonial theory, he does identify issues pertaining to colonialism and its legacy on Sub-Saharan Africa. He opines that Africans' understandings of childhood and child rearing is often suppressed and erased in international settings, while it was easier for international participants to accept Western psychology on child development without considering the sociocultural contexts of childhood in other parts of the world. As a result, colonised nations have had to rely on Western interpretations, constructions and concepts of childhood over the years, which may be different from their own culture and understanding of childhood. Serpell (2011), in support of Pence, confirms that, although Western psychologists were aware of cross-cultural differences, their studies and outcomes on childhood education were predominantly based on Western philosophies.

In applying postcolonial theory to early childhood education in India, Gupta (2013), for example, considers how colonial rule affected the Indian population and how the use of traditional practices in early childhood education in India could be beneficial to young children there. Gupta observed that Indian colonial masters concentrated efforts in the education sector, in order to perpetuate their own culture and colonisation; a situation for which Indian teachers in urban areas face 'a cultural discrepancy between the educational philosophy' of their training and the 'Indian philosophy' of classroom practice (Gupta, 2013, p.2). This opinion is supported by Ryan and Grieshaber (2005), who also argue that practitioners in early childhood education need to have 'an understanding of individual children, their interests, and cultural backgrounds, to set up the environment and deliver learning experiences' (p.34). Gupta (2013) further questions how Western-style education, when introduced for just a short space of time, could replace India's rich 5,000 year old culture. As a postcolonial writer, Gupta argues that her work is to:

provide space for the voice of the 'other' to be heard, the 'other' being the marginalized, non-Western early childhood teacher who strives to be the 'right' teacher, who feels pressured and compelled to follow the standards of early childhood education that has been articulated within early childhood discourse that is dominant in the West... (p.2)

Indeed, reference to the work of McLaren and Farahmandpur (2003) appears to suggest that Africa's education is best understood within a postcolonial theory and the phenomenon of globalisation and its effects on government policy. As the work of Takyi-Amoako (2012, p.113) suggests, the formulation of Ghana's educational Strategic Plan, for example, 'was more donor-led than Ministry-led due to the global policy frameworks also referred to as the non-

negotiables'. This appears to suggest a form of imperialism in which post-colonial countries may find themselves as unequal partners when dealing with rich and powerful former colonial rulers on educational issues. These issues may be helpful for the education of their citizens but may not be funded, due to donor interest in other educational matters. Higgs (2012, p.37) seems to support the argument that the marginalisation of African philosophy and values in education has given rise to the 'Westernisation of education theory and practice in Africa'. It seems to suggest that, instead of education being based on African philosophy and values to find solutions to problems facing Africa, the continent's education is unable to support the needs of its citizens. This makes postcolonial theorists object to the assumption that only the West possesses universal knowledge, history, and culture, which makes it superior to the colonised (Cohn, 1996). This presumed Western national identity is conceptualised within a framework of the Western race in respect of the 'other', as indicated by Said (2003) in his work on orientalism. It is important for African researchers to decolonise the minds of current educators, so that those missing values are reflected in the education of children today. By applying postcolonial theory to education, postcolonial academics need to find a balance between the aspirations of a national curriculum and the desire to be part of the global world; an aspiration which reflects the national and cultural identity of the people, whilst at the same time incorporating this within the wider global world in a way that recognises indigenous identity.

Based on the above arguments, there is no doubt that the study of postcolonial theory within early childhood education is relevant, as the childhood period marks an important milestone in the formation of children. It is in this light that I apply postcolonial theory to the changing language policies for children in lower grades, especially when the use of local language, and/or English, remains a contentious issue in the education of young children in Ghana.

2.3 Criticism of postcolonial theory

Like other academic theories, postcolonial theory has been criticised for many reasons over the past decades. One of the criticisms centres on the use of 'post', which could be seen to signify the end of colonialism. Another criticism is the idea that the theory is too general and unfocused. Postcolonial theory has also been criticised for being too reactionary or only interested in providing a counter discourse to colonial history.

According to Subedi and Daza (2008) and Quayson (2000), the main criticism of postcolonialism is the term itself, which some scholars claim is ambiguous and difficult to understand. Hiddleston (2009), for example, questions the word 'postcolonial', since some

writers use a hyphen between post and colonial while others write it as one word. The argument is that the use of 'post' as in 'post-colonial' could change the meaning. In other words, the use of a hyphen suggests the aftermath of colonial rule and, since postcolonial theory is concerned with the period after colonial rule, the use of a hyphen is most likely to give a different meaning to the study. Subedi and Daza (2008, p.1) noted that 'the meaning of 'post' and how it is connected to 'colonial' have also been widely debated, leading to some scholars questioning whether the term signifies the premature end of colonialism' or not. The question is, does the use of the word 'post' signify the end or aftermath of something in the past, in this case colonialism, or can it be used to describe the period after colonisation, especially as some countries are still experiencing domination and suppression by the West, as suggested by Childs and Williams (1997). In answer to this, Quayson (2000) appears to suggest that political scientists and economists used a hyphen to refer to the period after colonialism, whilst the unhyphenated version gained popularity with culturalists and literary critics. Ashcroft and Ahluwalia (2001), for example, preferred to use a hyphen in the word - post-colonial – in contrast to other writers, such as Loomba (1998), Ramone (2011), and Hiddleston (2009), who use the word without a hyphen.

Another criticism of the theory is the understanding or interpretation of the historical period to which the term is to be associated. McClintock (1995), for example, has criticised postcolonial theory for choosing a singular rather than a multiple understanding of the word. The argument here is, should postcolonial theory be applied to all forms of oppression in human history or just to the period of the European domination of Africa, Asia and the Caribbean? (Quayson, 2000). For Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1989) the use of the term 'postcolonial' should include all forms of oppression and colonisation and should be extended to include all forms of colonisation before the European colonisation of Asia and Africa. However, such a multiple understanding of postcolonialism makes the theory too wide and fragmented without much focus, thus rendering the theory 'a vague condition of people anywhere and everywhere' Loomba (2005, p.17). McLeod is of the opinion that not including geographical terrain in the debate on postcolonial theory will continue as one of the most contested issues for academics.

Postcolonial theory appears to be closely associated with post-modernism in Europe because of the element of resistance in both. The comparison of the two, according to Childs and Williams (1997), is because critics of postcolonialism and postmodernism are unsure if these theories are a form of resistance, or historically and culturally based. Ashcroft et al. (1989) criticises postcolonial writers for using allegory as a form of response, in answer to the similar

writing styles in colonial literature. Thus, while colonial writers portray colonised states in a derogatory manner, postcolonial literary writers aim to reject and oppose Western supremacy and colonial discourse.

As discussed above, postcolonial theory has been seen and criticised as being obsessed with 'writing back', a form of 'retelling' the story, which, according to Quayson (2000), is seen by some as giving distorted and contradictory versions to historical writings. However, this is necessary, as this way of writing was to contest colonial writings, which appear to portray the colonised as if they had no previous history, culture and language. McLeod (2007), however, appears to suggest that postcolonial writers are different from postmodernist ones. Postcolonial theory is not about rejecting Western ideologies and its claims of supremacy, or about writing back or retelling the colonial narrative. Postcolonial theorists are interested in providing an explanation for the relationship between the cultural practices of their people in relation to the historical and political occupation and exploring these cultural practices from the perspective of the colonised. In an attempt to explain this relationship from the view of the colonised, Said (2003), in *Orientalism*, observed that:

There is in addition the hegemony of European ideas about the orient, themselves reiterating European superiority over Oriental backwardness, usually overriding the possibility that a more independent, or more sceptical thinker might have had different views on the matter. (p.7)

Said seems to suggest the need for different and independent views on Eastern peoples based on a real understanding of the cultural differences between people, rather than from the point of view of one culture being superior to another. Thus, Matin (2013, p.358) argues that the focus of postcolonial protagonists - like Said, on cultural difference between the West and the East as the philosophy for an anti-colonial struggle - was a move to rediscover the 'self' from the Western representation of the 'other'. Writing back for postcolonial writers was akin to contesting European knowledge, which seems to claim superiority over other forms of knowledge and portrays other peoples as inferior or incapable of taking charge of their own affairs (Young, 2003). Spivak, (1988, p.285) makes this point clearer by suggesting that 'it is now time for the former colonies i.e. the 'subaltern' to present their side of the colonial experiences'. This appears to show the need for indigenes to tell their own side of the story or to have a voice in how they are represented by the West. As Quayson (2000, p.132) argues, colonised states need to find solutions to deal with the 'pressing economic, political and cultural inequalities' and these solutions can come from research into postcolonial issues by academics.

Although many critics have questioned postcolonial theory for various reasons, employing postcolonial theory for this study is valid and valuable as the study reflects on the effects of colonisation on Ghanaian culture, education, language and identity in order to seek answers to these questions. Of the many issues facing Africans, the question of the language used in education has received much attention. Western education is synonymous with literacy activities of speaking, reading and writing a foreign language. It is important to discuss the historical development of literacy, in order to provide context for children's literacy development in lower grade classrooms in Ghana.

2.4 Understanding the term literacy in a historical context

Graff (1995) suggests that the history and development of literacy, especially in the West, dates back to the invention of writing, which includes the Greek alphabet around 3100 B.C., through Roman public schooling to early Christianity by 200 A.D. Ford (2003), Graff (1995) and Thomas (1988) note that, although oral tradition and written forms were the two most important features of this period, oral performance was privileged so that speechwriters and orators were highly respected and sought after. Other important developments in the history of literacy, according to Graff (1995), were the advent of printing, the Reformation, the development and use of vernacular literature, and the expansion of schooling from the 15th century to 18th century, which gave rise to mass literacy development, especially in protestant countries like Sweden and Scotland. Literacy was no longer the prerogative of the elite few or a tool of power, as ordinary people became interested and were encouraged to read religious texts. However, Vincent (2000) seems to suggest that the question of what should count as literacy was still a problem; for example is literacy only reading or does it include the ability to write? Vincent's position receives support from Laqueur (1976), who asserts that there is sufficient evidence to suggest that ordinary men and women in Scotland and England in this period owned books such as the Bible, as well as devotional and other religious literature for their personal use. This appears to suggest the ability to read without necessarily having to learn how to write, further supporting the suggestion that literacy was more about one's ability to read rather than to write, thus making writing a non-essential component of literacy during this period.

Apart from the individual's personal interest in reading, the beginning of formal education through schooling, by both the protestant and catholic churches in Europe contributed immensely to mass literacy learning. William (1989) argues that, by the middle of the 19th Century, literacy was about the skills needed for both reading and writing, thereby creating a

distinction between those who were educated in school, and could therefore read and write, and those who could only read because they had had no formal education. However, Gillen and Hall (2013) suggest that the term 'literacy' was not used during this time; the terms reading and writing were preferred. This indicated that the use of the term literacy is a recent development. Although literacy during the 19th century was now associated with one's cognitive abilities in reading and writing, it was not seen as necessary for economic success or achievement, nor was it beneficial for all those who possessed it (Graff, 1995). Vincent (2000), in support of Graff (1995), suggests that, in the 19th Century, a person's literacy was more functional and for personal needs rather than a guarantee of future prosperity, as school education was for socialisation rather than for economic purposes. The focus on literacy by the middle of the 20th century shows there was a move towards heightening cognitive abilities, especially through schooling, and a clear distinction between the literate and illiterate became apparent (Graff, 1995). The period also saw a drive for further research into literacy, with emphasis on adult literacy and a more in depth understanding of reading, not simply as a decoding process but an activity that is experienced within a social context (Gillen and Hall, 2013, p.5).

2.4.1 The autonomous model of literacy

The changing conceptualisation of literacy from skills to social practice is also emphasised by research, especially within what is known as the New Literacy Studies (NLS). This suggests a shift from the emphasis on higher cognitive activity, based on the individual person at the centre of literacy learning, to literacy learning within a social context (Street, 1984). Street's work thus distinguishes between what he terms 'autonomous' and 'ideological' models of literacy, where literacy events are separated from literacy practices. Literacy is better understood as a social practice but in which learning to read and write are not separated 'from the context in which it happens' (Levy, 2011).

Street (2001) seems to suggest that the autonomous model of literacy is the imposition of a Western understanding of literacy on other non-Western cultures, which has also become a more useful monitoring tool for policy makers and donors. This is so because literacy is associated with the political power of those who are literate and those who are not.

Research into different perspectives on literacy indicates that an autonomous view of literacy could create what Liddicoat (2004) calls a dichotomy between peoples, between those who are literate and those who are not, or are illiterate. In addition, the autonomous model of literacy,

according to Larson (1996), could prevent a critical examination of the social and political context in which literacy learning takes place, leading to a power relationship between those who possess it and those who do not. This power relationship could also relate to elitism, where literacy opens the door for some to get better jobs and benefit from greater advantages in society. Barton (2007) also criticises the autonomous model, suggesting that there are different ways in which the learning of reading, writing and numeracy take place, rather than the one prescribed way of learning literacy.

2.4.2 The ideological model of literacy

As indicated earlier, the ideological model sees literacy learning as a social practice acquired through different means, within different cultures. Street seems to suggest that literacy is not only dependant on cognitive skills but on other factors, such as sociocultural factors. These sociocultural factors influence how literacy learning takes place within different communities and societies. Hall (2003) argues that research on literacy is shifting from the focus on the individual to a sociocultural context, where a child's engagement in literacy activities within a particular community is emphasised. This places literacy as a socio-cultural practice, where literacy practices are influenced by what goes on in their communities. In addition, Gee (1991) argues that, by advocating for an ideological literacy, the literacy practices of other cultures is recognised, which could lead to a minimisation of the domination and marginalisation of some cultures and peoples; the reason being that what counts as literacy for such communities may differ to that of other communities in the world. For example, in Ghana, literacy practices are based on oral traditions and embodied in history, songs, dance, proverbs etc., which are passed on to children from generation to generation (Yitah and Komasi, 2009). This means literacy practices in African indigenous communities are embedded in their cultural literacy practices. Indeed, further research by anthropologists, such as Heath (1983), has looked at literacy as part of cultural behaviour, including how different people from different cultural backgrounds experience literacy in their communities. However, Brandt and Clinton (2002), in opposition to this new paradigm of literacy, argue that defining literacy as ideological within a local context could be too reactive and exaggerated. They believe this could affect the manner in which literacy learning takes place and they further question how to account for the workings of literacy in local contexts because of the complexities associated with literacy learning. This different perspective on literacy has implications for children's literacy learning either at home, in the community or in school.

2.4.3 Definitions and meanings of literacy

The meaning of literacy has moved away from its simple definition relating to the cognitive skills of reading and writing, to include social practices, new literacies, and multimodalities. Traditionally, the term 'literacy' referred to one's ability to read and write. However, academic research shows that the term means different things to different people. To Graff (1978), it is '*The literacy myth*' as shown in the title of the book on literacy which illustrates the ambiguity of literacy. Walter (1999) supports this argument by commenting on how different scholars interpret literacy; linguistics experts focus on the cognitive domain, anthropologists on the cultural understanding of the term, historians look at the changing aspect of the term, and comparative scholars compare the understanding of literacy within different societies. Alexander (2006) and Jackson (1993) argue that since literacy means different things to different people depending on the context in which it is used, the use of the term should cut across the entire lifespan of a person. Baynham and Prinsloo (2001) and Paul (2006) support this argument and note that literacy is multi-dimensional and sociocultural, embedded in the life of the individual and that of the community. The understanding of literacy as being multi-dimensional and embedded within society is associated with the study of new literacies in academic research, where the individual is constantly making meanings, interpreting and using modern technology in his/her sociocultural setting (Bulfin and Koutsogiannis, 2012; Kress, 2009; Marsh, 2007).

Kennedy, Dunphy, Dwyer, Hayes, McPhillips, Marsh, O'Connor and Shiel (2012, p.10) seem to suggest that literacy should be understood as encompassing 'the cognitive, affective, socio-cultural, cultural-historical, creative and aesthetic dimensions'. In this definition, literacy includes cognitive skills, such as reading and writing, in addition to being shaped by the historical and cultural perspectives of people, including events involving their music, arts and drama. Goodman (1986), in the book *Emergent Literacy*, supports the above argument and further suggests that literacy is a cultural phenomenon, which develops and expands just like language develops and expands over time and space. This interpretation of literacy focuses on its holistic nature: that is, how an individual perceives reading and writing - the way people construct meaning in their environment and express and appreciate the community's way of life. Indeed, Wolfe & Flewitt (2010) argue that changes in the meaning of literacy have occurred due to changes in the social, cultural and technological lives of people globally. I agree with Walter (1999, p.32), who affirms that 'there are no simple, universal definitions of literacy, either in popular thought or scholarly theorizing'. To say that there is no one single

definition of the term literacy suggests there is room for multiple interpretations. In view of this, Baynham and Prinsloo (2001) further suggest that research on literacy has moved from a focus on reading and writing to new literacies and multimodalities. This move also includes a focus away from the classroom and school curricula to its use outside the classroom in a sociocultural context. Indeed, Nagle and Stooke (2016, p.158), in a study on students' learning outside the classroom, argue that the multiliteracies theory 'draws attention to the meaning complexities of meaning-making in socially, culturally, linguistically and historically situated contexts and foregrounds identity, agency, motivation and engagement with semiotic resources'.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD, 2009),

Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society. (p.2)

The OECD's definition above focuses on how individuals improve their own personal knowledge by identifying their literacy needs and understanding what these needs are. This includes the ability to interpret and make meaning from written texts, to communicate with others and be useful members of their communities and wider society.

2.4.3.1 Literacy as reading and writing skills

A review of the works of Lonigan, Farver, Phillips and Clancy-Menchetti (2011) on 'reading', Fellowes and Oakley (2010) on writing, and Nutbrown (2006) on literacy, suggests that, traditionally, the term literacy refers to an individual's ability to read and write. As suggested by UNESCO, 'the most common understanding of literacy is that it is a set of tangible skills-particularly the cognitive skills of reading and writing' (UNESCO, 2006, p.149). Reading is seen as an important component of literacy, as it is the skill that makes the individual understand written text and language, which is necessary for academic achievement and economic success (Lonigan, Purpura, Wilson, Walker, and Clancy-Menchetti, 2013). The works of Whitehead (2010) and Kennedy et al., (2012) therefore highlight the interconnectedness of different aspects of literacy, namely, language, reading, and writing. Levy (2011) in her work on 'Young Children Reading' discusses the different perspectives from which young children's reading takes place; cognitive-psychological, psycho-linguistic, socio-political, and socio-cultural.

August and Shanahan (2006) define literacy as:

including pre-reading skills, such as concept of print and alphabetic knowledge; word-level skills, including decoding, word reading, pseudo-word reading, and spelling; and text-level skills including fluency, reading comprehension, and writing skills. (p. 1)

August and Shanahan's definition identifies three key skills, namely, 'pre-reading skills', 'word-level skills, and 'text-level skills'. Here, reading is defined in terms of skills and how these skills build on each other. Palmer (1975) argues that this way of defining reading is like placing these skills in a hierarchical order, where one skill leads to the other. While August and Shanahan's definition appears to focus on this hierarchical order of skills, others see reading as dependant on language development. Mullis, Martin, Kennedy and Foy (2007), in The Progress International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), see the relationship between literacy and reading as follows

...ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual. Young readers can construct meaning from a variety of texts. They read to learn, to participate in communities of readers in school in everyday life, and for enjoyment. (p.103)

The above definition shows literacy as comprising of both cognitive and social abilities, which helps the individual to construct meaning by integrating language, reading, and writing. Mutter, Hulme, Snowling and Stevenson (2004, p.665) also define reading as 'a linguistic skill that, with rare exceptions, is learned only after children have acquired considerable proficiency in oral language'. In this definition, reading depends on children's oral language ability. Teaching children to read and write has been the prerogative of many schools and, in Ghana, this activity is mainly about children's ability to read, write and speak the English language, so that they can achieve academic success (Opoku- Amankwa and Brew-Hammond, 2011).

2.4.3.2 Literacy as functional

As previously discussed, literacy has also been defined as functional and tailored to the needs of the individual and those of their community.

According to UNESCO (2006):

...a person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the community's development. (p.30)

UNESCO's description of functional literacy identifies four elements; namely, (1) the ability to engage in literacy activities required by one's social group, (2) the use of reading, writing and numeracy, (3) the use of reading, writing and numeracy for personal development, and finally (4) the use of reading writing and numeracy for community development. This definition suggests a split between literate adults who can read and write and illiterate adults who cannot read or write and are in need of literacy skills, in order to function well in their society. Ghana, like other countries around the world, places importance on adult literacy and, over the years, has organised literacy programmes for adults with little or no formal education as a way of eradicating illiteracy in the country (Tagoe, 2008; Yates, 1997). Most of these literacy programmes have been targeted at both men and women in rural areas. Although functional literacy appears to benefit a section of the population, Street (2003) challenges this type of literacy as being autonomous with little or no bearing on the cultural setting and reasons why people might be illiterate in the first place. Functional literacy has also been criticised by Luddicoat (2004) for providing only minimal literacy or insufficient skills for the beneficiaries to operate fully in today's complex world.

2.4.3.3 New literacies

Further research and development in the study of literacy involves the multi-literacies, with emphasis on the influence of new technology and popular culture on literacy teaching (Marsh, 2007). Exley and Luke (2010, p.20) affirm that the impetus for the development of a 'pedagogy of new multi-literacies was the advent of new technologies and global structures of cultural and economic exchange required by an ambitious, futures-oriented educational agenda'. In this vein, Carrington and Marsh (2005) seem to suggest that it would be absurd for anyone today to think of literacy as simply to do with basic print. This is because literacy has moved on from its traditional understanding to encompass what it means in a digital age and include the use of new technologies within society.

The works of Gillen (2014), Wagner (2004), Lankshear and Knobel (2003), Marsh and Millard (2002) and Street (1984) show that technology has changed the understanding of literacy. Street (1984) argues that the term 'new literacy' is a shift from the traditional understanding of literacy, where emphasis has been on the cognitive skills of the individual, to that of social practices involving different types of literacies, including the use of media, computers, and other new technologies (Marsh and Hallet, 2008). Cazden, Cope, Fairclough, Gee, and et al. (1996) also argue that multiliteracies are based on the relationship between new and multiple

communications channels on the media and the global understanding of the existence and influence of different cultures and languages on literacy.

Further understanding of the study of new literacies shows how the presence of new and modern technology is creating an emerging field of interdisciplinary research into digital and popular culture among academics and contributing to the debate on how digital literacies are influencing the understanding of literacy today (Bulfina and Koutsogiannis, 2012; Gee, 2010; Carrington and Marsh, 2005). Thus, the study of new literacies have put literacy learning at the heart of the social, cultural, political and economic domains of peoples all over the world.

Lankshear and Knobel (2006, p.25) assert that new literacies are ‘socially recognized ways of generating, communicating and negotiating meaningful content through the medium of encoded texts within contexts of participation in Discourses’. Indeed, Gee (2010) argues that new literacies are the day-to-day technologies used by people in their society and are, therefore, part of popular culture. The study of new literacies has contributed to further research on multimodality in literacy, which looks at the use of different modes of teaching and learning of literacy in response to the cultural and social needs of children.

2.4.3.4 Multimodality

According to Flewitt (2013, p.296), ‘the term “multimodality” describes approaches to representation, which assume that communication and meaning are about more than just language’. This seems to suggest there are other forms or modes of communication or making meaning. The understanding of the term multimodality, therefore, presupposes the availability of using other modes, including the use of image, sound, etc. to create and understand meaning. Anderson (2013, p.277), in support of this definition, affirms that ‘in its simplest sense, multimodality entails making meaning through more than one mode... and acknowledging that language is just one of many possible modes that serve as resources for meaning-making’. Both Flewitt and Anderson are suggesting that, currently, language is not the only medium by which one can communicate, understand or create meaning. Indeed, this argument is in line with Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001), who argue that language is one of the many ways of communication. Kress (2003) further argues that ‘in the new communicational world there are now choices about how what is to be represented should be represented: in what mode, in what genre, in what ensemble of modes and genres and on what occasions’ (p.117). Thus, Bearne (2009) suggests that the use of print, visual aids, information technology, media, and graphics are modes other than language, which practitioners can use to help children construct meaning and

knowledge. Research shows that multimodality is concerned with how the use of different modes, including language, gestures, images etc., impact on our senses and how this interaction creates meaning within a particular community or society (Shanahan and Roof, 2013; Lotherington and Jenson, 2011; Kress, 2003, 2010).

This development suggests the need for Ghanaian teachers to combine traditional and contemporary pedagogies in supporting children's literacy. Lower grade teachers can take advantage of the use of linguistic, visual and audio modes existing within contemporary Ghanaian society to help children make meaning of what they learn. Such exposure can increase children's experiences, help make them understand, interpret, analyse and apply meaning to the literacy practices in and out of the classroom. The introduction of iPads, touch screen devices, interactive boards, videos and games, alongside the use of music, dance, gestures in lower grades for example, can improve teachers' classroom practices so that the teaching of language and literacy is not only concentrated on the traditional use of one mode of teaching. This will help children with diverse language and literacy needs to benefit more fully from their lessons.

2.4.3.5 Emergent literacy

Children's emergent literacy is an area that abounds in research and literature because of its importance in future or later reading success and progress in school (Storch and Whitehurst, 2002; Lonigan, Burgess and Anthony, 2000). Indeed, Gillen and Hall (2010, p.3) argue that 'research into early childhood literacy is a very recent phenomenon' with focus on reading and children's readiness. This argument receives support from Yaden, Rowe, and MacGillivray (1999), as follows:

To those outside the field of education, it must seem like unnecessary splitting of hairs to debate whether young children's first encounters with print should be called pre-reading, reading readiness, emergent literacy or early literacy.
(p.1)

The above quote suggests that, just as literacy definitions have many interpretations, so there are many understandings of children's literacy learning. Children's literacy development has moved from what was known as a "reading readiness" approach, where children were considered 'to be ready' to read at a point in the child's development, to a more accepted concept of emergent literacy, which considers the way children develop literacy in a much broader way (Teale and Sulzby, 1986). According to Rogers (1971) reading readiness is the developmental maturity and preparedness at which a child can learn to read easily and

proficiently in a normal classroom setting when exposed to good teaching'. Durkin (1970) explains that this maturity has to be in all areas of development such as 'social, emotional, mental, language, visual and auditory'. This point is developed further by Rupley (1977), who suggests that children's readiness to learn how to read depends on 'hereditary, maturation, experiential background and learning' of the individual child (p. 450). Rupley further argues that hereditary and maturity were natural factors which the teacher or parent had no control over. However, the other two, experiential background and learning, depends on the help given to the child by teachers through direct the curriculum and reading instructions. Maturation, according to Teale (1995) involves the mastering of certain given tasks such as:

pencil-and-paper activities focused mainly on giving children practice in visual discrimination (matching pictures, geometric figures, and sometimes letters and words), following a sequence in pictured stories, oral vocabulary, and auditory discrimination. (p.103)

This appears to suggest that a child is deemed ready to begin how to learn to read if she/he is matured developmentally and is able to develop the above skills with the help of his/her teacher. Crone and Whitehurst (1999, p.604) point out that age was an important factor to reading readiness and as a result, it was generally accepted that the 'older the child, the more prepared the child is to learn and benefit from the curriculum demands of kindergarten and elementary studies'. This means kindergarten and first graders were considered matured and better prepared to learn how to read than those not yet in kindergarten.

Unlike reading readiness, research on emergent literacy shows that children start developing skills that are necessary for future reading skills very early, before they are introduced to formal instruction on reading and writing (Whitehurst and Lonigan, 1998). Indeed, Strickland (2004, p.86) argues that 'learning to read and write is an ongoing process' which 'does not suddenly begin in kindergarten or first grade'. Teale (1995) asserts that emergent literacy 'stresses continuities between the Preschool and Beginning Reading phases, between the concerns and issues of early-childhood educators and those of reading teachers, and between the home and school environments'. Green, Peterson, and Lewis (2006) also argue that the belief that reading and writing began with formal education is no longer held in research and practice due to further research into the matter. Children's emergent literacy according to Sulzby and Teale (1991) is fostered by the different experiences that they have with oral and written language. Thus unlike reading readiness, which is about the period a child is perceived to be ready to

learn in kindergarten or first grade, emergent literacy is concerned with children's literacy practices before they start schooling or receive formal instruction in school.

Indeed, Yaden et al. (1999) attribute the shift in terminology in the understanding of children's literacy development as a reflection on current understandings in theory, research and educational practice. Thus, the consensus on children's emergent literacy is more holistic and constructivist; acknowledging the individual child as an active learner, making meaning of things in an informal way during different developmental stages (Kennedy et al., 2012; Riley, 2006; Whitehurst and Lonigan, 1998; Snow, Burns and Griffin, 1998). Accordingly, Teale and Sulzby (1986) explain that children's emergent literacy deals with children's cognitive ability and the significant changes that occur during the growing up period, through the real life situations and activities of the child at different stages of their physical and cognitive development.

2.4.3.6 Definitions of emergent literacy.

The literature on the term 'emergent literacy' suggests that it was first associated with the works of Clay (1979) and developed further by Teale & Sulzby (1986) among others over the years. Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998, p.849) define emergent literacy as 'the skills, knowledge and attitudes that are presumed to be developmental precursors to conventional forms of reading and writing'. Here, Whitehurst and Lonigan are concerned with those skills that children develop before they are able to read, such as their print and alphabet knowledge. Whitehurst and Lonigan are of the opinion that the acquiring of these skills is developmental and, therefore, does not occur in one go. This suggests literacy development takes place from infancy through childhood, as the child picks up different skills, in contrast to the school readiness concept. Baker, Scher and Mackler's (1997) work on home and family influences on preschool children's literacy and research by Nutbrown, Hannon and Morgan (2005) supports the assertion that children's home literacy practices are necessary for their literacy development.

Aistear (NCCA, 2009, p.54) views emergent literacy as developing through 'play and hands-on experience where children see and interact with print as they build an awareness of its functions and conventions'. In this definition, Aistear introduces play as one of the means through which children pick up emergent literacy skills. This confirms the argument put forward by Wood and Attfield (2006) on the importance of play in learning. Similarly, Yaden, et al., (1999) suggest that play provides a positive opportunity for the development of cognitive and linguistic skills, which children need for developing reading and writing skills in future.

Further, Holdaway (1979) compares children's literacy learning to how children learn to talk or walk without realising the effort they are making; in other words, literacy learning should be as easy and effortless for children as learning to talk and walk. Baker et al. (1997) are of the opinion that 'children whose early encounters with literacy are enjoyable are more likely to develop a predisposition to read frequently and broadly in subsequent years. This implies spontaneous activities and events at home and in school are likely to have positive effects on children's early literacy development.

Hannon (2000 p.44) defines children's literacy development 'as the process in which children change from being totally unable to use written language to being able to use it in one or more contexts'. The process of this change, as suggested by Hannon, is gradual and might require help from family members and the school. This places children's literacy within a social domain: the family and the school. Literacy, as discussed previously above, has assumed a sociocultural approach, where the daily social activities of the community play a significant role in children's literacy development (Gee, 2015; Street, 2003). Children's learning takes place within a socio-cultural setting, so that they learn how to use language and pick up literacy practices within the home and the community as they grow. With regard to children's reading, research by Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) suggests print awareness, alphabetical knowledge and phonological awareness are necessary for children's future reading success. In addition, oral language, which includes sounds, new words, understanding vocabulary and learning how to use language, is also seen as important for improving reading skill (Browne, 2010). The association between language and children's literacy learning is of importance, as children's literacy practices, especially at school, may be in a language different from their home language (Whitehead, 2010).

Consideration of emergent literacy is relevant to this study because in Ghana, children develop speech and language in their local languages at home before starting school. However, when they go to school, they are introduced to literacy practices in a different language (English) where some of the alphabet and their sounds may be different from those in their own local language. This happens at a time when they have not fully developed literacy skills in their own language. These differences in letters and sounds are likely to affect their phonological knowledge, and their ability to decode written language in English. This could create some difficulties for their future reading and writing and calls for the need for children to have some form of early literacy skills in their own languages first before learning English. Indeed, Cummins (2001) argues that there is need for bilingual children to develop literacy in their own

languages before being introduced to another language. Without Ghanaian teachers' knowledge and understanding of how young children learn to read and write and how to combine children's literacy practices at home and in the school, the support they give children in this regard will only be minimal.

2.4.3.7 Biliteracy

Hornberger (2002) defines biliteracy as 'any and all instances in which communication occurs in two (or more) languages in or around writing'. This means biliteracy is about literacy practices in two or more languages; one's own language and other languages as in multilingual societies and the development of one's language and literacy with other languages. This form of literacy development is crucial for children from former colonised countries, where European languages are used in school as opposed to the children's home language. Garcia (2009) refers to biliteracy as the ability to develop two forms of written languages simultaneously or gradually. This suggests that children whose home language is different from the language used in school can either learn a second language alongside their home language or be introduced to the second language gradually, to enable them use the new language effectively (Delbridge and Helman, 2016). Proctor and Silverman (2011) argue that bilingual students like their 'English monolingual counter parts, must acquire sophisticated levels of literacy to access the social and economic benefit associated with higher education'. This suggests bilingual students should have the ability to use both oral and written forms of the second language as a native speaker would.

Literature on biliteracy and bilingualism also points to the need to respect and acknowledge children's cultural and social identity, in order to help them deal with difficulties that might occur as a result of learning another language (Whitehead, 2010; Guerra, 2007). As already discussed, literacy practices are culturally embedded. As a result, children identify with their cultural and linguistic identity before entering school. Cummins (2000) suggests that biliteracy learning would be easier if children's home language is accorded importance, as biliteracy depends on the child's first language (L1) for the development of the second language (L2). However, in a society like Ghana, where the second language is a minority language in the community yet is associated with power and economic success, the benefit of bilingual and multi-literacies needs to be presented in a way that would be appreciated by the indigenes.

In sum, the meaning of literacy has evolved over the centuries, with huge implications for literacy learning in postcolonial countries. First, lower grade teachers need to have sufficient

knowledge of the children's language and literacy development in order to improve their own teaching. Second, the understanding of contemporary issues in literacy practices, including the place of technology and the use of multiple modes in literacy teaching, could be useful to lower grade teachers as they seek new ways of making their classroom practices more suitable to the needs of present-day children. Third, lower grade teachers need to understand the importance of children's mother tongue in the development of literacy in English so that they do not ignore its use in the classroom to the disadvantage of the children they teach.

In the next section, I will discuss the literacy situation in Ghana, where children's home language is different from the language of instruction in school.

2.5 Literacy learning in Ghana

Children's literacy learning has become a topical issue in many countries because literacy is related to school success and economic progress. Ghana, like many other countries in the world, is concerned about the literacy rate of its citizens, especially adults. Tagoe (2011, p.659) argues that a recent survey on living standards in the country showed '32% of adults and nearly twice as many females as males had never been to school' and that literacy rates are higher in urban than in rural areas. In addition, a World Bank's (2009) report indicates that despite the gains made by Ghana in the education sector, the majority of children drop out of school because of poor progress. The literacy rate is an indictment on the educational system in Ghana, as it is unable to provide the support needed by children in school.

Research shows that there is a link between literacy and language (Whitehead, 2010). However, for the Ghanaian child this is a difficult task, as English is the dominant language used in school, though it is not a language commonly used at home. English is not the only language that the child has to contend with, as the local language of instruction may also be foreign to the child because of the multilingual nature of the country. Bodo (1996, p.33) states that language is 'a repository of the world-view of its speakers, it is this particular language that best contains and expresses the indigenous belief systems - socio-cultural, political, economic and technological of any society'. Bodo seems to suggest that language is very important because it is a tool of communication between people and a means of understanding and expressing one's self. Indeed, Makkey (1993) cited by Wakerley (1994, p.97), states that 'language is not only the mind of a culture, it is also its most exclusive vehicle' through which people operate.

Language is not only a means for communication and identity within a community, but is closely related to children's ability to read and write in a particular language. Shanahan and Lonigan (2010) argue that children's literacy and language are interrelated because literacy is language based, as children learn to read and write in that language. Children's knowledge of vocabulary and the use of it helps them to use words and comprehend what they read, which helps with their reading skills (Storch and Whitehurst, 2002). This is why the language used in teaching in African schools is of tremendous importance. If children are unable to understand a language and are unable to express themselves in it, then they are bound to have future difficulties with comprehension and reading in that language. Babaci-Wilhite (2013) argues that the question about language and education was not a matter of importance in most African societies before their contact with Europeans because education was part of the culture and based on the peoples' language. Further, Fordjor, Kotoh, Kpeli, Kwamefio, Mensa, Owusu and Mullins (2003, p.186) argue that Ghanaian education was based on sound philosophy, social responsibility and tailored to the need of the community and included 'endurance tests of the young people or in physical exercises and in the religious or apprenticeship training programmes'. In all this training and education, the local language of the people takes precedence because it is the means of expressing one's self and identity within the community. Fordjor et al. (2003) place emphasis on the use of stories, proverbs, music, dance etc. as essential parts of the non-formal education in traditional Ghanaian education.

However, the introduction of a Western style of education took over most of the traditional ways of educating children, with Spolsky, (2004) arguing that the school took over the different tasks of the family, including socialisation and children's language development. William and Cook's (2002) work on language and education also indicates that many colonising countries, like Britain and France, curtailed the use of African languages in favour of their own languages, as a means of establishing economic and political institutions in the countries they colonised. This development created a gap between children's home language and language at school resulting in failures and many children dropping out of school. Chimbutane (2011) argues that the reason for many children in Africa going through education with high rates of failures is:

linked to the fact that a language foreign to the child (English, French or Portuguese) has been used since the first day of schooling or the transition to a foreign language has been made too early, before the child has developed solid foundations in her/his own mother tongue. (p.19)

This clearly suggests that the language of school is a major problem in Africa for children who have to make the transition between their first language, i.e. L1, to the English language (L2) or to start using English by the fourth grade when they have not fully mastered it.

There are several reasons for the legitimisation of the use of European languages in African classrooms. The first reason was the adoption of European languages or English at independence (Trudell and Piper, 2014; Chimbutane, 2011 and Wakerley, 1994). According to Trudell and Piper (2014, p.6), African leaders opted for the colonial language for its 'governance, commerce and education' after gaining independence. By deciding to use the colonial language in school, children have to learn to speak and write it.

It is important to note that the use of English in Ghanaian schools did not start after independence. Studies show that the use of either English or the local language was already a matter of debate during the colonial time, leading to two main arguments on the issue (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1975). Whilst some people saw English as a global language offering great prospects for the future, others felt its use over the local language was intended to undermine Ghanaian culture, which could have serious consequences for the country.

This controversy continued after independence, when African leaders like Dr Kwame Nkrumah opted for the use of English instead of a Ghanaian language as the official language and the language of instruction in all levels of Education (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1975). Mfum-Mensah (2005) argues that the reason for the adoption of a European language in school after independence was that leaders wanted to benefit from the educational policy left by colonial rulers and because of the fear that local languages could not offer much in terms of development to the newly independent countries. This argument is supported by Spolsky (2004, p.182), who asserts that most newly independent African states faced the dilemma of which language to use after independence and were 'unable and unwilling to resist the attraction of continuing to use the colonial metropolitan language or languages', which most of them saw as economically and socially beneficial. This shows that language policy was more of a political and economic decision, rather than an educational one.

Thus, African leaders were more interested in what was likely to be economically beneficial to the individual African in a global setting, rather than the cultural importance of language. According to Graham et al, (2015, p.427), there are people with the 'belief that African languages are unsuited to education, and only knowledge of a European language can lead to higher education or socio-economic success ...'. However, the belief that success was

associated with colonial language or the English language appears justified, as Harries (2012, p.54) also argues that ‘in the current global system, anything done in English is liable to receive enormous subsidy’. Harries is of the opinion that projects, which do not promote European languages and culture, do not receive the necessary attention from wealthy donors. This puts a lot of pressure on African states as they seek foreign aid for the development of their countries.

Another reason for the adoption of European languages in Africa was for peaceful cohesion and national unity because of the number of tribes and different languages spoken in each country. Graham (2010) argues that:

The newly independent African countries sought to address the danger of disunity from the many disparate linguistic groups within their borders and assumed that the choice of a supposedly neutral official, or national, language would reduce diversity and promote consensus. (p.311)

The creation of artificial boundaries, which resulted in people from different tribes being grouped together for administrative purposes, meant the need to use a common and neutral language acceptable to all. In Ghana, the English language serves as a neutral language because adopting an existing language as the official one would have posed difficulties for its leaders because of the distinctive linguistic and cultural diversity within the country. The rural/urban drift after independence in 1957 compounded the problem of multilingualism in Ghana.

The movement of people from different parts of the country to urban areas meant people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds living together in the same area with their children speaking different languages. Since the language policy in Ghana is, for example, based on the predominant language of the area where the school is situated, Spolsky (2004) observed that the effects of urbanisation and migration mean that children are likely to come to school with a home language, which will be different from that of their school.

The issue of multiple languages affects communication in some urban classrooms because of the inability of some teachers to speak the different languages of the children. A study by Nyaga and Anthonissen (2012) depicts the difficulties faced by some Kenyan teachers with the use of mother-tongue policy in some lower primary classrooms. Thus, Povey (2007) concludes that lack of a common language was one of the many inherited problems of newly independent states in Africa, which contributed to the choice of a European language as the common language.

The attitude of the Ghanaian elite appears to be another reason for the use of English in school. Mfum-Mensah (2005) argued that the colonial government's promotion of Western education meant that:

The 'fortunate few' indigenous children who enrolled in school received instruction in English. Some of the local people received further training abroad and returned to occupy the lower administrative and clerical positions in the colony. These local 'scholars' carved out a place for themselves as the emergent group of local 'elites' in the society. (p.75)

It seems the newly educated Africans gained prestige, power, and authority in society however; Woolman (2001) argues that these African elite soon became misfits in their own society because of their Western education. It appears the Western education they received made them believe that English was the only way to improve one's self and advance socially and economically. With independence and the desire of many leaders to keep the European language as the official language for national cohesion, English became more attractive to both parents and children in school. This situation seemed to come into being after many years of independence, as shown in a study by Mfum-Mensah (2005). The study suggests that parents, teachers, students and community members in the schools under study prefer the use of English to the local language because those with little knowledge of the English language are handicapped, unable to move up the social and economic ladder.

It is clear from the above discussion that the question of a language policy in lower grade education in Ghana, and other Sub-Saharan African countries is deeply rooted within a colonial and postcolonial context. Confronted with a colonial past and the introduction of European languages in school and public life, the problem faced by Ghana and other sub-Saharan Africa countries is how to combine the use of European language and the child's first language in school (Bloch, 2000). As a result of the difficulty of satisfying the needs of the different factions in this debate, Ghana's language policy suffered a number of changes over the years.

2.6 Postcolonial language policy changes in Ghana from independence in 1957

Since language policy may mean different things to different people, the use of a language policy in this study refers to 'a policy that is enacted by law and enforced through legislation or the formulation and proclamation of an explicit plan, usually but not necessarily written in a formal document about language use' (Spolsky, 2004, p.11). Fredua-Kwarteng (2015, p.83) argues that 'in the British colonial model, the national education policy-making process involves the appointment of a national education commission or committee to review the

national goals, outcomes, philosophy, and policies of education and make appropriate recommendations to government'. Indeed, a review of literature shows that the British turned to the Phelps-Stoke fund in America to help it with the formulation of educational policy for its African speaking colonies when it took over the administration of Sub-Saharan African states (Ball, 1983). Among the many recommendations made by the Phelps' Commission was the use of local language in lower grades. However, not all schools used the policy. Some missionary schools promoted the use of local language as part of their strategy to convert indigenes to Christianity (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1975). As a result, both English and the local language were used as languages of instruction by different schools and the controversy of which is more suitable for children continues to this day. This divided opinion appears to be responsible for changes in language policy for lower grades, as discussed later in this chapter.

2.6.1 The English-only policy at independence

The use of English at independence was very popular with many Sub-Saharan African countries with a British colonial past. The history of the use of an 'English only' policy as the medium of instruction in Ghanaian schools appears to have resulted first from the fear of some Ghanaians of an attempt by 'the British to provide Africans with an 'inferior' education' (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1975, p.60). As discussed earlier, African leaders adopted the use of European languages for several reasons and Dr Kwame Nkrumah, the president of the first Sub-Saharan country to gain independence from the British, appears to have led the way on this.

A review of the works of Ansah (2014) and McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh (1975) shows that English became the language of instruction at all levels of education (including lower grades) at the time of independence in 1957. According to McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh (1975, p.60), a special committee, the Barnard Committee, was set up before independence to 'investigate the possibility of adopting English as the medium of instruction throughout the primary school course'. The committee favoured the use of local language in lower grades; however, this was not accepted, with English becoming the language of instruction for all levels of education in the country. According to Ansah (2014, p.6), 'even though the committee's report was accepted by government, a member of the committee submitted a minority report recommending an English-only policy'. This suggests a wide division of opinion by committee members on the language issues in the country. Perhaps this minority group represents the elite, who were beneficiaries of British colonial education. The acceptance of the minority view is not

surprising because Bohene-Agbo (1985) argues that there were already indications in 1951 of the use of English in school, when Ghanaian politicians were in charge of the governing the country. The following statement, as recorded by McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh (1975), sheds some light on the situation:

In recent years, the tendency has been to introduce English as the medium of instruction early in the primary course and in urban situations from the beginning where teachers could do so. At the same time, the teaching of Ghanaian languages as a class subject has remained compulsory. (p.61)

The acceptance of using English rather than the local language meant the majority of children and some teachers would have a problem using English in communication. The language of communication in most Ghanaian communities is the local language, so the use of local language would have been more widespread, especially at the time of independence when only a few had received Western education. Arthur-Shoba and Quarcoo's (2012, p.79) argument that 'the majority of Ghanaians acquire English language through education' supports the fact that local language use is very common in Ghana. This suggests that the majority of children come from homes and rural communities where English is rarely used. This situation is likely to create problems for teachers, as they may have difficulties interacting with children in a language the children do not understand.

The adoption of English was unacceptable to the majority of Ghanaians, who felt local language was the better medium of instruction for younger children than English. Owu-Ewie (2006) argues that many Ghanaians saw the adoption of the English language policy as a betrayal of the African, because of Nkrumah's Pan-African ideology and his call for Africans to be in charge of their own affairs. Indeed, Owu-Ewie questions why the president with strong Pan-African views should choose English over local language? Judging from Nkrumah's own words, it appears that this was a strategic plan for national development and a means of preparing Ghanaians to compete and participate in the global world, in order that they can manage their own affairs. Mfum Mensah (2005) also suggests that the choice of a European language instead of a local language was a choice for national unity because of the multilingual status of the country. This situation, according to Mfum-Mensah, made it difficult, if not impossible, for African leaders of newly independent countries to choose one language over another, which could create divisions, chaos, and animosity. In addition, the use of English rather than local language was unacceptable to those who believe the use of English deprives the child of the use of their own language in education and is likely to alienate them from their

own culture and traditions. As Akello, Timmerman and Namusisi (2016) assert, using one's own language in education helps children to share their cultural values and beliefs, thus promoting cultural identity.

The implementation of the English-only policy at the time of independence was difficult because of the high demand for teachers, due to the fact that there were many new schools without teachers. This demand resulted in the employment of untrained teachers, who did not have enough English language knowledge in their own educational background (Ansah, 2014; McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1975). McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh (1975) report that during the review of the country's education after the overthrow of the CPP government:

The committee was fully aware that more than half the teachers in elementary schools in Ghana are untrained and have an inadequate knowledge of English. It would be unrealistic to suppose that these untrained pupil teachers can teach English satisfactorily, let alone use it as a medium of teaching other subjects. (p.119)

This statement reveals the state of the English-only policy when it was in operation. Although this situation pertained to the period immediately after independence, since untrained teachers remain employed by some schools today (especially in rural areas), some children would still be missing out on learning the English language.

Although the adoption of English-only at independence was not welcomed by some Ghanaians at the time of independence, the policy was reintroduced in 2002 by the New Patriotic Party (NPP) government led by John Agyekum Kufuor (Ansah, 2014; Opoku-Amankwa, 2009; Owu-Ewie, 2006). As part of the education reform in the country, the Anamuah-Mensah Commission, set up by the Kufuor's government in 2002, reviewed various aspects of education in the country, including the language policy in lower grades (Fredua-Kwarteng, 2015). This Commission also recommended the use of local language to the Kufuor's NPP, but they decided against it (Ansah, 2014). This decision of the NPP government was similar to that of the Convention People's Party (CPP) during the time of independence. It appears that a small minority had once again decided on the use of the English language rather than the local language.

The NPP English-only policy states that:

Instruction at all levels will be in English, however, pupils and students in all Basic schools (both public and private) will be required to study a Ghanaian language as a subject, that is from KG 1 to JHS 3. Where there are teachers, French will be taught

from JHS 1 to SHS 3. (Ministry of Education, Textbook development and distribution policy, p.12)

This decision meant young children entering school for the first time would have their lessons not in the local language but in English. It is likely that the majority of children would find learning difficult as the Ghanaian language continues to be the language spoken at home and in the communities they come from.

Among the many reasons given by the minister for the re-introduction of the English-only policy were the lack of well-trained teachers with competency in using and teaching the local language, inadequate teaching and materials in local languages to support teaching and learning in schools and the problem of multilingualism in some classrooms (Owu-Ewie, 2006). This is an indication that teacher education institutions could not prepare teachers to effectively use local language in teaching, or prepare their students on how to teach children with a diversity of languages. Nyaga and Anthonissen (2012), in a study on multiple languages in Kenyan schools, suggest the need for teachers to be aware of the diversity of languages children bring to the classroom and the strategies to deal with it in practice. Opoku-Amankwa (2009), commenting on the return of the English-only policy, also provided further reasons for its reintroduction: the need for children to learn English language early in school and the fact that English language is a global language for technology, commerce and science. These reasons show colonial rule still has a strong influence on Ghanaian society.

There are many similarities between the NPP government's adoption of the policy and that of the CPP government's preference for the use of English in school. A review of Ansah's (2014) work shows that both the Convention People's Party (CPP), led by Dr Kwame Nkrumah and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) government, led by John Agyekum Kufuor rejected the recommendation of the education commission following a review of education in the country. Both the CPP and the NPP governments placed importance on the need for children to learn English for self-advancement and participation in the global world. Furthermore, the decision to reject the recommendations of the two commissions, which could favour the majority of the citizens, appeared to be a decision taken by a small minority; perhaps those with the belief that the local language was not capable of bringing economic prosperity to the nation. However, some writers have disputed the argument that economic success is only achieved through the use of European languages. Bodomo (1996) is of the view that the development of local

languages can help in the economic development of African countries because of the abundance of local knowledge and intelligence on issues of importance in local communities.

Nunan (2003), writing on the impact of English on Asian-Pacific regions, for example, argues that because English has become a global language:

Governments and ministries of education are framing policies and implementing practices in the language area without adequately considering the implications of such policies and practices on the lives of the teachers and students they affect. (p. 591)

Although the use of the English language may be beneficial to children in some ways, the fact that English is not the first or home language of many children could create problems for classroom interactions and restrict children's academic progress. The disadvantages of using English as the language of instruction in African schools have been discussed extensively in literature (Graham et al., 2015; Ansah, 2014; Kioko, Ndung'u, Njoroge and Mutiga, 2014; Opoku-Amankwa, 2009). These writers have questioned the use of English when its use appears to be problematic in schools. Opoku-Amankwa (2009, p.131), in a study on the English-only policy under the NPP government, observed that children in the study could not express themselves well in the English language, leading to 'lack of confidence, a feeling of inadequacy and generally low levels of self-esteem'. This evidence appears to suggest that children struggle to make meaning of what they are being taught, also contributing to unassertiveness in some children. Kioko et al. (2014) concur with the above view that the use of English language makes children passive learners with the following statement:

The barrier of starting school in a language that is not the learner's home language changes the focus of the learning from learner-centred to teacher-centred, and thus reinforces passiveness and silence in classrooms, which in turn suppress the young learner's potential and liberty to express themselves freely. (p.3)

The above statement clearly shows language is an important factor in classroom interactions between teachers and children because the children will be able to express themselves better in their own language rather than an unfamiliar language. Akello et al. (2016) argue that language is important for communication and meaning making during learning activities, so it is necessary to use a language which children understand and are able to communicate in freely during lessons. This is likely to help children participate effectively in class and help make learning activity less teacher-centred in African classrooms. Opoku-Amankwa (2009) states that, a study conducted by Andoh-Kumi in Fante areas in Ghana concluded that the good

interaction between the teacher and children observed during a lesson was the result of the use of local language, which was familiar to the children. This has led some African writers to question the reasons why their governments still prefer the use of colonial languages in schools, when current research shows children understand their lessons much better when they are taught in their own language (Oduor, 2015; Trudel and Piper, 2014; Babaci-Wilhite, 2013; Davis, and Agbenyega, 2012).

Another criticism of the English-only policy is about the quality of the teaching of the English language by teachers, as some believe that teachers are not well enough equipped to teach English language in lower grades. Opoku-Amankwa and Brew-Hammond (2011), Owu-Ewie (2006), and McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh (1975) are of the opinion that the number of untrained teachers who were employed to teach in schools after independence contributed to children's poor literacy learning because these teachers did not have enough English competency to teach it. Thus, children are 'exposed to the poor, non-standard English of many primary school teachers' (Andoh-Kumi, 2000, p.4). Pryor, Akyeampong, Westbrook and Lussier (2012) suggested that the reason for poor English teaching is because teacher training colleges in Ghana are failing to prepare teachers adequately for literacy teaching with lower grade children. As a result, both trained teachers and particularly untrained or pupil teachers are unable to meet the language and literacy requirements of many children in the country. Fillmore and Snow (2000) argue that because teachers play an important role in children's language and literacy development, those who teach in English to children whose first language is not English need to have expert knowledge in the language, in order to teach it well.

The English-only policy was interrupted after a military coup toppled the first civilian government of the Convention People's Party in 1966. McWilliam and Kwabena-Poh (1975) assert that the country's education came under review once again, with the decision taken to change the language policy in lower grades from English language to local language.

2.6.2 Change from English-only to local language policy

As already discussed, the first president of Ghana promoted the use of English as the medium of teaching for all levels of education in Ghana immediately after independence, although, local language appeared to be the preferred language for lower grades. The language situation in lower grades changed after the government of the Convention People's Party (CPP) was overthrown in 1966. Andoh-Kumi (2000) indicates that, after the military coup of 1966, instruction in Class 1 reverted to local language, while English was maintained in Classes 2

and 3 until 1970 when local language became the language of instruction for all three lower grade classes. The reintroduction of the local language in lower grades after this military intervention seems to be a continuation of the debate on the appropriate language to use in lower grades. The policy was used for over thirty years, before it was changed in 2002 by the New Patriotic Party (NPP) (Ansah, 2014; Opoku-Amankwa, 2009). In 2008, the local language policy was reintroduced yet again by the same government, but only for a year when a new bilingual policy was implemented in 2009. Although the local language was a means of promoting indigenous language and literacy, English still remained a major feature in education in Ghana because the local language was used as a means to assist children in learning English.

A review of Ansah (2014) and McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh (1975), and other writers on the language and literacy policy in lower grades, shows that educational reforms were commissioned by the government of Ghana at different stages after independence. According to McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh (1975), the Kwapong Commission of 1966/67 was set up after the military coup in 1966, recommending that:

A Ghanaian language should be used as the medium of instruction for the first years of primary school course, the change to English as medium of instruction should commence in its fourth year whilst the Ghanaian language continues to be studied as a subject. (p.119)

This policy meant local language was promoted as the language of instruction for lower grades and English studied as a subject (e.g. grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, etc.), until English becomes the medium of instruction in upper grades and local language is now learnt as a subject. According to McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, schools in urban areas were allowed to use English earlier than the 4th grade if it was necessary to do so. This suggests a disparity in the application of local language policy between schools employing teachers who could use local language as the medium of education and those which did not. This means some children would miss out on the use of their local language in school. The statement also shows that, while local language was used as the medium of instruction, teachers were to teach the English language as a subject until it became the medium of instruction in upper grades.

The Dzobo Commission of (1972/3) was another commission which deliberated on issues concerning the language and literacy policy in lower grades later in the 70s (Ministry of Education, 1974). The government's white paper on the Dzobo Education Review Committee of 1972/3 states that:

Government, therefore, accepts the recommendation of the committee that where teachers and learning materials are available, and the linguistics composition of classes is fairly uniform, the children's first language must be used at the dominant medium of instruction in kindergarten and lower primary school. (Ministry of Education, 1974)

In this second example, the use of local language continues to be used, however, it appears there were a few problems with the implementation of the policy. First, the statement suggests there were a number of teachers who either did not have knowledge of local languages or did not receive adequate training in local languages in college to enable them use them effectively. Second, it appears there were inadequate learning and teaching materials in the local languages for teachers to use in support of what they were teaching. Finally, some urban classrooms appear to have children from diverse language background, which means there was no common language in these classrooms. These challenges appear to show the inability of the government of Ghana to implement a policy catering for all the language needs of all children in the country. As Awedoba (2001) observed, an ideal situation would have been for the government to develop all the different languages spoken in the country for use in school.

Over the years, the local language policy used in school states that:

In the first years of primary education, the Ghanaian language prevalent in the local area is to be used as the medium of instruction, whilst English is studied as a subject. From Primary Four onward, English replaces the Ghanaian language as the medium of instruction, and the Ghanaian language becomes another on the timetable. (Mfum-Mensah, 2005, p.76)

The policy statement above addresses the need for the use of children's local language as a medium of instruction and the teaching of English language as a subject, as stated in the previous policy statement. However, a critical examination of the statement shows a number of factors, which could make the use of the policy difficult in some schools. First, rather than the use of a child's mother tongue, the statement refers to the language prevalent in the local area where a child attends school. This means children may not necessarily learn through their first or mother-tongue but the language predominantly spoken in the area where they live. The diverse linguistic nature of Ghana, where more than sixty languages and dialects are spoken, makes it impossible for every child's language to be catered for (Ansah, 2014). In relation to linguistic diversity, Ghana operates a school language policy where only 'Asante Twi, Akuapem Twi, and Fante, Dagaare-Wali, Dagbani, Dangme, Ewe, Ga, Gonja, Kasem, and Nzema' are the only approved languages for use in schools (Opoku-Amankwa, 2009, p.122).

The number of school languages compared to the languages spoken in the country shows the local language policy does not make it possible for every child, and especially those from minority languages, to benefit from the policy.

Over the years, UNESCO has argued the importance of mother-tongue education for young people (Ball, 2011). This is because a child's mother tongue is their first language; a language in which that child understands, constructs meaning, expresses ideas and in which the child socialises with members of the family and community. The mother tongue, therefore, helps in the intellectual, emotional and social development of the child (Cummins, 2001; Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle, 1978). In addition, Pandey (2014, p.63) argues that a child's first language or mother tongue is a 'comfort zone for learning especially in the early years...', suggesting that its use facilitates easy learning as children understand ideas and concepts in their own language better than through another language. This assumption is likely to make classroom interaction better for both teachers and children, as children are likely to understand their lessons and take a more active part in discussions. Students, in a study conducted by Opoku-Amankwa (2009) on the use of English as the medium of instruction, reported that the use of English prevented them from participating actively in class. This goes to show the use of local language would have been better for these children. Many African writers are of the view that learning in the mother tongue also makes children more aware of their language, culture and history, because of the interconnecting relationships between these (Effiong, 2013; Arolowo, 2010). Research findings show that children's use of their mother tongue facilitates the learning of another language (Cummings, 2000). This means children are in a better position to learn the English language if they know how to read and write in their own language, so that they can transfer those skills to a second language.

Although the use of local language is beneficial to children's learning, its use was not accepted by all because of the negative attitude held by some during the colonial era. This attitude, as discussed earlier, is the perception held by some that the use of local language was an attempt to deny the African a good education.

There appears to be a perception among some Africans that there are no economic advantages associated with the use of local languages, making it difficult to persuade for their use in school. In support of this, Trudell and Piper (2014) argue that:

These pro-African language education policy choices are nearly always contested-on the grounds that the international language is more advantageous to the students, or on

the grounds that the African languages chosen for use do not reflect the stakeholders' own local language preference. (p. 9)

In this vein, Graham et al. (2015, p.427) argue that the belief that the use of only European languages can lead to 'higher education or economic success' is contributing to the poor implementation of mother-tongue education on the African continent. However, Kioko et al. (2014, p.7) disputes the assertion that there is no economic benefit associated with the use of local language and argue that 'research on the creative economies indicates that there are sustainable economic opportunities if one invests in multilingual contexts'.

One of the difficulties of the local language policy was the inability of many teachers to use it in teaching because they had insufficient knowledge or lack the capacity to use local language in the classroom. Awedoba (2001) attributes this problem to the fact that teachers trained before 1976 had not received any instruction in local language in college. Although little research has been carried out on teachers' competence in local language, Rosekran et al. (2012) report that a survey showed that while many teachers of lower grades were competent, about 62% were only partially competent. This shows how poorly teachers were prepared to use local language in lower grades. Among the reasons given for this is lack of government funding for the development of local languages and insufficient teaching and learning materials in the selected local languages for teaching purposes (Opoku-Amankwa, Edu-Buandoh and Brew-Hammond, 2015; Graham, 2010).

Finally the policy statement indicates that the local language is to be used until Class 4 and English thereafter. Opoku-Amankwa (2009) opines that this policy was not helpful to children, as they mastered neither the local language nor the English language by Class 4 because of poor implementation of the policy. In addition, Owu-Ewie (2006) criticises the exit period as being too short. He argues that the early switch from local language to English in Class 4 is likely to have a negative impact on children's learning because they will not have mastered the English language enough to understand lessons taught in English. In support of this, Graham (2010) argues that studies conducted in the US show that children who were educated under the late exit system of mother-tongue education made significant progress, as compared to those under the early exit. This is likely to affect their reading, comprehension and writing skills in both languages.

This policy, like the English-only policy, supports a form of bilingualism where children learn local language and study English as a subject. After nearly thirty years of local language use in

lower grades, the NPP government claimed local language policy had failed to produce results, substantiated or unsubstantiated, leading to a return of the English-only policy in 2002 (as discussed under English-only policy section 2.6.1). It is clear from the different commissions set between 1967 and 2002 that the implementation and practice of the local language policy was not going to be an easy task. The return to an English-only policy was short-lived, as the majority of Ghanaians expressed dissatisfaction with the decision, followed by a return to the local language policy in 2008 (Ansah, 2014). Indeed, due to the frequent inconsistency and lack of political will in finding a lasting solution to Ghana's language policy for lower grades, and in an attempt to find solutions to children's poor literacy skills, a new policy with emphasis on bilingual literacy (Local language and English) was introduced in 2009 (Hartwell, 2010).

It is important to note that the policy also makes room for the use of English where it is impossible to use local language because of either multicultural diversity or lack of teaching and learning materials in the local language. This could create confusion as the use of local language would depend on individual teachers. Owu-Ewie and Eshun (2015, p.72-73) note that this provision allowed 'most teachers/educational practitioners to hide behind this caveat and disregard the implementation of the policy'. Indeed, Smit (2005), writing on teachers in South Africa, argues that among the reasons why government policy failed in schools is the lack of clarity between policy, text and practice. In light of the complex nature of language policy in lower grades, as discussed above, perhaps, bilingual education and biliteracy, as in NALAP, could be the way forward in a multilingual country like Ghana.

2.6.3 National Literacy Acceleration Programme (NALAP)

The National Literacy Acceleration Programme, or NALAP, is a bilingual literacy programme initiative that began in 2009 to help improve young children's literacy learning in both a local language and English (Hartwell, 2010). This policy appeared to address the concerns of those who argue for the use of local language as the medium of communication and instruction, while at the same time satisfying those who argue for the use of English because of its importance in the wider world. This policy change came after several years of using either a local language or English-only policy to support children's literacy in English before they reach Class 4.

According to Rosekran et al. (2012), NALAP is the product of the successful pilot of a mother-tongue literacy programme in 2004. Literature on the formulation of NALAP shows that unlike previous policy reforms, which took place during major educational reforms involving all levels of education, NALAP was more focused on how to improve the literacy rate in lower

grades. Hartwell (2010) explains that the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service received donor support and technical assistance for the development of the policy from USAID and EQUALL. Since it was a new and national policy, head teachers and teachers in kindergarten and lower grades were trained in the philosophy and pedagogy of NALAP. The overall aim of NALAP is to use the child's local language (L1) and move on gradually to the use of English (L2), in the hope that by the end of lower primary the child will have basic reading skills in a Ghanaian language and in English. This makes NALAP the first official bilingual programme in Ghana and the first time language and literacy has been grouped together in one policy. Due to the difficulty in sourcing for the official NALAP policy statement from both the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service, the statement below is taken from Hartwell (2010, p.2).

Using a bilingual (Ghanaian language and English) methodology, NALAP is implementing the policy to promote teaching pupils in Kindergarten through Primary grade three to read and write in their local language, one of 11 selected Ghanaian languages, while introducing them to spoken English, and by grade two, to written English. The approach is a transitional one using local language literacy as a bridge to English literacy. The program also serves to encourage and celebrate the use of local languages as a valuable aspect of Ghanaian culture.

This bilingual literacy policy appears to be a compromise between the use of either local language or English in lower grade literacy development because it acknowledges the importance of local language use and learning and the teaching of English in lower grades. Literature suggests that it was hoped that this would answer, and perhaps end, the uncertainty of the place of both local languages and English in children's learning, caused by education policy changes since independence. Indeed, Hartwell (2010) argues that, NALAP is unique 'in the contentious history of early grade language policy and practice in Ghana and other African countries', because it explicitly addresses the relationship between the child's first language and English language reading and writing skills, while helping to overcome the conflict between local language education and English education. However, this bilingual education is only implemented as far as grade three and does not extend to the rest of primary and junior secondary, where the language of instruction is still English.

In addition, NALAP acknowledges the importance of local language (L1) and its use as a bridge for children to acquire literacy in L2 or English. It provides guidelines on the amount of time for using local language from kindergarten to Class 3 and how to use teaching materials in the local language. This development supports the local language policy and the argument that

children learn best in their mother tongue or in a language familiar to them. It also supports bilingual learning, which depends on children's first language as 'a prelude to and complement of bilingual and multilingual education' (Ball, 2011, p.5). However, the type of bilingual learning in this situation is different from places where the child's language is a minority language and the new language is the commonly spoken one. The policy requires teachers to demonstrate local language knowledge and the capacity to use and teach it. However, like the local language policy, the disadvantage of NALAP is the inability of teachers to use the local language, which still remains a component of the policy, and the need for publishing and equitable distribution of teaching materials in all local languages, as suggested by Opoku-Amankwa et al. (2015). The difficulties faced by teachers' inability to use local language effectively appear to be the biggest obstacle to this policy. Rosekran et al. (2012) observed that a survey to assess teachers' local language knowledge showed that a little over 18% were fully literate in a local language with about 62.8% being partially literate. This is an indication that the majority of teachers would be unable to fully implement the policy. This appears to suggest, as previously discussed, that teachers are not sufficiently trained in local languages during their initial teacher training courses.

Besides the use of local language as a bridge to literacy learning in English, the policy appears to make children recognise the importance of local language as a valuable aspect of Ghanaian culture and identity. As discussed earlier, Woolman (2001) suggests that colonial rule and education produced an African elite alienated from their culture and traditions. The challenges of colonial rule and the use of English in school continue to prompt a negative attitude from some Ghanaians towards local language and their Ghanaian identity. Although NALAP policy attempts to provide a context for local language and culture, there is a need for this at all levels of education to encourage a more positive attitude towards the importance of local language and culture in education and nation building. This makes the 'early exit' programme, where children are taught exclusively in the English language from grade 4, problematic.

Furthermore, the gradual introduction of English in lower grades appears to satisfy, to some extent, those in favour of English used to teach younger children. However, with the current policy meaning children are taught exclusively in English from Class 4, there is a need for lower grade teachers to demonstrate a high level of English language competency to help make this transition easier for children.

To improve the implementation of the policy, head teachers and teachers in lower grades were trained on the philosophy and pedagogy of the programme. This was to help teachers to have content knowledge on bilingual learning (using local language and English) and teaching methods to effectively support children's learning. However, a study conducted by Akyeampong, Lussier, Pryor and Westbrook (2013), on teacher preparation for teaching reading and mathematics in some African countries, found that teacher preparation was often lagging behind the curriculum used in schools and they were not trained sufficiently in teaching younger children to read. This suggests teachers may not be adequately prepared in the use of English. The presence of untrained teachers, who themselves may not have good English language skills, could also undermine and create difficulties for the implementation of NALAP, as they may have little or no training in teaching methods.

The literature on NALAP also identifies the role played by foreign donors, including USAID and EQUALL, who provide both funding and technical assistance (Hartwell, 2010). This suggests two things; first, the involvement of foreign countries (through their donor agencies) on language and literacy policy formulation in the country, and second, Ghana's dependency on foreign aid and foreign experts even though the country has been independent for a number of years. Some may argue that decisions on which language to use in teaching should be left to the discretion of Ghanaians and not foreigners. The involvement of foreigners in the development of NALAP could be seen as neo-colonialism or another way of powerful countries influencing policies in former colonial countries. Takyi-Amoako (2012), in a study on donor agencies' involvement in the education sector of Ghana, shows the presence of a power imbalance between donors and the Ministry of Education because donors promote global agendas and exert power and influence on the contents and texts of educational policies in Ghana.

The above discussion on language and literacy policy shows the continuities and discontinuities in these policies from independence to date. Since teachers' classroom practices depend largely on the training and support they receive in college, the next section will examine the changes that occurred in the training of teachers for lower grades.

2.7 Post-colonial teacher education and reforms

Teachers play an important role in children's literacy because literacy takes place in social environments in the home and in the school setting, with support from parents and teachers. To support children's language and literacy, teachers need training on theory, methods and skills

and how to provide for the specific needs of children in multilingual classrooms. Missionary societies paid attention to the training of teachers in Ghana because of evangelisation of the indigenous people, while colonial interest focused on the need for a workforce for the colonial administration. With independence, the shift in teacher education was on preparing children for the future development of the country. This resulted in a number of reforms from independence for preparing 4-year trained teachers for teaching in primary schools, to university-trained teachers with the introduction of kindergarten and greater emphasis on early childhood education.

According to Graham (1971), training of teachers first started with the European missionaries, who needed the assistance of the indigenous people to help them propagate the Christian faith. The training of the indigenes was central to missionary work because of the language barriers between the missionaries and the local people, so having a training centre or seminaries to train catechists was very necessary and, with time, the centres became training colleges. Asare-Danso (2014, p.58) writes that the Basel Mission ‘played a pioneering role in the introduction of teacher education in the Gold Coast (now Ghana)’ in Akropong in 1863. The training colleges played an important role in the overall plan for the evangelisation and European civilisation programme from the colonial period to date. As a result, Asare and Nti (2014) argue that teachers trained by missionaries carried out their orders and made their students follow the status quo. As a result of interest in the training of teachers, Ghana has over 38 Teacher Training Colleges or Colleges of Education established by either missionary churches or the government in nearly every region in the country (Akyeampong, 2003).

Most Ghanaian teachers have professional training. However, there are some untrained teachers called ‘pupil teachers’, who have existed in the teaching service from pre-independence to date. The Accelerated Education Plan for universal primary education before and after independence increased school enrolment and a demand for teachers. However, due to the small number of trained teachers, those without training had to be employed by schools and were given on-the-job training (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1975). Both Tanaka (2012) and Lewin (2002) have attributed the existence of pupil teachers in the teaching service after many years of independence to the inability of some students to obtain the required entry qualification to either the training college or the university and the refusal of some trained teachers to accept posting to rural areas of the country. Kabba (2014) reports that a projection on teacher shortage by UNESCO for 2015 showed that sub-Saharan African countries would have the greatest teacher gaps or teacher shortages, where the number of trained teachers is

insufficient to meet the demands for teachers in schools. This means pupil teachers will continue to be employed by schools. However, several governments have come up with different distance learning programmes for the training of pupil teachers in the country (Asare and Nti, 2014).

2.7.1 Post-Middle and Post-Secondary teacher training

Teacher training and training of teachers for lower grades is important, as teachers have the duty to support and prepare children to use English in upper grades and thereafter. Until recently, initial teacher training education in Ghana did not have a smooth history, due to the many changes that have occurred since its inception during the colonial era and post-independence (Asare-Danso, 2014). These changes include the entry qualification, duration of training and the qualifying certificate, as part of other educational reforms in the country to improve teaching and learning. Initial teacher training took place in Teacher Training Colleges, now Colleges of Education, to prepare teachers for the elementary or basic schools in Ghana. Since secondary school education was uncommon during the colonial era, training colleges encouraged those with a Middle School Leaving Certificate to enrol, as well as those who had a Secondary School Certificate.

The Post-Middle Teacher Training Colleges are the oldest form of teacher training institution in Ghana and a Middle School Leaving Certificate is the entry requirement (Asare-Danso, 2014). Candidates who pass through this training obtained a Certificate 'A' Post-Middle teaching qualification and taught in lower grades or in primary schools. The duration changed from four years to two under the Accelerated Educational Plan in 1960, for the training of more teachers to teach in the number of newly opened schools to boost education in the country (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1975). As a result, teachers who went through this programme obtained Certificate 'B' instead of Certificate 'A'. The four-year Post-Middle training ended in 1986 because of educational reforms in the country and the need for trained candidates with Secondary education to reflect the changes in the country's education (Akyeampong, 2003). Although the focus of teacher training was initially on evangelisation of the indigenes through preparing children to read the bible, with time, the shift in focus was for working in the colonial administration and other development purposes. Thus, teaching was to help children move on to secondary, vocational, technical and to other higher education.

Students who had completed five years of secondary school or three years Senior Secondary School (SSS) were also educated in three-year training colleges as teachers with the Certificate

‘A’ Post-Secondary qualification (Asare-Danso, 2014; Akyeampong and Stephens, 2002). Though Certificate ‘A’ Post-Secondary teachers were originally trained for teaching in middle school, and later Junior High schools, some were appointed to teach in primary schools (lower grade and upper grade classes). Due to further reforms in teacher education, students wishing to become teachers can now either choose the three-year diploma programme in a traditional Teacher Training College (now College of Education) or do a four-year degree programme in a teaching university (Newman, 2013). This latest development appears to bring an end to the diversity of routes to the traditional teacher training college in Ghana.

Concerning training on how to use local language or English as a medium of instruction, there appears to be little information on this. However, Owu-Ewie and Eshun (2015), have argued that some teachers do not have the competencies they need in local language. This is possibly because they did not study it in school, which will make it difficult for teachers to use it as a medium of instruction and communication. On English language teaching, Akyeampong et al. (2013) suggest the preparation they receive in the training colleges is insufficient for teaching reading in lower grades. This appears to suggest a gap in what teachers are taught in training college (theory) and the practical aspects of what and how to do things. This presupposes that theoretically teachers have knowledge about a language policy but may not have practical training on how to go about its use. This situation makes code switching easier for teachers, from English to local language and from local language to English, depending on the competence of the teacher and the situation in the classroom. The challenge this poses is how teacher education can bridge the gap between theory and practice in the preparation of teachers.

In addition, Zimmerman (2011) appears to suggest the rote method of learning and pupil teachers with no teaching skills have contributed to problems in schools.

2.7.2 Early childhood training and further professional development

The government of Ghana has paid increasing attention to teacher education in Ghana through different educational reforms since independence. This has enabled many serving teachers to upgrade their knowledge and skills by enrolling in teaching universities in the country. With regard to early childhood, although for many years teachers were untrained, the situation has changed since the introduction of compulsory kindergarten for four year-olds’ early childhood education. Teachers with an interest in teaching younger children now have the opportunity to train teachers for this vocation. The opportunity also exists for serving teachers, who wish to

specialise in their subject areas, to do a Post-diploma programme in one of the teaching universities in the country.

2.8 Chapter Summary

The literature reviewed in this chapter shows how Ghana's language and literacy policy is closely associated with the British colonial era. The review outlined the development of literacy, the different understandings thereof and it considered issues relating to biliteracy. In addition, the different language and literacy policies were reviewed to show the reasons for having a language policy and the changes that have taken place since independence. Since the study looks at how the policies have affected teachers' practices, literature on teacher education was reviewed to establish the training teachers received and how they were prepared to apply the language and literacy policy in lower grade classrooms. The review shows that the question of an appropriate language for instruction and communication is very complex, with two different opposing views as a result of colonial rule. While there is evidence to show that Ghana has practised a form of bilingualism over the years, this was not officially acknowledged until the introduction of NALAP, the new literacy policy, in 2009. Finally, teacher training institutions do not give much away about how they prepare teachers to use either local languages or English as the medium of instruction in the classroom.

Although the literature review shows there is growing interest in the use of postcolonial theory in some aspects of educational studies and in early childhood education in particular, the use of postcolonial theory has not received much attention in researching Ghana's education, let alone in lower grades. This fundamental gap means there is limited analysis about the effects of British colonial rule on language policy and young children's literacy development in Ghana. I have also demonstrated in this literature review that there is little literature on teachers' perspectives on language and literacy policy since independence. There is a further gap in the literature on the effect of a teacher's training on the teaching of language and literacy policy in lower grades classrooms. This indicates why this study is needed, in order to answer and contribute to the literature, by asking and answering the three research questions proposed: (i) What have been the key language and literacy policies since Ghana's independence, as seen through a postcolonial lens? (ii) How have teachers experienced these changes in language and literacy policy in terms of their classroom practices? (iii) What are teachers' views on how language and literacy policy has been developed and implemented?

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I reviewed the relevant literature in relation to my research. My aim in this chapter is to provide an explanation of the methodological structure that underpins this study. The chapter starts with an explanation of methodology and methods, an overview of the ontological and epistemological assumptions that informed the study and considers how my research questions helped in designing the study. I provide justification for the choice of a qualitative research methodology within an interpretivist paradigm and for the use of a life history methodology. The discussion moves to the chosen method used in investigating the study, outlining how I identified and recruited my participants and justifying the mode of data collection. I also discuss the importance of ethical and other methodological issues, and how these issues were addressed at each stage of the research process. In addition, I discuss the procedure used for analysing participant data. The pilot study, which was conducted before the commencement of the actual fieldwork, is discussed in terms of its impact on the main study. The chapter concludes with a discussion of some of the problems encountered during the main fieldwork in Ghana.

3.2 Justification for research methodology and methods

Before discussing the design for this research, it is necessary to recall the three main research questions and four objectives for the study. As suggested by Creswell (2003), research questions are very important because they help to determine the design and the methods to use in a piece of research. This view is supported by Clough and Nutbrown (2007, p.40), who argue that the questions researchers ask ‘inform the creation of research methods’. In addition, the research questions and objectives of a study help to give focus to the research. In view of this, my three research questions are as follows: RQ1. What have been the key language and literacy policies since Ghana’s independence, as seen through a postcolonial lens? RQ2. How have teachers experienced changes in language and literacy policy in terms of their classroom practices? RQ3. What are teacher’ views on how language and literacy policy has been developed and implemented?

There were four specific research objectives, which informed the above questions: (1) To critically examine the different language and literacy policies for early grades from independence until the present time; (2) To assess the effectiveness of the different policies on

classroom practices from teachers' perspectives; (3) To identify and understand the key perceived sociocultural factors and how these have affected the language and literacy policies for 4-8 year olds in Ghana; (4). To develop a conceptual framework aimed at addressing the language and literacy teaching and learning of early graders in Ghana

Before discussing the philosophical assumptions of this research, it is necessary to explain the terms methodology and methods, which, though related, have different meanings, especially because of the use of the life history methodology in this study, which may appear confusing.

3.2.1 Research methodology

Tight (2013) asserts that some researchers appear to use the terms methodology and methods interchangeably although there is a difference between the two words. Wellington (2015, p.33) defines research methodology as 'the activity or business of choosing, reflecting upon, evaluating and justifying the methods you use' when conducting research. Wellington's definition suggests that methodology involves the concepts and theories that a researcher considers when doing research, which include: deciding or making a choice on philosophical issues, the research design, the tools for collection and analysis of data, as well as ethical issues that may be encountered during the study. Similarly, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) see research methodology as making choices on the use of a particular philosophical paradigm, methods and procedures for collecting data, analysing and interpreting the data collected from participants. In this definition, Cohen et al. (2011) clearly reveal the difference between methodology and methods; the former requires researchers to make a decision about their philosophical assumptions for the research, while the latter requires researchers to choose the methods to be employed, and to explain how they are used to collect data from participants and how that data will be analysed. Clough and Nutbrown (2007, p.23) differentiate between the two as follows, '...this distinction can be seen in terms of methods as being some of the ingredients of research, whilst methodology provides the reasons for using a particular recipe'. This shows that research methodology relates to the general design of the research and the methods are the tools for data collection. The relationship between research design and the methods therefore requires researchers to find the appropriate approach and methods suitable for their study and be able to justify their use.

In deciding the research approach for this study, I was guided by Clough and Nutbrown (2007, p.34), who said 'it is the task of methodology to uncover and justify research assumptions as

far as practicably as possible and.... to locate the claims which the research makes within the traditions of enquiry which use it’.

3.2.2 The research paradigm and philosophical issues

It is important for every researcher to consider how the choice of a research paradigm may affect their study, as what one studies is important to knowledge construction and everyday activity (Bryman, 2008). As the research questions show, this study is concerned with examining the different language and literacy policies in lower grades since independence and how these policy changes impacted on teachers’ practices. This is an indication that this study is interested in understanding teachers’ knowledge and experiences and how these inform their classroom practices. This undoubtedly means that as a researcher I am interested in the interpretations and meanings of the social reality of my participants, which will influence my choice of philosophy, strategy and methods of data collection (Bryman, 2008).

Guba (1990) argues that the philosophical assumption or paradigm chosen by the researcher is underpinned by his/her epistemological and ontological stance, together with the choice of methodology. According to Creswell (2007), these philosophical assumptions deal with the ‘nature of reality, what counts as knowledge and how knowledge claims are justified, the role of values in research and the process of research’ (p.20). In other words, these philosophical issues deal with what Clough and Nutbrown (2007, p.33) refer to as ‘the study of being and of knowing respectively’. These arguments appear to suggest that there is a close relationship between a researcher’s ontology, epistemology and methodology. The next section will discuss my ontological and epistemological position with regard to this study and a justification for the choice of an interpretivist paradigm.

3.2.2.1 Ontology

Ontology, according to Crotty (1988, p.10), is about the ‘study of being’ or ‘what is’. Bryman (2008) also sees ontology as the nature of reality or what constitutes a fact and whether reality can be learnt from a subjective or objective view. In other words, ontology deals with what people see as the reality and how they interpret something. To Cohen et al. (2011, p.33), ontology is the ‘nature of reality or of a phenomenon’ and it is based on ‘politics and interest’. This suggests that ontology is about peoples’ belief systems and how their beliefs influence how they interpret what they see. Thus, the question of ontology in social science research is associated with knowing things objectively or subjectively (Blaikie, 2010). In other words, do social entities exist by themselves and can they therefore be known independently or are they influenced by social actors? (Bryman, 2008). Bryman asserts that having an objective ontology

means accepting that reality exists by itself or has its own existence and, as a result, is not influenced by social factors. On the other hand, holding a subjectivist view suggests that individuals have a part to play in the understanding of the social world and, therefore, reality can change depending on how it is perceived. I hold the belief that, for the participants in this study, social reality is constructed differently based on their family circumstances, their educational background and teaching experiences. By adopting a subjective position, I was able to collect in-depth qualitative data on personal beliefs, values and classroom experiences, which were not only unique to individual participants, but also provided a deeper understanding of teachers' use of language and literacy policy in Ghana. As Germeten (2013, p.616) argues, Life history research is a paradigm where people, situations, events, and experiences are in focus'.

I will now discuss how my subjective ontology influenced my epistemological position.

3.2.2.2 Epistemology

Epistemology deals with the nature of knowledge, or what is regarded as 'acceptable knowledge in a discipline' (Walliman, 2006, p.20). This philosophy holds many positions on what constitutes knowledge or how people come to know something; however epistemology is often reduced to two main positions on the nature of knowledge (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). First, some argue that the truth is out there and it is up to the researcher to find it through scientific testing (positivism). Those who hold such a belief use objective means to come to the truth with less involvement by the researcher. On the other hand, some believe that knowledge is not out to be tested or observed, as in the case of positivists, but human interpretation (subjectivism) of the social world can lead to knowledge (constructivism or interpretivism). Knowledge, according to Sumner (2006), is therefore based on the knower or the relationship between the knower and the knowledge, so both positivists and interpretivists will perceive knowledge differently based on their ontological assumptions. I agree with Goodley (1996, p.338) that the, 'personal qualities of life history, its commitment to subjectivity' defies the notion of positivism. The choice of life history and my ontological position makes the adoption of an interpretivist approach the best option for this study.

Hanson (2015, p.854) argues that interpretivism or social constructivism is based on the 'idea that meaning, learning and wisdom are context bound and therefore not amenable to singular models for deciding what matters, or is real'. This appears to suggest that, because people experience reality differently, there cannot only be one way of knowing things. May (2011)

also suggests that interpretivism is an epistemological position, which believes in the existence of multiple realities and the acceptance of multiple interpretations of a given phenomenon. This is because interpretivists believe peoples' perception of reality is based on their opinions, understanding and feelings, rather than on a single unitary reality. Since the concern of this study is individual teachers' life histories and perceptions of policies relating to language and literacy teaching in lower grades, this study has adopted an interpretivist paradigm, and I see myself positioned on the 'inside' of the research.

3.3 The choice of interpretivist paradigm for this study

The insight and understanding gained regarding the philosophy of educational research, as discussed above, shaped my perspective on which paradigm would best suit this study. My choice of interpretivism rather than other paradigms is based on the fact that my research questions require me to trace the different language and literacy policies over the past 57 years from a postcolonial perspective, and examine how these changes impact on teachers' classroom practices. These questions have been framed as such because I see my participants as functioning social actors in the use of these policies, and as such their understanding and perceptions are important to the research. Using an interpretivist paradigm requires me to probe into the diverse knowledge and understanding participants possess individually on language and literacy policies, as well as the meanings participants attach to their daily experiences of teaching children in the classroom. The perception and understanding of these issues is bound to be different from person to person based on their subjective views. Since this study is interested in teachers' lives and their classroom practices, which incorporate their attitudes and beliefs, these views cannot be measured by scientific testing using questionnaires or surveys or analysed quantitatively or statistically as in a positivist paradigm.

As a researcher, I was aware of my own biases and subjective views on matters concerning language and literacy policies in lower grades. I realised that my position as a former teacher, who had experienced how teachers cope with the language and literacy policy, meant I could not detach my views and beliefs on the matter. Based on these observations, the choice of an interpretivist rather than positivist paradigm became more obvious to me. I have, therefore, chosen to approach this study from a subjective view and to use a small sample of seven teachers to discuss their professional life history, in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the realities that confront them in their job as teachers.

The research strategy - life history

There are different research strategies in social science research for studying and understanding human lives. These include biography/autobiography, case study, narrative, ethnography, documentary etc. (Bryman, 2008; Cole and Knowles 2001). Over the past decades, the use of life history in educational research is gaining some popularity because of its importance in the study of teachers, in order to give them a voice (Dhunpath, 2000; Goodson, 1992). In order to understand the difficulties associated with language and literacy policy use in lower grade schools in Ghana, it is necessary to know more from the teachers who implement policy daily in the classroom. One of the ways to find this out is to study their professional lives using a life history approach, so that Ghanaian teachers can tell their own stories. This study is therefore grounded in Goodson and Sikes' (2001) and Goodson's (1992) principles of life history research on teachers' lives. As Goodson (1991, p.41) argues, 'the teacher's life style both in and outside school, his/her latent identities and cultures, impact on views of teaching and on practice'.

The life history method is arguably the oldest form of research method that has been used by cultural anthropologists in ethnographic studies for attempting to gain an understanding of different cultures around the world (Agar, 1980; Hendry, 2010). Goodson (2001) suggests that the first life histories were collected from studies of Native American Chiefs by anthropologists at the beginning of the 20th century. In this vein, Germeten (2013) argues that life history studies originated from anthropological studies on researching unknown or indigenous cultures, with the aim of providing readers with an insight into those cultures. This appears to suggest that the use of life history as a method in research has origins in studies where people from other cultures study the culture and lived experiences of others in order to understand them better.

Descombe (2010, pp.82-83) defines life history research as 'an in-depth study of individuals, social groups or communities... in order to get a grasp on their experience and thinking that links these to the cultural, social and historic circumstances in which they occur'. In this definition, life history is seen as studying a person, an interest group or a society in a manner that allows one to come to a deeper understanding of their personal life, their history, culture or tradition and how and why these cultures and traditions were originated. Thus, the use of life history 'assigns significance and value to a person's 'own story', or to the interpretation that people place on their own experience as an explanation for their behaviour' (Armstrong, 1982, p.5). Cole and Knowles (2001, p.10) also assert that a life history study represents

‘human experience that draws in viewers or readers to the interpretive process and invites them to make meaning and form judgement based on their own reading of the “text”’.

Many researchers, including Dhunpath (2001), Goodson (1992) and Armstrong (1982), have argued for the use of life history in educational research because of its benefit in drawing attention to different aspects of education and teachers’ lives. Armstrong (1982) argues that the use of life history in social and educational research is advantageous and multifaceted because it can be used in many different ways to achieve the required results. In addition, Dhunpath (2000) talks about the popularity of life history in educational studies, particularly, in studying the lives of teachers. Furthermore, Goodson (1992) argues that life history is the only method that can be used to understand teachers from a teacher’s point of view. As Goodson and Sikes (2001, p.1) suggest, life history makes the researched think about themselves in a given situation and it enables the researcher to ‘explore possible influences and explanations, interpretations and alternatives, silences and significance’ of a given situation.

The use of life history in studying teachers’ lives has gained popularity in recent times. For example, Smith (2012) used life history to study female teachers and their career decisions. Johnson (2007) also used the method to study preservice teachers’ views on teaching for equality, and Biott, Moos and Moller (2001) studied the lives of head teachers in the UK, Denmark, Ireland and Norway using life history. The use of life history in studying teachers’ lives provides an opportunity for ‘comprehending the complexities of a person’s day-to-day decision making and the ultimate consequences that play out in that life so that insights into broader, collective experience may be achieved (Cole and Knowles, 2001, p.20).

The choice and justification for the use of life history in this study is because of my Ghanaian cultural background, where story telling plays an important role in maintaining the oral history and traditions of its people. Indeed, Germeten (2013) reveals that ‘many cultures have a long tradition of telling stories from one generation to the next. Another reason for my choice of life history is because I believe the best way to study the impact of language and literacy policies on Ghanaian teachers’ classroom practices is through teachers’ life stories. Furthermore, prior studies on education and teachers in Ghana reveal that very few researchers have considered the use of life history, thus making its use in this study relatively innovative. Indeed, Barret (2009, p.112) argues that ‘there are few examples of life history in education research carried out in Africa and published in British or international journals’. This appears to suggest that the use of life history methodology is more popular in Western educational research than in

Ghana and other parts of the African continent. So far, the only use of life history in Ghana that I have found has been by Stephens (2007), in a study commissioned by the University of Sussex on widening education in Tanzania and Ghana. Although studying teachers' lives using life history is more about teachers' personal life, its use in this study is not so much about their personal lives but their professional lives as teachers. As such, the briefs obtained from teachers during the interviews were about their reasons for choosing a teaching career, training received at teaching institutions, and how they used the language and literacy policies. This was done in order to understand the individual teachers' experiences in relation to historical happenings from independence to date. The use of life history also helps in the development of theory because the use of in-depth interviews enables the researcher to draw out and create meaning from participants' experiences and stories. Goodson and Sikes (2001) suggest that the use of life history helps the researcher to understand the past in order to have a better understanding of the future.

Life history methodology has been criticised for being unscientific because of its reliance on participants' stories as valid statements. Dhunpath (2000) suggests that life history has been criticised for lack of validity or reliability, for the inability to generalise its result because it is peculiar to individuals' experiences. However, Conle (2001, p.23) argues that 'when we talk to one another with the aim of understanding, we assume that each of us acts rationally (making claims of truth, sincerity and social appropriateness), or else we would not bother talking'. This suggests that participants in life history research tell their stories with the intention of telling the facts about themselves. Life history has also been criticised for being highly biased because it is very subjective. Dhunpath (2000, p.543) reveals that some writers do not see 'its legitimacy as a research genre'. This is in relation to the positivists' objectivist research tradition, which relies on scientific testing of a hypothesis. This point is supported by Hatch and Wisniewski (1995, p.126), who also argue that, because the source of data in life history research is personal stories, 'those bound to thinking of "science" as paradigmatic knowledge will be reluctant to accept life history and narrative inquiry as legitimate'.

As has been discussed earlier, knowledge is gained not only through objective means but also through subjective means, especially by paying attention to the meaning people attach to their daily experiences, which works very well in life history studies. In this vein, Dhunpath (2000, p.543) argues that life history 'challenges the traditional conceptions of epistemology'. Furthermore, there is a difficulty with how to analyse data explicitly, due to the large amount of data generated and how to represent the data without losing vital information (Agar, 1980).

Finally, there is ambiguity on who the speaker is and how the voice of the participants ought to be presented and who owns what is said (Sikes, 2010; Atkinson, 2010). This ambiguity relates to ethical issues, according Sikes (2010), and these need addressing at every stage of the research. I will now discuss how I identified and recruited the participants who took part in the study.

3.4. Identification and recruitment of participants

The process of identification and recruitment of participants for my life history study includes deciding what the appropriate sample size should be in qualitative research, by using convenience sampling and snowballing techniques, identifying who should be part of the study using a broad set of criteria, then recruiting and selecting the participants.

3.4.1 Sampling and sample size

Convenience or purposeful sampling is a non-statistical or non-probability technique commonly used in qualitative research. It simply involves deliberate identification, recruitment and selection of participants, who express interest and volunteer to take part in the study (Robinson, 2014; Cohen et al., 2011). As in many other qualitative studies, there was no need for me to have a large proportion of the population of Ghanaian teachers, but I had a duty to look for participants with a certain level of knowledge and experience about the language and literacy policies in lower grade classrooms in Ghana. As such, I used two qualifying criteria for my convenience sampling. First, a potential participant must be a Ghanaian teacher who has taught lower grades for between two and five years. I believe such a participant will have the relevant knowledge of the language and literacy policy and would have experienced its use in the classroom. Second, each participant's professional experience must fall into at least one historical time period, defined in this study as a decade from 1957 to 2014. This meant that the study spanned six decades: first decade (1957 to 1967); second decade (1967-1977); third decade (1977-1987); fourth decade (1987-1997); fifth decade (1997-2007); and sixth decade (2007-2014). By dividing the years into six decades, it made it easier to track the policy changes. These two criteria have been used to help answer my two research questions on tracking the changes in language and literacy policy from independence and the impact of these policy changes on their classroom teaching.

I used these two qualifying criteria to generate a pool of thirteen potential participants, before eventually selecting seven to take part in the study. The reason behind the reduction in the number of potential participants from thirteen to seven was informed by their availability for

interviews and travelling time. Again, the choice of in-depth interviews, which is recommended for a life history study, meant I had to choose a small number of participants so as not to generate more data than I could handle (Robinson, 2014).

I also used purposeful sampling to recruit expert participants for the study. This means I selected these experts based on the fact that they had knowledge that would be useful for this study. Cohen et al. (2011) describe this sort of sampling by researchers as handpicking participants on the basis of the knowledge they possess. The experts I chose for the study were either government or religious officials with expert knowledge on the areas of interest for the study - language policy or the church's role in education in Ghana.

3.4.2 Recruitment of main participants and experts

When I was deciding on the method to use to recruit my participants, the idea of using a snowballing tactic became the most obvious. After receiving ethical approval for my study from the University of Sheffield Research Ethics Committee, I contacted the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) in Accra (Ghana) by email, followed by a visit to the GNAT Office to seek out potential teachers who might be interested. Noy (2008, p.330) asserts that 'a procedure may be defined as snowball sampling when the researcher accesses informants through contact information that is provided by other informants'. When I arrived in Ghana, I visited the Ghana National Association of Teachers headquarters in Accra to enquire about any progress on my request. I was directed to meet with some teachers who were engaged in a workshop. I met a number of teachers and, after discussing my project with them, they suggested names of colleagues teaching in lower grades who might be helpful. I was given names and telephone contacts and the schools where they were teaching.

These initial meetings had a snowball effect, as those I called also directed me to other teachers, which proved very effective in the recruitment process, as suggested by Goodman (2011) and Walliman (2011). Although calling and talking to teachers whom I had not met before was not easy, I realised those I talked to were interested in my research. In the end, I had talked to about twenty teachers from different parts of the country. Using my criteria, I narrowed the number down to thirteen, comprising of seven females (two retired, five practicing teachers) and six males (three retired, three practicing teachers), who expressed initial interest in participating in the study. These teachers were living in the Greater Accra, Volta, Central, Western and Eastern regions of Ghana so I had to decide on recruiting those living in areas where I could easily travel to. Using my two qualifying criteria for teachers – those who have taught lower grades

for two to five years within six decades (from 1957 to 2014) and the cost of travel - I selected seven teachers: two retired male teachers and five practicing female teachers. Chapter Four, which follows this chapter, gives detailed information on each of my participants.

As discussed earlier, I included three other participants who were experts in the government (two from the Ministry of Education and Sports), and from the National Catholic Secretariat in Accra, Ghana, who provided extra information on the research topic. I am not going to outline what their specific roles are because then they would be identifiable. They were selected based on my background search and visit to the headquarters of the Ghana Education Service (GES), the Ministry of Education and Sports, and the National Catholic Secretariat all in Accra. Their expert knowledge on educational policy formulation, implementation and evaluation in Ghana and the role of missionary activity in education was very helpful. Like my main participants, they volunteered to grant me an interview on language policy and other matters relating to the study. The next section discusses how data was collected.

3.5 Data collection

There are different types of data collection to be used with participants in qualitative research. These could include observation, which may or may not involve the researcher directly, the use of interviews and analysing of documents (Cohen et al., 2011). I did not use observations because this is a life history study and I want to have a perspective on participants' lives. The use of interviews allowed me the opportunity to talk in-depth with my participants and take leads from them.

3.5.1 Justification for the use of interviews

Interview is a qualitative method used in collecting extensive data or facts from participants. May (2011) describes it as conversation between the researcher and participant on a subject of interest. To Wellington (2015, p.138), interview 'involves a relatively informal interactive style, which may often involve a two-way exchange of views'. This suggests a verbal exchange between the researcher and a participant on a range of issues with the intention of gaining more insight on issues. Thus, Anyan (2013) asserts that the purpose of the interviews is to enable the researcher to collect in-depth information about the interviewee, with the aim of interpreting the meaning of the interviewee's experiences of the world. This in-depth information, according to May (2001, p.121), includes 'insight into peoples' biographies, experiences, opinion, values, attitudes, and feelings' based on what the interviewee is ready to share on a given subject.

As a qualitative data collection technique, the use of in-depth interviews means only a small number of people can be included in the study, as compared to the use of survey or questionnaire in a quantitative method, where a larger number can be used (Creswell, 2007). Since interviews are designed as a conversation, they are seen as time consuming and difficult to generalise, due to the small sample and different opinions that may be expressed by different participants. Although many qualitative researchers use interviews as a form of collecting data for more in-depth insights, St. Pierre and Jackson (2014) appear to criticise this method, arguing that researchers tend to treat participants' words as if 'they can serve as the foundation of knowledge' (p.715). In other words, qualitative researchers tend to place too much emphasis on participants' words, as if to say they are absolute truth.

There are a number of interview techniques available for researchers interested in using this method for data collection; structured (using closed questions), semi-structured (a mix of predetermined questions) or unstructured (using open-ended questions) and the process may involve a single participant (one-to-one interviews) or a group of participants (focus group interviews) (May, 2001). For life history studies, Goodson and Sikes (2001, p.28) advocate for the use of 'unstructured, informal, conversation-type encounters' if possible. This style is likely to help generate an extensive dataset from participants. For this study, I decided to adopt the use of in-depth semi-structured interviews for my main participants (seven teachers), who are the subject of the study, and unstructured interviews for the experts, who contributed data to the study.

My choice of in-depth semi-structured interviews enabled me to probe and use open-ended questions. I had a few preselected questions (Table 3.3) based on participants' personal life, language and literacy policy changes since independence and socio cultural changes in Ghana. My use of semi-structured questions in this study also allowed me to ask a number of standardised questions based on a participant's time-line; e.g. place of birth, education, training, and work history, questions on language policy and their teaching practices, as suggested by Goodson and Sikes (2001). The use of unstructured interviews for the experts made it possible for them to discuss broader issues based on their area of expertise (Cohen et al., 2011; May, 2001). Although unstructured and semi-structured interviews have many advantages, the volume of data and associated difficulties of transcription and analysis can be challenging and daunting.

3.5.2 Interview guide and schedules

Before the start of my field work, I planned how to go about the interviews. This planning involved, deciding upon the questions to ask, the location for the interviews, the duration of the interview and my travelling time. This planning was necessary because I had to travel from Accra to meet my participants, who were living in different towns in Eastern and Greater Accra regions. There were three sets of interviews and we had agreed to have them on separate days, which meant I had to meet each participant on three occasions. I prepared a number of questions, which I gave participants to help them prepare for the interviews. Table 3.1 below shows the interview schedule/plan and provides a list of the main and sub-research themes emanating from the three research questions and four objectives of the study.

Table 3.1
Semi-structured Interview Plan – 7 Main Participants (Hubert, Frank, Mary, Grace, Dorothy, Jessica, and Judith)¹

3 Phases of the semi-structured interviews each 45-60 minutes	Main research themes Research Questions 1, 2, 3 and Objectives, 1 and 2	Sub-themes	Example of specific interview questions
Phase 1 – First interview	Professional life history of participants	Participant’s life history	Can you tell me about yourself?
Phase 2 – Second interview	Knowledge and understanding of specific language and literacy policies and their impact on classroom practices.	Language policies since independence English-only, local language and NALAP policies	What language policy did you use when you taught lower grades?
Phase 3 – Third interview	Impact of changes in language and literacy policies on teaching practices in the context of prevailing socio-cultural environment	Socio-cultural changes	What were some of the cultural and social changes at the time you were teaching lower grades?

Note: (1) participant names have been anonymised to protect their identities

As shown in Table 3.1, the semi-structured interviews were conducted in three phases, each covering a specific main and sub-research themes linked to the research questions and objectives.

Phase 1 was the first interview of three. In this interview, participants were asked questions about themselves and their professional life. This interview was very important to the study, as

participants had the opportunity to talk about their families, education and professional lives as teachers. In this interview, participants reflected on their past and where they were at that moment. The second interview (Phase 2) was about participants' knowledge and understanding of the specific language and literacy policy used during their teaching and any change that took place during the decade in which they taught in the lower grades. The third interview or phase 3, was about their experiences of using the language and literacy policy in the context of the prevailing political and socio-cultural changes within the society. All the interviews were conducted in the English language although there were occasions when participants used a local language of their choice.

All the interviews were voice recorded using an Olympus digital recorder VN-7700. Although the initial time set for each interview was forty-five minutes, most of the interviews exceeded this because of the need for more explanation and clarification on issues. My two retired participants had a lot to say, possibly because they had more work experience and a lot of time for a conversation. This accounts for the reservation of some life history researchers about time keeping. Pinsky (2015), for example, argues for a more flexible approach to interviews and for more interactive time with participants, rather than a prescribed or limited time approach. As I was able to develop a good relationship with my participants, they were able to narrate their stories and experiences freely without inhibition. I interfered when I thought there was need for clarification or if I wanted more explanation on issues.

The interview with the three experts was unstructured. The reason was to give me the opportunity to ask open-ended questions, so that I could get information about formulating or implementing, monitoring and evaluating early language and literacy policies in Ghana and about the church's role in this process. As such, the main theme for the interview was 'Early language and literacy policy formulation/implementation process in Ghana'. As expected in life history studies, the use of the unstructured interview method enabled these experts to discuss issues pertaining to their jobs in detail, as they perceived them, which gave me deeper insight into what they do and how they do things in their respective positions (May, 2001; Goodson and Sikes, 2001). I started the interview with only one statement i.e. Tell me about your knowledge and experience with language and literacy policy formulation, implement and implementation processes. The rest of the interview questions came from the answers each participant provided.

The information from the experts' interviews were useful in validating participants' interviews, as suggested by Gudmundsdottir and Brock-Utne, 2010). First, these interviews provided the context within which some of the findings from my seven main participants were discussed and interpreted. Second, the use of unstructured interviews enabled me to critically assess the significance of the language and literacy policy formulation process, providing the basis for thinking about the nature of any future language and literacy policy and how it might impact teaching practices in lower grades.

3.6 Addressing ethical and other methodological issues

The term 'research ethics' is concerned with the moral rules and professional codes of conduct applied by researchers at different stages of the research process, in particular during the planning, collection, analysis, reporting, and publication of information about research participants and the research findings (Sikes and Piper, 2010; May, 2011). The main reason for understanding and applying these rules and codes is to protect the interests and rights of participants, especially in a study like this (May, 2001; BERA, 2011). The first ethical challenge I had to deal with was the submission of application to the ethics board for approval (University of Sheffield Research Ethics, 2014). The writing of the application helped me to consider the ethical boundaries within which to work, due to the complex nature of the interaction likely to occur between me and my potential participants (Saunders, Kitzenger and Kitzenger, 2015; May, 2011).

Table 3.2 below provides details of the key ethical issues relating to the study (from the beginning to the end of the project). Before discussing the ethical issues involved in the actual field work, I wish to state that care has been taken to ensure all ethical issues involving the choice of research topic and acknowledgment of literature have been taken care of to avoid any form of plagiarism. The table below shows the ethical issues that I had to deal with in relation to this study.

Table 3.2
Addressing ethical issues in my study
(Source: BERA, 2011; University of Sheffield Research Ethics, 2014)

Key Stages in the research process	Ethical issues	How ethical issue was addressed
Identification, recruitment	Participation should be voluntary. Participants may withdraw from study	Informed consent form signed by all participants before the start of the semi-structured and unstructured interviews. Quick response to

and selection of participants	without providing reasons and must consent to take part in the study.	misunderstandings, disputes or misconduct
Data collection using semi-structured and unstructured interview techniques	Participants must not be subject to stressful experiences, for example, physical or psychological harm. Maintaining professional relationship between researcher and participants, data to be collected during the daytime in a public place.	Ensuring questions are not stressful to participants. Comfort breaks during interviews to ensure the physical/psychological wellbeing of two of my retired participants. No covert observation.
Use of data collected, interpretation and publication of findings	Participants' right to information supplied to researcher. Maintaining confidentiality and anonymity. Under no circumstances should participants be deceived. Participant data is not to be published without consent of the participant who supplied the data (disclosure limitation).	Ensuring that the research results are not made public without the participants' consent. Participants' identity to remain anonymous and confidential. Personal data should be reasonably guarded against risks such as loss, unauthorized access, modification, or disclosure

3.6.1 Participant's consent

As shown in the table above, there were a number of ethical issues that I had to consider for this study. Before the start of the field work, I met all my participants individually to get to know them personally, since our conversations were always by phone. At the meeting, we went through the participant information sheet and I explained to them that their participation in the study was voluntary and there was no monetary reward, though they would be provided with lunch and a drink. I also explained how any other information they provided, aside from anything relating to the study, would be confidential. We also discussed anonymity and the need for them to sign a consent form if they wished to be recruited as participants. At the end of the meeting, participants did not hesitate in signing the consent form because they had all the information they needed and were willing to be recruited for the study. As Israel and Hay (2006) suggest, participants usually give consent if they have full understanding of all the information they need in order to make a decision. Participants were further reminded that they could withdraw at any time without providing me with any reason for their decision.

Having obtained consent from participants, I had to schedule the time and place for the interviews and I gave each person a set of questions (Table 3.3) to prepare them for the actual interviews. An example of the actual interview questions with Hubert can be found in Appendix B.

Table 3.3
Examples of questions for participants

Where you born and where did you live as a child?
What is the history of your education before training college?
Why did you choose to become a teacher and which training college did you attend?
What teaching certificate do you hold?
What memories do you have of your training as a teacher?
Which classes did you teach and why?
How did you find your first experience of teaching?
Which language policy did you use in teaching, why and how did you have to use it?
What other language policy do you know of?
What is your understanding of the language policy?
How did other teachers in your school use the language policy?
What was your schools' reaction to the language policy?
What are some of the socio-cultural changes that took place during your own education and the time of your teaching lower grade?
What are your memories of teaching lower grade?

Some participants (retired ones and teachers with children) preferred to have the interviews in their own homes, as it was most convenient for them, especially because the field work took place during the school holidays. All my interviews were conducted during the day in a location convenient to both the participants and myself. I made sure that questions asked about their personal lives would not cause them any psychological harm. I did not misrepresent myself in any way and I was polite and respectful throughout the meetings.

With regards to my own safety as a researcher, I took the necessary steps to ensure no harm came to me. For example, I made my family and friends aware of my interview plans for each day, and ensured the interviews were conducted during the day in either the home of the participants or in a designated public place. My initial fears about conducting some of the interviews in participants' homes were unjustified, because all the participants lived with their families and there were always people around during the interviews. A few of the interviews were held in public spaces, such as the pastoral centre of a local Catholic Church. This centre was a very busy place with a number of activities taking place at the same time as our sessions. In addition, considering some of my participants were retired and some had younger children, I made sure that we had regular breaks and the interview did not go beyond an hour. Furthermore, knowing that interviewing participants in their homes may constitute invasion of privacy, I was always on time and left as soon as the interviews were over. I made no covert observations or showed any disrespect for the cultural values of the participants.

3.6.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

I explained confidentiality and anonymity to my participants during our first meeting so I made sure I maintained that promise throughout the fieldwork and during the whole study. I maintained anonymity for each individual participant by deliberately giving each of them a pseudonym and removing from the interview transcripts any elements that might make it possible for others to identify them. The question of anonymity arose because, in addition to my participants' names, in the first interview I had collected detailed information about their dates of birth, hometowns, places of abode, and the training colleges and the universities they had attended. The dilemma was whether or not to anonymise this additional information, since anonymity requires non-disclosure as a means of protecting the identity of my participants and ensuring that my participants could not be identified in my findings (Saunders et al. 2015; Annukka, 2012; Perry, 2006). This was a very difficult decision for me to make because Nespor (2000, p.549) argues that hiding names and places in a piece of research 'naturalizes the decoupling of events from historical and geographically specific locations'.

However, the decision to anonymise participants' particulars was taken, although some of my participants expressed the view that since there was nothing confidential about the information they provided, they had no objection to the mention of their actual geographical locations in the study. One of my retired participants said he was always consulted on educational matters in his village because everyone knew the work he had done and he was very proud to be mentioned. This comment receives support from Walford (2005, p.85), who states that 'confidential information is information that is private or secret'. This also shows that anonymity may not always be appropriate (Perry, 2006).

The issue of anonymity in research, though the accepted norm, appears to have a lot of practical challenges, with writers taking different positions for or against (Saunders et al. 2015; Annukka, 2012). From the views expressed by my participants, it can be argued that 'blanket' anonymity should not necessarily be accepted (Saunders et al., 2015) especially where all identifying details of participants are anonymised. However, to protect the identities of my participants, all their names have been anonymised. All other information provided by my participants has also been anonymised but, in doing so, I used the names of places close to the original ones provided so that readers would have a better understanding of the life histories or narratives of my participants.

Furthermore, regarding data management and protection of participant data, I maintained an effective and efficient data management system, comprising of manual records and electronic folders/files in my laptop, appropriately labelled and accessed only by me using a secured password. In addition, I used an Olympus Digital Voice Recorder (Vin-7700) to record the interviews, because it identifies each interview with the participant through the use of numbers. I therefore knew and could match each number to a participant. The voice recorder was stored in a secure drawer throughout the study and all the transcribed interviews were all retained until such time that they may not be needed. The final electronic and hard copies of the thesis will be stored in the library of the University of Sheffield. I will seek their permission if I decide to publish the results of this study after the completion of my studies

3.7 Pilot study

Before the commencement of the main study, I decided to pilot my interview questions. Gudmundsdottir and Brock-Utne (2010) argue that piloting is very important to avoid methodological problems and also for improving and increasing the reliability and validity of a study. I had several reasons for doing the pilot study. First, I wanted to test the interview questions to see how easy or difficult they would be for participants. Second, I wanted to see if there would be any potential problems with travelling time, the location of the interview sessions (how feasible the use of participants' homes would be for conducting interviews) and any unforeseeable problems that might occur so that I could plan for any eventuality. Finally, I was interested in how willing participants would be to take part in the study.

Because of time and cost constraints, I decided to use only one participant (Participant Judith) for my pilot study. The fact that the interview process was implemented in three stages/phases turned out to be a good idea because I was able to cover the three different interview themes (professional life history; language and literacy policies; and impact of policy changes on teaching practices) in detail without causing my participants any distress. After each phase of the face-to-face interviews, I transcribed and analysed the three transcripts to assess whether or not my questions were presented and understood well by Judith and if the answers provided or the narratives would be coherent enough for further analysis. I had previously attended a workshop on Nvivo at the university, so I also wanted to practise using it to analyse my interviews as I was expecting to have a total of twenty-one interviews from the seven teacher participants and three more interviews with experts. NVivo is a 'computer-aided qualitative analysis software (CAQDAS)' (Veal, p.400). It helps qualitative researchers to organise,

analyse and find insight in unstructured or qualitative data (QRS, 2016). The use of NVivo will be described in detail later in this chapter.

Overall, the results of the pilot study were encouraging in three ways. First, Participant Judith did not have any issues with the interview themes presented. In fact, Judith was very excited to be given the opportunity to talk about herself, and to do so using life history and narrative methods. Second, the use of a face-to-face interviewing technique, in addition to the fact that the interviews took place in a home setting, was commented on by Judith as a very convenient choice because of her trading activities and an opportunity for me to meet her family, especially her two daughters. Finally, at the end of the three-phase interviews, Judith visibly expressed joy at being part of a doctoral research project involving a Ghanaian studying in the United Kingdom. In addition, she expressed her willingness to validate the interview transcripts as soon as they were ready. However, despite these favourable results, there were some areas of concern or problems, which affected the main study, as shown in Table 3.4 below: namely, time keeping; recording the interviews; transcription of interviews; update of reflective journal; and data management. For example, I learnt that ‘time keeping’ could become an issue in the main study, because some of my remaining participants were elderly, and although very keen to tell their stories, may not have been able to do so for an extended period of time. I therefore decided to keep the duration of each interview to within 45-60 minutes with comfort breaks to suit the participant. I also realised that the younger participants could be busy, like Judith was, requiring me to keep to the arranged time.

Table 3.4
Results of Pilot Study - Semi-structured Interview with Participant Judith

<i>Key Results from the Pilot study</i>	<i>Problems identified during the Pilot study</i>	<i>Impact on the Main study</i>
<i>Time keeping</i>	Time keeping could be problematic, where participant is elderly/poorly or very keen to talk	To keep duration of each interview within 45-60, and take comfort breaks
<i>Recording the interviews</i>	Fear of not recording the interviews because of faulty recorder	To make regular effort to check that the recorder is still running;
<i>Transcription of interviews</i>	Transcription of the 3 pilot interviews was time consuming, because of the large volume of data	To take steps to improve the speed of transcription and concurrent analysis of each transcript soon after each interview
<i>Referencing participants’ interviews</i>	Lack of an effective system of referencing the transcripts	To develop a more specific referencing system/template to facilitate analysis and discussion.
<i>My reflective research journal</i>	Occasionally forgot to update important entries e.g. details of contacts and journal articles in the journal.	Remember to update reflective diary at least once a day

<i>Data management</i>	I was scared of losing data e.g. electronic files of transcripts, and of how I would manage the situation should it happen.	Produce back-up copies of transcripts manually and electronically; also send to personal email just in case; saving back-up copies of electronic files; printing hard copies of interview transcripts
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In addition, I noticed I was easily drawn into Judith’s very exciting narratives, and occasionally forgot to check if the recorder was still running. Furthermore, I developed a more effective template for referencing of participants’ interviews, using a line-by-line approach, with participant’s pseudonym, the interview theme, and the line number. For example, JU1/Q1/PH1/1, stands for, JU1 (Judith-first interview), Q1 (Question one), PLH (Professional Life History), and 1 (line one) etc. Although I did not reference participants’ data in the final work, the exercise was very useful because I could easily access their data whenever I needed to refer to it. Finally, I took steps to improve the process of data collection and analysis concurrently, and remembered to update my reflective journal entries on a daily basis, and to maintain an efficient data management system.

Problems encountered during the field work

The first problem for me was travelling to meet with participants in their homes or designated place. I lived in Accra most of the time so I had to travel outside Accra a number of times to meet with participants. Apart from the cost of travelling, I had to spend a lot of time on the road in heavy traffic, especially in Accra. Although I am originally from Ghana, I still faced some challenges dealing with the sometimes extremely humid environment. These challenges made the process of identifying, recruiting and selecting participants for the study time consuming and costly – particularly when you have a limited budget as a self-sponsored research student.

Another problem I had to deal with concerned the power relationships in the study. Elwood and Martin (2000) argue that the power relationship between the researcher and participant could tilt towards the participant if the latter is allowed to decide the location of the interview. I did not experience this situation with my main participants (but with one official who provided expert knowledge for the study and this will be discussed later) because of the mutual and cordial relationship between us i.e. the power relationship between me and my main participants was balanced. For example, I mutually agreed with Participants Grace, Mary, Jessica and Dorothy to have the interviews in Accra (Capital of Ghana), and with Participants Hubert, Frank, and Judith to meet, respectively, in Dawu, Larteh and Aburi (Eastern Region of Ghana). The different locations meant it was impossible to have a central place where they

could be invited to for the individual interviews. In negotiating the time and place for the interviews, most of the participants agreed to have the meetings in their homes, which was convenient for me, because by inviting me to their homes a good relationship developed between me and the participants and helped in creating a relaxed atmosphere for the interviews. Another positive thing was that the home environment made it more flexible for me because the participants did not have to travel and I was doing the travelling and meeting them when it was most convenient for both of us. With regard to the interview itself, there were no significant power issues, as there was mutual respect and understanding between us. The interviews were more of a conversation and listening to participants' stories.

In contrast, however, I realised the power relationship between me and each of the three expert interviewees (2) from the Ghana Education Service (GES) and Ministry of Education and (1) from the National Catholic Secretariat was not balanced, because the interview were conducted in their offices. The choice of location meant that I had to go through some form of protocol (through secretaries or front desk officials and security checks) before getting to their offices. Although two of the interviews went well (suggesting a balanced power relationship between us), the third interviewee displayed an initial hostile attitude and unwillingness to discuss issues, suggesting an imbalanced power relationship, with a shift towards the interviewee trying to control the interview process. However, after the interview, this official's attitude changed; he was happy to have been interviewed and he was willing to have his data included in this study.

My last problem was the frustrating challenge of obtaining policy documents needed for the study. It was difficult to know which government department was responsible for the documents I needed and getting government officials for interview was equally challenging. Living in the UK also compounded the problem since I was not always around to visit the Ministry of Education or meet with the people I had planned to meet. I therefore had to rely on online secondary documents and other Ghanaian writers who had written on the language policy.

3.8 Data analysis

Goodson and Sikes (2001, p.34) argue that 'analysis is about making sense of, or interpreting, the information and evidence that the researcher has decided as data. This usually involves fitting the evidence and information into a framework of some kind'. One way to analyse data is to use content analysis, which is a systematic, step-by-step, and theme-by-theme technique

used in interviews or observational data to determine the frequency of themes and their associated patterns within a specific group of participants (Clough and Nutbrown, 2007).

3.8.1 Thematic analysis of interviews (participants' stories)

Although there are many ways of analysing interviews, thematic analysis appeared to be the most appropriate data analysis method for this study because of the nature of the data collected. This meant that the process of analysis was reflective and fitted with the interpretive paradigm of the study. Thematic analysis is a form of qualitative analysis, described by Clarke and Braun (2016, p.1) as a 'method for identifying, analyzing and interpreting patterns of meaning (themes) within qualitative data'. This requires the researcher to identify emerging themes, analyse the themes for meaning and group similar themes together to form a desired pattern. Indeed, by using thematic analysis I was able to focus on the stories, interpret them and group them under relevant themes and subthemes. However, because the data provided by participants was mainly based on their life experiences, it was necessary to analyse the data in a way that would not only bring out the content but also the meaning in a form of narrative (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Polkinhorne, 1995). By using thematic analysis and narrative, I was able to analyse data within the context of participants' stories, so that I did not lose the meaning of their stories.

3.8.2 Steps used in analysing data

In this study, I used some of the stages prescribed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Before analysing the data, I transcribed all the interviews verbatim and typed them out. The scripts were labelled with the pseudonym of each participant and filed (see appendix B). Transcribing the interviews was very helpful because it enabled me to read over each script several times, in order to identify the main ideas or concepts in each response. Since some of the responses were rather long, I decided to break the responses into smaller units i.e. sentence by sentence, which became my unit of analysis. I wrote down the initial ideas from each sentence and prescribed a code to it. Table 3.5 below gives details of the steps I used in the analysis process.

Table 3.5
Thematic analysis – integrating Manual and NVivo procedures

Step 1	Transcribing of interviews	Verbatim transcription of the semi-structured and unstructured interviews.
Step 2	Selection of codes	I preselected codes to use for the coding of the interview script and I used line by line coding.
Step 3	Counting frequencies	First I coded the interviews manually. After that, I coded the new script using NVivo. I did a word similarity and word frequency also using NVivo to determine the ideas and themes within the interview script.

Step 4	Establishing relationships between codes or themes	I produce a data cloud and carried out a cluster analysis of themes and printed it out to note the patterns and themes that were emerging. The next stage of analysis was done manually by cutting out the new themes and sub-themes to establish the relationship between them.
Step 5	Building themes and sub-themes	The themes and sub-themes were reduced to a smaller number for interpretation and discussing of the results.
Step 6	Narrative analysis	The themes and sub-themes were used as a narrative in the study

I began the next process of analysis by using my pre-selected codes of PLH for participants' life history, LLC for language and literacy policy changes and SCC for socio-cultural changes, to code the interview script. These codes are described by Miles and Huberman (1994, p.56) as 'tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study', which are attached to phrases or sentences. Rubin and Rubin, (1995, p.238) also describe coding as 'the process of grouping interviewees' responses into categories that bring together the similar ideas, concepts or themes ...' Furthermore, Clarke and Braun (2016, p.1) interpret codes as 'the smallest units of analysis that capture interesting features of the data (potentially) relevant to the research question'. Although PLH, LLC and SCC were the main themes, I came up with small units of new codes to express these ideas and concepts in a simple way. For example, I had codes like participant's name (PN), place of birth (POL) etc. After coding the first interview transcripts with these initial codes, I realised I had many themes, so I decided to group the codes expressing similar ideas together under new codes. For example, instead of having PN, POL, etc., I decided on using POP (profile of participant), to which I coded everything participants said about where they were born, the towns and villages where they attended school and anything to do with their upbringing. I did similar things for the other two interview scripts for individual participants. My main objective here was to be flexible on what I coded and why I chose a certain code.

I continued with different codes for all three interviews for each person, until I had coded all the interview scripts. To help speed up the process and to identify the relationships between the various themes emanating from participants' life histories, I uploaded each interview transcript into NVivo Version 10 for Windows using the updated codes for a third coding. Although using NVivo was helpful, the process was very long as I had to do the coding myself. For me, the use of NVivo was to help narrow down the number of codes and to help generate themes that were emerging from the data (Veal, 2011).

To help gain more insight into the themes raised in participant interviews, I created a 'data cloud' diagram based on the selected codes (see Appendix C). I was able to picture the emerging themes, as the data cloud produced a number of ideas based on the number of times participant's used certain words. I then carried out a cluster analysis based on code similarity and word similarity in NVivo to help me analyse the data (Crowley, Harre and Tagg, 2002). Since the cluster analysis had grouped all similar themes together for each participant (Appendix D), I spent time reading, identifying and selecting the themes that had emerged according to their importance within the structure. I printed out the cluster analysis diagrams for each participant and analysed them manually. I started by writing down all the themes and sub-themes for each interview and came up with a diagram (Appendix E). I cut out each theme and put them all in an envelope. I then put all the similar themes into one envelope and those themes which could not be grouped together under one theme into another envelope.

The themes in the two envelopes were further renamed and reframed because of the number of themes that had been generated. This was done to get the best out of them and to come up with a smaller and more manageable number to use in line with my research questions and objectives (Attride-Stirling, 2001 and Bryman, 2008). This procedure was also applied to my three expert interviews. As expected, this exercise was very laborious because I had twenty four (24) interview transcripts in total, on a wide range of issues. The nature of the association between themes provided the structure for the participant narrative, to make the life history more readable and coherent without compromising the voice of participants. At the end of the process, I came up with three main themes; namely, professional life history of participants, the different language and literacy policy changes, the impact of these policy changes on teachers' practices and participants' views on policy formulation and monitoring. I also had a number of sub-themes in relation to the above themes, which have all been discussed in the findings chapter with the help of relevant literature.

3.8.3 Analysis of secondary data

Since the study is about language policies (English-only, local language and NALAP), I also used secondary data sources, including data from the Ministry of Education, which was given to me during my visit to the ministry. I also obtained some documents from the library of the head-quarters of the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) in Accra. I also used online documents from donor agencies like EQUALL. There were other online sources, which were also used. Since this study is situated within an interpretivist paradigm and uses a life history method, I analysed the language and literacy policies from a historical and socio-

cultural perspective and from an interpretivist point of view. The policy text was interpreted sentence-by-sentence to help identify the following key themes; its origin, whom it was intended for and some of the issues that were raised. This means the analysis was more descriptive.

3.8.4 Validity, reliability and generalisability

As a qualitative researcher, I was concerned about using the terms ‘reliability’ and ‘validity’ in my study, which Wellington (2015, p.43) sees as ‘difficult to understand and define’. Guba and Lincoln (1994) argue that validity and reliability are issues that are a concern for positivist or quantitative research, rather than for qualitative research; the reason being that, in quantitative research, the methods used can be replicated to gain the same results, which is not possible in qualitative research. Kirk and Miller (1986, p.20) define ‘reliability’ as the degree to which research findings are ‘independent of accidental circumstances of the research’, and ‘validity’ as the degree to which the findings are ‘interpreted in a correct way.’ This suggests that reliability is about how a piece of research can be relied on for its accuracy or honesty and how the findings can be replicated in other circumstances. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the use of qualitative research could mean greater dependability and credibility or trustworthiness, transferability, and conformability, rather than reliability and validity, which will make it possible for other researchers to replicate their work. Lincoln and Guba (1985) prefer the term ‘trustworthiness’ in qualitative research and stress the need for it to be credible. In addition, Creswell and Miller (2000) argue that qualitative researchers need to show how valid and credible their data are by using choosing different methods to validate their studies and through their chosen paradigm. Triangulation of evidence from different sources has been recommended by Hughes (2001) as one of the means by which researchers can add credibility to their study. I used four key steps to improve the credibility and dependability of the study.

First, I critically reviewed existing literature on the postcolonial lens and early language and Ghana government policy documents, to ensure that my research questions and objectives relate to my main research themes (changes in language and literacy policies, impact of policy changes on teachers’ practices within lower grades), as shown in the literature review. Second, I provided justification for my choice of an interpretivist paradigm and the use of in-depth interviews for data collection, in line with a life history study. The data used in this study are the true voices of my participants, which were elicited from them during the interview sessions. As Hughes (2001) suggests, participants’ voices constitute valuable knowledge. As a researcher with an interpretivist view, I was open to the different interpretations that my

participants attached to the understanding of language and literacy policy and the effects of the use of policy in their classroom experiences. Indeed, Creswell and Miller (2000) argue that researchers with constructivist or interpretivist views believe people have pluralist or different interpretations or views on social reality. Thus, the understanding and interpretation to a particular issue may differ from participant to participant and these need to be presented as such. Using Wellington's (2015) views on how to make one's interview credible, I validated the transcription of participants' interviews by calling and talking to them on the phone to seek further clarification on things that were not very clear or audible on the voice recorder. I also met participants during my follow-up visit to Ghana, where they had the opportunity to check the typed scripts to confirm whether or not I had accurately captured what they had said during the interviews.

For the expert interviews, the communication and validation of the transcribed scripts was through emails. This was quite easy and fast because the experts had the opportunity to correct the script and send it back to me. By asking all my participants to validate their responses, I ensured I had represented participants' views accurately, as suggested by Creswell and Miller, who argue that validity in qualitative research depends on 'how accurately the accounts represent participants' realities of the social phenomena and is credible to them' (ibid 2000, p.125). Goodson and Sikes (2001, p.36) further suggest that researchers can 'ask informants what they think about any analysis or written accounts' and also consider what action to take if some informants disagree with the information attributed to them. This will help give credibility to participant voice, because Cohen et al. (2011, p.179) are of the opinion that 'if a piece of research is invalid then it is worthless'. Third, my interviews with experts provided another source of evidence for triangulation. The fact that the data from the experts interviewed were in line with the data provided by participants in the study and sometimes came up with different perspectives on some of the issues raised, validates the findings (Creswell and Miller, 2000).

It is appropriate at this point to give thought to the issue of generalisation. Larsson (2009) suggests generalisation in qualitative research is a topical issue because of the different approaches taken and interpretations on the matter. In qualitative research, generalisations 'are explicit and constitute the explanation/generalization schema that is the basis for scientific reasoning' (Payne and Williams 2005, p.295). This reveals the difficulty in how qualitative results, which are not based on numbers and scientific testing, can be generalised. The aim of qualitative research is generally not to provide scientific reasoning, which can be generalised,

but to provide a deeper understanding of phenomenon or participants' experiences, as this study has done. As a result, the term 'transferability' used by Lincoln and Guba (1985) comes to mind. In addition, Wellington (2015, p.43) argues that qualitative researchers can consider the 'extent to which a piece of research can be copied or replicated in order to give the same results in a different context with different researchers'. I believe the adoption of life history and the use of in-depth interviews can be used to study other aspects of teachers' lives in Ghana. This is because any 'similarity' between my research context and 'other research contexts' can be considered a form of generalisation (Larsson, 2009, p.32). Although the experiences of individual teachers may be difficult to generalise, as these are personal to their individual situations, there are other areas of the study which are transferable to other similar studies on teachers.

3.9 Researchers' professional life and positionality

The research design and the choice of life history was influenced by my own life history as a professional teacher. As a teacher researching the lives of other teachers, I believe I can understand the life stories of my participants better by reflecting on my own professional life first. This is in line with Berger (2015, p.220), who describes reflexivity as 'self-appraisal' or 'self-evaluation of the researcher's positionality' and considering how these may affect the results of the study. I started my teaching career as a religious education teacher in higher education. After teaching for a number of years, I decided to do a postgraduate diploma in education and was appointed to head a large school in Accra. This was the beginning of my interest in early childhood and lower grades. With time, I became more involved in children's language and literacy learning, where I began to realise the difficulties some teachers faced with regard to the policy in lower grades.

The choice of life history fits into my cultural background and personal interest. I love storytelling and I remember how I used to sit and listen to my grandmothers' stories whenever we visited the village on school holidays. By combining my professional job, interest in language and literacy development and my Ghanaian cultural values, I saw the opportunity of using life history as a method of researching teachers' lives and children's language and literacy development. I came into this study fully aware that the values I hold, as a Ghanaian and a teacher, would influence each stage of the research process. As May (2001) argues, researchers add their personal value to their research from the beginning to the end by the design of the project, the way data is collected and interpreted and how the results are used.

This is because the amount of value attached to a piece of research is determined by the researcher's epistemological and ontological positions, since all research is value laden in a way.

I am aware of my subjective views as a result of my interpretivist position, which is often value-laden and also because, unlike quantitative data, qualitative data is usually based on understanding, meanings, opinions, and feelings of participants and how information is interpreted. I used my personal knowledge and experience with the language and literacy policies to ask my participants in-depth questions and to obtain the responses I needed for the study. I have been very reflective during the entire process of doing this research. I kept a journal where I wrote down my own reflections. The journal was very helpful during my field work and the write up period because I could go back to my notes to see where I took certain decisions. I would write any new idea that came to my mind or any inspiration gained from participants' stories. This helped me in analysing and interpreting the results of the study, while at the same time questioning my own bias and subjectivity and that of my participants (Cumming-Potvin, 2013).

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided justification for the choice of an interpretivist paradigm and the use of teachers' life history. I used convenience sampling and snowballing techniques to identify, recruit and select seven main participants and three expert participants for the interviews. I adopted a three-phase plan for the semi-structured interviews with my main participants and the unstructured interviews with the three experts.

The chapter provided a review of the procedures for manual and NVivo content analysis of the primary data from the interview transcripts, and the secondary data from the available language and literacy policy documents. This chapter also discussed the relevance of issues relating to qualitative education research, including research ethics, validity, reliability, and generalisability and considered how these issues were addressed at each stage of the research process. Finally, the implications of the results from pilot study, and the impact of this on the main study, were discussed in detail.

In the next chapter, the reader is introduced to each of the seven teachers who participated in this study through the use of voice vignettes (Ely, Vinz, Downing and Anzul, 1997). The vignettes were constructed from excerpts of the verbatim responses of participants. The

construction of the vignettes were based on themes emanating from a participant's family and educational background, understanding of language and literacy policy and lived classroom experiences, to produce a coherent story. The presentation is in the first person using their pseudonyms. I have provided an introductory profile, or background information, on each participant as this was not presented in the methodology chapter above. In constructing participants' profiles and vignettes, I intend, as suggested by Ely et al. (1997), to introduce my participants to readers and to pre-empt what is to come as I analyse and interpret their data in the findings chapter. I now present the profile and voice vignettes of each participant 'to bring the reader closer to the people who were studied' in this thesis (Ely et al. 1991, p.154).

Chapter Four

Profiles and Voice Vignettes of Participants

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the profile and voice vignette of the seven teachers who participated in the study. The introductory profile provides general background information based on my interaction with each participant during the period of the study to provide a context for the research. The use of vignettes is based on Ely et al.'s (1997, p.70) assertion that 'vignettes are compact sketches that can be used to introduce characters, foreshadow events and analyses to come, ...'. The use of voice vignette in this case is an effective way for each participant to introduce themselves to the reader through some of the highlights of the three interviews I had with each of them. The reader is introduced to the origins of each individual, their family and educational background, their training to become teachers, examples of their teaching experiences, and beliefs with regard to the language and literacy policy.

The background profile and voice vignette show that all participants were teachers who taught lower grade at a point in time. Of the seven participants, Hubert and Frank are retired, while Grace, Mary, Jessica, Dorothy, and Judith are still in active service. Since the beginning of the study, Mary and Dorothy have been promoted to the position of head teacher. Jessica and Grace are no longer teaching lower grade. Judith remains the only teacher who is still teaching lower grade.

4.2 Profiles and individual vignettes of participants

I will now give a profile on each participant, after which the participants will speak to the reader themselves. The introduction starts with Hubert and ends with Judith.

4.2.1 Profile of Hubert (focused on decade 1; 1957-67)

Hubert lives in Dawu on the Akwapem ridge in the Eastern region of Ghana with his wife. He comes from a family of teachers, with his father and brothers already in the teaching profession. According to Hubert, he wanted to become a teacher like his father and brothers so, after passing his Standard Seven or Middle School Leaving Certificate Examination with distinction, he wrote and passed the Pupil Teacher's examination and was offered a job as a teacher. After teaching for some time he decided to take up the opportunity of a two-year training college programme after Ghana had become an independent country. Hubert taught a number of classes in the primary school after his professional training as a teacher around Koforidua in the Eastern region of Ghana. He remembers his experiences as a teacher in classes one, two and

three, of which he claimed to have a lot of memories. During the interview, Hubert occasionally drifted into describing how some lessons were taught and he would recall the names of class-prefects and children who were very interested in arithmetic. Hubert had a lot of stories about the colonial era and how the school year was changed from January - December to September - July/August. He was particularly proud of his achievements as a head teacher, especially in the rural areas where he said “*Parents were interested in bringing their children to school for education but there were no teachers to teach them*”. As a retired teacher, Hubert said he spends his time as a lay preacher in his local church and attending to family and societal issues. He always said to me “*I hope we are lucky today and there will be no disturbance*”. I did not understand this at our first meeting but it soon became clear to me when our meetings were sometimes disturbed by people passing by either to say hello or consult him on personal matters.

Hubert told me he was often unwell as a child and a young adult. As a result, he could not further his education in the manner he would have wished to. I really enjoyed the times I spent interviewing him for his sense of humour and interesting stories about the colonial era, Britain and questions about life in the United Kingdom.

The following vignette contains a few highlights of what he said to me in the interviews.

I am Hubert, a Ghanaian by nationality and a citizen of Dawu in Akwapem. I was born at Dawu where I started my primary school in 1947. In 1948, my father, who was a teacher was transferred to Akyim Tafo so I did part of my primary to middle school in that town. My father was transferred to many other towns in the Eastern region and finally to Ashanti region where I completed middle form four with distinction. I retired about fifteen years ago after serving for about thirty-five years. I wanted to be a teacher like my father and two brothers so I wrote the pupil teacher selection exam, which was prevailing at the time and my performance was very good. As a result, I was put in the middle school to teach. I later wrote the teacher training exams and attended an interview and got admission to the training college on 7th January 1960 for two years. After teaching for two years, you write an examination to qualify you to do a Certificate ‘A’ course in a teacher training college, which I did, so a Certificate ‘B’ teacher is therefore given the chance to upgrade to Certificate ‘A’ post ‘B’. In those days, you were trained to manage any school because you could be posted to a newly opened school as the head teacher.

As a trained teacher, I taught for thirty-five years then, after that, because of my experiences some proprietors of private schools wanted to tap on my expertise so I was employed by a private school as the head teacher of the school for a year. I worked in another school for seven years, after which the owner rewarded me with a corn mill because he said he was impressed by my hard work. I now serve my church in diverse ways as a preacher, a leader, and an organist. When I was teaching lower grade, I used the English-only policy but the children did not understand the English language because nobody spoke English those day.

Because I was a very good teacher, I was often sent to poor schools to help them do better. I continued helping poor schools when I was promoted as a head teacher, so I have experience of the importance of English. But I believe children should be taught in both English and local language because the two languages are important in Ghana. Teaching is an enjoyable profession because the children share their experiences with you as a teacher so I also learnt a great deal from the children over the years. You see, teaching is not a matter of lecturing so as you teach you elicit information from children and you will be surprised at what children say, especially things you do not know yourself. When I look back, I can say it was a give and take affair. Last year, 1st July 2013, seven pupils from my last school visited me and presented me with assorted gifts. I was happy to see them because some have completed university and they had good jobs.

4.2.2 Profile of Frank (focused on decade 2; 1967-77)

Frank is a retired teacher who lives in Larteh, Akwapem in the Eastern region of Ghana. He lives with his wife and three children. Frank was introduced to me by another teacher, who said Frank might be interested in my study because he is in support of the local language policy. Frank was very eager to share his experiences with me because he said “*I have taught in Ghana and Nigeria and I know what goes on with the medium of instruction*” when I talked to him the first time on the phone. Frank was 72 years old at the time of the interview and he told me he was born in Accra but moved to Cape-coast with his father. Frank said he had no intention of becoming a teacher but when he had to drop out of secondary school because of the inability of his father to pay his fees, he moved back in with his mother and entered one of the newly opened training colleges in the region. Frank started his teaching career in Takoradi in the Western region of Ghana and taught in different classes including Class Three. He said he left

to teach in Nigeria in the 80s because many teachers were doing the same. His sojourn in Nigeria was, however, short-lived and he returned to Ghana after two years. Frank retired as a head teacher and started managing his farms and small business. Frank recalled his teacher training days with nostalgia and recounted some of the debates they had at school on Ghana's independence and the role of the first president. Frank had some strong views on the use of a local language in Ghana and he saw no reason why a local language cannot replace English as the official language in Ghana. He was of the opinion that the use of English in school is responsible for the poor performance of children in mathematics and science in the country. The interviews took place in his house because we could not find any other suitable place.

When I asked Frank to tell me about himself, he had this to say:

I was born in Accra where I started primary school but I moved to Cape-Coast with my father to continue my education. I entered the Ghana Secondary School in Takoradi but I did only up to form two because my father had some financial difficulties when he was a politician and it made it impossible for me to complete my secondary school education. So stopping school was basically due to financial problems since my father was... no longer around to pay for my secondary education. Luckily for me, Nkrumah's government had started a four-year teacher training college for those who wished to go into teaching and I entered a faith-based Training College, so that is how I became a teacher. So you see, I became a teacher by accident. After my training, I was posted to Effiakuma, Prestea, and Kojokrom. As a teacher during Rawlings' government, the economy was not good and teachers were going to Nigeria so I also went to Nigeria to teach in 1981. Over there, the teaching job was not earning me very much, and I had to do construction work to add to my income...I was very unhappy so I came back to Ghana after two years and continued teaching at Larteh where my mother comes from. I was later promoted as head teacher in one of the nearby schools. It was a small school but I was happy to have a job because it was difficult for teachers who left to Nigeria to get jobs and I could also take care of my mother who was then very old. I retired in 1999 and took to citrus farming here in Larteh and in Mamfe. I have an older daughter but I am married and I have three children who are still in school.

Personally, I don't think our children should be learning to speak English early in lower primary...because, learning their mother tongue first before learning the English language helps them to understand things better...not the opposite. So I think we should

not force our children to speak English. English is not our mother-tongue, it is a foreign language and where I was in Nigeria they use the local language Yuroba to teach. What I realised when I came back from Nigeria was that, when a teacher uses local language in teaching mathematics and science, the children get it better but if an officer comes to see you doing that, you will be in trouble. If you ask Ghanaian children what is your difficult subject? They will tell you mathematics and science. When you go to international conferences people speak their own languages and it is interpreted. So why does the German use German at the United Nations and the Chinese use Chinese but the Ghanaian use English? Why don't they speak Twi for someone to interpret it into English? I think we have to promote our language but we also have a problem because we have other languages apart from Twi so that can also create confusion.

4.2.3 Profile of Mary (focused on decade 3, 4, 5, 6; 1977-2014)

The interview with Mary took place in a pastoral centre belonging to a local church, which was convenient for both of us because of its location. Mary was introduced to me as a teacher with many years of teaching experience in the lower grades. She was the only participant whose teaching was only in primary classes, including kindergarten. Mary came to our first meeting with a lot of teaching materials. She told me she had about thirty years of teaching experience and she was very interested in helping younger children. Mary said she was a single parent with an adult son at university. She moved to the capital to live with her aunt after completing Middle School in her hometown. She started her teaching career in a nursery school and continued to the training college for her professional training. According to Mary, she worked hard as a teacher and took advantage of government initiatives for the education of serving teachers by doing a bachelor's qualification in Early Childhood and a Master's degree in Educational Administration. On my subsequent visit in 2014, Mary told me she had been promoted as a head teacher so we had our meeting in her school, where she introduced me to the teachers on her staff and talked to them about my research.

Mary said she became very interested in children's literacy development after her course in early childhood. She therefore attended a number of training courses on the new language and literacy policy (National Literacy Acceleration Programme, NALAP) and sometimes paid for other training courses on literacy. As a result, she said she was now a trainer of teachers and she extends her services to other schools that need training. Mary said she believes in improving children's learning in the early grades so she was putting a number of measures in place in her school to achieve this. When I asked her about her opinion on the language policy

in lower grades, she said, “From my personal experience, children should learn in their local language before switching to the English language and teachers should do their best to know the children’s language”. Mary introduced herself as follows:

My name is Mary, I am 50 years old and I was born and bred in Nkonya a village in the Volta Region of Ghana. I am a single parent with a grown up boy. I attended the local Authority Middle School and then continued to the training college. I furthered my education in Early Childhood Education and Care at the University of Education in Winneba. I chose to become a teacher because I had the flair and love for children. Actually, I began my teaching career when I started working in a Nursery School as a Day Nursery attendant for children between the ages of 2 and 4. I developed interest through the way I handled the children. I was so happy dealing with the children in the Nursery School and because of that I proceeded to the training college in 1980 and I completed in 1984 for the four-year certificate ‘A’ Post-Middle so I have been working with children for almost 28 years. I have taught classes two, four, five and six ...in many schools here in Accra. I am now teaching in Nima (Accra) in the early childhood department of my school.

Now I am an instructor and trainer in early childhood language and literacy development because I had a training in literacy development organised by MASHAV (Israel’s Agency for International Development cooperation Ministry of Foreign Affairs). I train teachers on how language and literacy should be taught in the early childhood schools. I did this course because I always wanted to know more about how children of this age learn. I realised when as I was a teacher in primary two that everything the children did was different from that of the older children, for example, the rate at which they learnt was different, and they learnt through play and they want to go out and see things and pick up things for themselves, and find out information for themselves. So that encouraged me to do the early childhood studies. Every government wants to change something in education especially when it comes to literacy. Some government will come and say we want our children to know more Ghanaian language and others would say because English is our national language the child should know more English.

Earlier in my career, we were just given a general knowledge of teaching which was more about instructing children...not about allowing them to learn through play or take

their own initiative when it comes to reading and writing...we were just teaching in an abstract world. But today when you come to my classroom, I have a round table with drawers at one side, a hospital setting, a home with a Ghanaian kitchen, with all the things you can think of such as onions, pepper, dried fish like 'Keta school boys', black eye beans and many others. We are no longer teaching in abstract as we used to do before. I bring whatever I want to teach the child into the classroom for the child to see ... and this is helping children to learn better. Because of my experience of teaching in lower primary, children need to know the local language and they need the English too, so both are important.

4.2.4 Profile of Grace (focused on decade 4; 1987-97)

Grace lives in a rural area close to the capital with her husband and her two teenage children. Grace was born in Accra but had her secondary school in the Eastern region of Ghana because her mother wanted her to learn the local language of her origins. According to Grace, schooling away from her parents made her become aware of the importance of language and culture. To her, the Ghanaian culture is very rich and it makes her proud to be a Ghanaian so she finds it difficult to understand why the young ones are looking up to other foreign cultures.

Grace was introduced to me by one of the contacts I had made from the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT). Grace invited me to her house and we agreed to have all our meetings there because she said she was supervising workers in the house. Grace said she always wanted to become a teacher because she believed it was a good job for women. After completing secondary school, she enrolled in a training college in the Ashanti region but, on completion, she was posted to a rural town in the Greater Accra region. Grace said that living in the rural area was a big challenge because she had always lived in big towns. She was appointed to teach in Class Two and though she did not speak the local language she made an effort to learn it because she felt it was the right thing to do.

After teaching Class Two for three years, she decided to move to upper grade because of the workload. She later went to the university to do a course in Adult Education. Presently, she is teaching English language and Home Economics in a school close to her house. Grace is of the opinion that the teachers' union should be doing more for teachers and they should take a more active role in policy formulation process by being the voice of teachers. She supports the use of local language as the medium of instruction in early grades. The following vignette presents a few highlights of what she said in her interviews.

My name is Grace and I am a teacher at the local Junior Secondary School. I am married with two children. I was born in Accra where I had my elementary school. But my mother sent me to do my secondary school education in the Eastern region so that I can learn to speak my local language well. From there I went to training college in 1989 for three years and obtained Certificate 'A'. After my training, I was posted to teach in the Ga rural area and I taught Class 2 for three years. I had a change of class and later taught Class 4. I am now teaching in the Junior High School (JHS) because with the lower primary there is a lot of work and you need to prepare your lesson notes for all the subjects you teach and you have to make sure you give exercises on every lesson and mark them, but with the JHS, I have to prepare notes for only the subjects I teach because I am a subject teacher so I prepare my lessons notes for the classes that I teach so I don't have to prepare lesson notes during weekend and I can also mark the exercises later in the staff room. In 2000, I went to the University to study Adult Education for three years on adult literacy learning.

I really like my training and the teaching practice because it brought me a great joy. I quite remember an incident in the school when the children were sad because the teaching practice had come to an end after three weeks and they would not let us to leave. That incident created a certain passion for us, especially me, I had that passion and I wished I could remain there and teach there but that was not possible because it was only for the teaching experience. As a teacher, I think it is important for me to use the mother tongue, I see the Ghanaian language as culturally dynamic because it helps people to socialise with each other... I believe teaching in mother tongue will make children learn faster because they understand what I teach them and they are able to answer my questions well.

Teaching is very interesting if you want to enjoy it. It depends on the individual, you will enjoy it if you like it and if you don't like it you will never enjoy it. So for me what I do is, I bring myself to do whatever I have to do and I try to do it to the best of my ability. I know how to prepare my lesson notes so I do not wait for anyone to tell me what to do. I know how to teach my class, how to mark my exercises so it depends on the individual. Me, I teach and I enjoy it and when my children understand what I teach I feel very happy.

4.2.5 Profile of Jessica (focused on decade 5 & 6; 1997-2014)

Jessica was introduced to me by Mary, who said Jessica had shown interest in the study after she had talked to her about me. When I met Jessica, she said that, although she was interested, having three interviews was going to be difficult for her because she does not like talking. We therefore agreed to have the interviews on two days instead of three. It became apparent to me later on that she was a very busy person and agreeing on an appropriate day and time for interview was going to be very difficult. Our meetings took place in the same venue as I had the interviews with Mary. Jessica introduced herself as single and living in her family home with her father, siblings, nieces and nephews. She said living there was very demanding and her nieces and nephews would always come to her with their homework and her siblings always consulted her on school matters. She described herself as a teacher at home and in school. When I asked her why she became a teacher, she explained that teaching was not her first choice of profession. She wanted to become a banker and when that did not work out she took the advice of others to go the teacher training college. After her training, she was posted to teach in the primary school in the Volta region but, because her family was in Accra, she always wanted to get a transfer to Accra. After teaching for a while, she enrolled in the university to specialise in Social Science but she was transferred back to the Volta region. She finally moved to Accra and was appointed to teach in the kindergarten.

Jessica said that teaching lower grades was difficult for her because of the language policy. She could not use both the Ewe and Ga languages because English was the language spoken at home. Jessica said she was in favour of the use of English language for children in lower grades because English is a global language and Ghana's official language so it should be used very early on in school. The vignette below gives highlights of Jessica's interviews with me.

I am Jessica. I am single and am from the Volta Region. I was born in Accra and I had my basic education at ... here in Accra. From there I proceeded to ... also here in Accra. After completing I gained admission to St. Theresa's Training College in Hohoe for secondary teacher training course. I completed in 1995 and I was posted to teach in the Catholic Unit so I taught at Tegbi Roman Catholic primary school in the Volta region for some number years and I was transferred to Denu. From there I gained admission to the University of Education, Winneba, for four years where I obtained a degree in social studies. I never thought of becoming a teacher. Since my infancy I said I will work in the bank to earn more money as a cashier but when I wrote my G.C.E. 'O' level and I could not make all the grades a neighbour who was a teacher said the

post-secondary forms for teacher training were out. She said in order not to waste time I should buy the forms since it could be a stepping stone to other professions. I also remember my aunt buying me forms for training college but I was not interested because I thought training college was for older people. Even when I wanted to go to the university I did not want to go to Winneba because I thought that university was for old people but I listened to the advice of friends and took the opportunity to do a Bachelor's degree. When I started teaching initially it was tough but now I am enjoying it so I have no regret choosing to be a teacher. Teaching is an interesting job but you need to be in a class that you like and be able to teach what you are good at.

When I came out of training college I saw that everything the children did was in English so if you use the Ghanaian language too much I feel it will disturb them because when it comes to the teaching of English we do not mix it with Ghanaian language. We were told when it comes to English we should use the English language alone and when we teach the Ghanaian language we should use only Ghanaian language. So when it comes to the Ghanaian language what I do is to call somebody to come to explain whatever it is to the children.... though I knew I had to use the L1, I wasn't using it because I know everywhere you go it's English so now they have seen that we teachers are not using the Ghanaian language in teaching so they have brought it back. Some teachers like those of my level, my age group or modern day teachers, did not implement the old policy, how much more this NALAP, it is not everywhere that you see teachers using it. So we still use English and if you happen to have a Ga teacher, then you can ask that teacher to teach it for you.

4.2.6 Profile of Dorothy (focused on decade 6; 2007-2014)

Dorothy is a teacher who expressed interest in my project because of her personal interest in early childhood and she was introduced to me by another teacher. According to Dorothy, her decision to become a teacher was because of the encouragement she was given by teachers who had taught her. Dorothy taught for six years after training college and proceeded to the University for a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education. Like Mary, she was promoted to head a school in 2014. Our meetings took place in her friend's house in Accra because I could not travel to the town where she lives. According to Dorothy, 'children should be happy when they come to school so I make my classroom a place where children will feel happy and forget about home'. She said her philosophy about children and school made her name her kindergarten class 'Educogenic'. When I asked her to explain the name, she said it

was to reflect the type of education offered to children and the lovely environment in which the children study. She explained that it was “*like bringing the environment into the classroom and ensuring that children get the best out of the school environment*”. Dorothy said socio-cultural changes were having an effect on children, as some children are beginning to forget common Ghanaian courtesy of greeting and helping others. The following comes from her interviews.

My name is Dorothy. I was born in 1973 in the Western region of Ghana in a small town called Kwesiminstim. I am the seventh out of ten children. I have six older sisters, two younger sisters and one brother. I attended the local Methodist School for my basic education from 1986 to 1993 and I sat for the Common Entrance and went to Takoradi Secondary School from 1993 to 1998. I had a chance to enter the training college from 1997 to 2001. I taught for six years and after that I furthered my education at the University of Education, where I studied Early Childhood Education. I have taught in the JHS, primary and kindergarten. All my teaching has been in the Eastern region, in Oda, Kade and Akyem Tafo.

The NALAP policy tells us to use the local language of the child’s environment to teach the child to read and write. I have given my classroom a name, ‘Educogenic’ environment. It is an educative environment; all my walls have paintings, pictures, drawings, writing, etc. so when you get to the entrance of the kindergarten area, you know you it is a learning environment. A child is free to go the swing or go to any of corners. We have a corner with books and pictures, a mini-store where you can get whatever is available in a main store in town, we have a place for crayons and writing materials where the child can do whatever they want to do or to draw and we also have sand tray, Lego and other things for the children. Today, more attention is given to the lower primary because it is believed that if children are not well cared for or well prepared it disturbs their future education, so in our school I have put almost the best teachers in the lower primary. My kindergarten 1 teacher is a diploma holder, so too is the kindergarten 2, Classes 2 and 3 teachers and some of them are taking degree courses in Early Childhood Education as well. For me, although the policy is out, not everyone is following it and there is no monitoring or nothing in place to check that whatever is said in the policy is being followed by teachers. The policy is good if only supervision and monitoring is strengthened ... If you introduce a policy there should be a way out, how to monitor, how to evaluate it over a period of time, for example, the

authorities can check to see if the policy is working or not after a certain number of years...

The changes in our cultural practices are affecting our language because nobody wants to be left behind. Everybody wants people to know that their child is in schooling and can speak English so the local language is out of the way and some parents are also working with foreigners so when these friends visit their homes with their kids they want their children to be able to communicate with them. Some don't want their kids to speak their local language at all so they move from their original home to the urban cities and they don't go back home or want their children to go back there but it is important for children to know their own language.

4.2.7 Profile of Judith (focused on present day)

I got to know Judith through the recommendation of her head teacher. She has two daughters, who soon became good friends of mine and always reminded their mother of our interview dates. Judith lives in her family house and she introduced me to her relatives, who were very friendly towards me. She told me she worked hard by trading in African prints so she could build her own house. When I asked her how she combined her trading with teaching she said *"I have always been trading as a student so I could not stop when I became a teacher"*. Judith said she was very happy teaching in class one because she has a keen interest in children's literacy learning. She explained that as a teacher she has been able to help a number of children, including her own younger siblings, to learn how to read and write. She also said that children in her school have been asking for her help because of her reputation for helping students with reading and writing. Judith said she had taken part in a number of courses on children's literacy learning and, as a result, she made an alphabet song to help her class. She said her head teacher is happy with her progress so she has been asked to assist other teachers who need help on the new language and literacy policy. Judith showed me a number of teaching aids she prepared herself for teaching her class. Judith is the only participant still teaching lower grades. She said:

My name is Judith I come from Aburi but my mother comes from the Volta region. I was born in my mother's hometown and I started school there. I came to my father to complete my secondary school and I completed in 1992. I decided to come to my father because the area is a place for education. In this district, we have training colleges, and special schools for the blind and deaf, and there many other secondary schools and even a university. It's all because the white men came here and started the first school.

I lived with my aunt who was a teacher in Ho and Hohoe and I was moving around with her so that motivated me to become a teacher.

It was 1997 before I was able to enter the training college. I completed in 2000 with Certificate 'A' post-secondary because there was no diploma during my time but I have done the diploma in education so I have a post-diploma certificate. I was first posted to teach in the JHS in a Krobo town called Asesewa in the Upper Manya area where I spent 6 years. Currently, I am a teacher at the local primary school in Tutu in the Akwapem area. I did not want to teach in kindergarten because teaching kindergarten is more difficult than class one even though that is not the reason why I prefer that class. The government started the diploma in education as an upgrade for teachers and also for better quality in education. So for about three years now there is no more three-year Certification 'A' but Diploma in Basic Education, so those of us who did not have the diploma went for another three years training to have Post Diploma. Although I did not get any extra money, I enjoy the course because it is helping me in my teaching. I learnt a lot of new things, which I did not know before about literacy.

Our language is very, very, important because language is for identification. For example Twi or Ga identifies you and where you come from and it also serves as the medium of communication and instruction. Language also enables the individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potentials and to participate fully in their community and the wider society. I believe parents should be speaking the local language with their children and those of them who are literate should be reading with them and this will help the children to learn other languages like English.

There are so many changes in our society; there is a shift from the extended family system to the nuclear system. Our forefathers lived in a strongly traditional society, their life, what they did, whom and when they married, was determined in advance by custom and the traditions of where they come from but that is also changed now. But because we are in the modern time, we do things based on our own ideas and our family ties have little control over us so I think we need some government policy on family to help young parents.

4.3 Chapter Summary

In summary, this chapter has given general background information on each of the seven teachers who took part in this study. The voice vignettes gave the reader personal first-hand information and allowed the reader to understand them better as their stories unfold in the findings chapter. The next chapter will present the data analysis in the form of narrative and offers a discussion on the experiences of each participant in relation to their engagement with the language and literacy policy in Ghana.

Chapter Five

Findings

5.1 Introduction

This study aims to understand how changes in language and literacy policies over a number of years have impacted on teachers' classroom experiences in early grades. In order to achieve this, the study has drawn on postcolonial theory to investigate the perceptions of teachers working across six decades in schools in Ghana. This required an understanding of how the language and literacy policies evolved from 1957, when Ghana became independent, to the present day. One of the findings emerging from the thematic analysis of participants' narratives of their life histories revealed that there were three significant changes in policy with regards to language teaching. There was a shift from the use of English-only to the use of local languages in 1970, a move back in 2002 from teaching using local languages to English-only and finally, a move to biliteracy (or NALAP) in 2009, which impacted significantly on the classroom teaching practices of individual participants. The main purpose of this chapter is now to consolidate this evidence in the context of the three research questions: RQ1. What have been the key changes in language and literacy policy since independence when seen through a postcolonial lens? RQ2. How have teachers experienced changes in language and literacy policy in terms of their classroom practices? RQ3. What are teacher' views on how language and literacy policy has been developed and implemented?

Despite the fact that the study of the impact of changes in language and literacy policy on teachers' practices is complex, the findings in this study make a significant contribution to knowledge, by providing not only an evaluative account of the impact of changes in policy on teachers' practices over six decades from 1957 to 2014, but also providing deeper insights into the socio-cultural factors which influenced the decisions or choices of participants when dealing with the policy changes. The conceptual framework developed in this study, to address problems relating to language and literacy teaching and learning of early graders, explicates reasons why more attention should be focused on the involvement of teachers and other stakeholders in the process of formulating and implementing changes in educational policies over time.

As explained in detail in Chapter Three, in order to answer the four research questions, the study was guided by the four related research objectives presented in Table 5.1

Table 5.1
Four Research Objectives

<i>1. To critically examine the different language and literacy policies for early grades from independence until the present time.</i>
<i>2. To assess the effectiveness of the different policies on classroom practices from teachers' perspectives.</i>
<i>3. To identify and understand the ways in which certain socio-cultural factors affected the language and literacy policies for 4-8 year olds in Ghana.</i>
<i>4. To develop a conceptual framework aimed at supporting lower grade teachers in addressing the language and literacy teaching and learning of early graders in Ghana.</i>

The use of a narrative technique as part of a life history study informed the discussion and interpretation of the key findings, in light of changes in bilingual education policies in Ghana and in other post-colonial African countries, including South Africa, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Tanzania and Mozambique (Chimbutane, 2011; Makoni, Dube, and Mashiri, 2006; Brock-Utne et al. 2004). This study traces the policy changes since independence in 1957, in order to understand the impact of policy changes on teachers' practices over six decades, as narrated by participants.

This chapter is divided into three sections. Section 5.2 provides a narrative account of the specific language and literacy policy changes that have occurred since 1957 and evaluates the impact of these policy changes on teachers' practices over six decades from 1957 to 2014. Section 5.3 discusses participants' views on language and literacy policy formulation and monitoring. Section 5.4 provides a summary of the chapter, highlighting some of the key results of the study.

5.2 A narrative account of the impact of early literacy and language policy changes on teachers' practices from a postcolonial perspective

The narrative account in this section focuses on the participants' professional life history and the impact of changes in language policies (English-only, local language and biliteracy or NALAP policies) on participants' teaching practices. Although the focus of this study is on the impact of these language and literacy policies, rather than on teacher training, it is worth considering here the varied routes the participants followed, in order to understand the impact on their practices. The data reveal that participants either completed the post-middle (four year training) or the post-secondary (three-year training), with the exception of Hubert who had a two-year post-middle teacher training. However, given the period in which Hubert trained, it appears that this was a short-term measure to increase the number of trained teachers for primary schools between 1951 and 1961. What is more, most of the participants took advantage

of the opportunity provided by different governments to further develop their professional knowledge and skills by going to university. However, two participants chose not to go to university, for personal reasons e.g. ill health (Hubert) and lack of finance (Frank). In addition, the use of a postcolonial lens helps to show how many of these participants experienced a degree of conflict between their Ghanaian culture and the European culture embedded in the faith-based training colleges. This is discussed in detail later in this section.

5.2.1 Professional life history of participants

The participants' life histories revealed that Mary was the only participant to experience all three policies, whilst Jessica experienced two policies (the local language and NALAP policies). The remaining participants experienced only one policy, namely Hubert (English-only), Frank and Grace (local language policy), and Dorothy and Judith (NALAP policy). As a consequence, Mary experienced two policy changes, whilst Jessica experienced the change from local language to NALAP; the remaining participants did not experience any policy change during their teaching careers.

With regard to how the policies and policy changes impacted on participants' teaching practices, a range of issues were identified from their narratives, including the level of awareness of policies and their attitude toward implementation of policies. The level of participants' awareness of policy influenced their attitudes in the classroom – attitudes which have roots in the way participants perceived their socio-cultural realities. For example, because the faith-based training colleges attended by the participants were founded by European missionaries, they received training based on a European Christian philosophy of education. Participants reported that some aspects of this were beneficial in the classroom setting, however, other aspects were found to be in direct conflict with their Ghanaian socio-cultural practices.

The way in which the narratives on participants' professional life history and the colonial influences on the training colleges they attended address the research questions is now examined critically below. The discussion is structured in relation to the key themes that emerged, as outlined in chapter three.

5.2.1.1 Training to become a professional teacher and opportunity for further development

In terms of participants' awareness of the language and literacy policies they experienced, most participants became aware of the policies when they were training to become professional

teachers; for other participants this happened during their teaching career. Although there were different routes to becoming professional teachers in Ghana, as discussed in detail in the literature review chapter, the participants in the study used two routes to become a teacher: the post-middle or post-secondary route. In addition, although the research questions in this study do not specifically require exploring how participants became teachers, the fact that participants were professionally trained meant that they should have received the knowledge and skills required for teaching at the lower grade. As such, it is important to understand the experiences of participants, as detailed below, regarding how they became teachers and the knowledge they received on language and literacy policy during their training, because these issues would help policy-makers make informed decisions.

Prior studies, including that of Asare-Danso (2014), indicate that Ghanaian children's low literacy is due to the high number of untrained teachers in many schools. This argument supports the need for high quality trained teachers, especially at the lower grade, to improve the teaching practices in the classroom. As such, the quality of training received by participants plays a critical role in their understanding and application of language and literacy policy (Flores, 2016; Akyeampong et al., 2013). When participants were asked how they became trained teachers, each offered different reports, although there were areas of similarity relating to two routes of entry into the teaching profession: post-middle i.e. entering into a four-year teacher training college, or post-secondary i.e. entering a three-year teacher training college. The post-middle teacher training policy made it possible for those who had no secondary school education at the time to become professional teachers. Therefore, those teachers who trained within the post-secondary teacher training policy had more education before entering the training college than those who were 'post-middle' trained.

The information provided by participants revealed that these two paths to a teaching career were situated in a policy inherited from the British colonial government. In addition, the participants' data also revealed that some aspects of the inherited policy prevailed for a number of years under successive Ghanaian governments. For example, both the three-year and four-year teacher training paths were situated within government policy on teacher training from the colonial times until the four-year training path was abolished in the 1990s; however, as discussed in detail in the literature review chapter, the three-year training path is still situated within the current government policy under a different name (College of Education).

Post-middle route - Four-year Certificate 'A' teacher training

The four-year Teacher Training programme, which was popular for many years, started in the colonial era, with the aim of training Middle School leavers to teach in primary and middle schools in Ghana (Akyeampong, 2003; McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1975). Since the entry requirement for this course was the Middle School Leaving Certificate (MSLC), both Frank (1967-1977) and Mary (1977-1987) were able to do their teacher training without having to attend secondary school. For example, Frank revealed that *“Luckily for me Nkrumah’s government had started a four-year Teacher Training college or programme for those who wished to go into teaching and I entered a faith-based training college”*. As suggested by Frank’s statement, the Convention People’s Party (CPP), led by the first president of Ghana, created an opportunity for those without secondary education to join the four-year teacher training programme, in order to become teachers. Indeed, Kadingdi’s (1973) work on Ghana’s educational reforms reveals that *‘...realising the importance of trained teachers for the expanded system, the 1961 Education Act opened new teacher training colleges and expanded old ones...’* to boost teaching in the country (Kadingdi, 1973, p.4). Frank’s statement also shows that he took advantage of this opportunity, since he did not complete his secondary education. He stated *“My father had some financial difficulties when he was a politician and made it impossible for me to complete my secondary school education”*. When I asked if the training was adequate for him, Frank answered:

It was adequate because when I came out as a teacher, I realised that our training was better than that of the Post-Secondary teacher. The post-secondary teachers were not good in teaching in the primary level. When you put them in the primary school especially in the lower primary Class 1 to 3, they found it very difficult but we had emphasis on the method of teaching in the four-year programme.

Frank’s statement appears to suggest that the four-year teacher training programme was for teaching in primary school, whilst the post-secondary training was aimed at teaching in higher grades; this is also noted by McMillan and Kwamena-Poh (1975). In terms of the structure of the four-year training programme, Frank said:

The first two years was for academic work and the last two years was for professional work or experience. This was because we did not do secondary education so they had to bring us up academically before the professional training as a teacher.

Similarly, although Mary did not go to secondary school, like Frank she had the opportunity to go to the training college for the four-year teacher training. She stated, *“I was so happy dealing with the children in the Nursery School and because of that I proceeded to the training college in 1980 and I completed in 1984 for the four-year certificate ‘A’ Post-Middle”*. When asked

about the focus of the training she received and how it prepared her for teaching, she had this to say:

The training we received was for teaching in the primary because the post-middle teacher training was for preparing teachers for the primary school and at a point during the training you have to go out for teaching practice and I was sent to the University Practice School. To be assigned to a school like that means you must be very good because the children are all children of lecturers at the university and I was assigned to teach Primary 2 and at the end of my training I was given a testimonial to say I was very good in teaching primary 2 so for a very long time (5 years) I was in Primary 2 teaching and helping children.

Mary's statement ties in with Frank's statement above, suggesting that the post-middle training was focused on preparing teachers for teaching in primary school. Indeed, Mary's comment shows that she believed her success in teaching lower grades was due to the high level of training she received in college.

Hubert (1957-67) was educated at a time when the two-year post-middle training option was available, but the duration had reverted to four years when Frank and Mary went for their post-middle training. According to Hubert's narrative:

The government had a policy which was compulsory education for all children which means every school-going child should be given the opportunity to receive formal education and, since education was compulsory, it also means several children will have to go to school. As a result, teachers were needed, so for that reason the duration of the teacher training course, which in the colonial era was four years, was now shortened to two to enable the government to get enough teachers to manage the schools. For the two years training you come out with a Certificate 'B' then after teaching for two years, you write an examination to qualify you to do a Certificate 'A' course in a teacher training college, which I did, so a Certificate 'B' teacher is therefore given the chance to upgrade to Certificate 'A' post 'B'.

Hubert's comment shows a change in policy for teacher training, which meant he only had to do two years instead of the usual four years. However, the fact that he went back to the training college for an additional two years to qualify as a Certificate 'A' teacher meant he had the chance to upgrade his qualification, which could have a positive impact on his teaching career. Hubert's comment further suggests that the preferred period of training for post-middle trained teachers was four years rather than two, to ensure that trainee teachers were prepared both academically and professionally, as suggested earlier by Frank. The policy to shorten the duration of teacher training is confirmed by Kadingdi (1973), who also revealed that the policy on the change in the duration of teacher training was implemented from 1951 and abolished in 1961, when the government felt it had achieved its short-term aim of training more teachers for

the lower grades. The data from Hubert, Frank and Mary suggest that the post-middle teacher training was quite intensive and prepared them well enough to teach in the classroom. For example, Hubert said “*During our time, we were well trained to teach in the primary school and you can also teach in the middle school if you are very good.*” In contrast to the post-middle teacher training route, the experiences of participants who chose the post-secondary teacher training route is discussed in detail below.

Post-secondary route - Three-year Certificate ‘A’ teacher training

The post-secondary training route was for students who had finished five years of secondary education or three years of senior high (Akyeampong, 2003). Unlike Hubert, Frank and Mary, who did not go to secondary school, Grace (1987-97), Jessica (1997-2007), Dorothy (2007-2014) and Judith (2007-2014) all completed secondary education, with the General Certificate of Examination Ordinary Level (GCE ‘O’ Level), and obtained the minimum requirements for entry into teacher training college before being accepted into the training college (Akyeampong and Stephens, 2000). This shows a difference in the entry requirements for participants who took the post-middle (MSLC) and those who took the post-secondary route (GCE ‘O’ Level).

Although Grace was the only participant in this group to mention the certificate she obtained at the end of her teacher training, Jessica, Judith and Dorothy also qualified as Certificate ‘A’ (Post-Secondary) teachers. The evidence provided by the participants in the study shows that Certificate ‘A’ was the award given to teachers at the end of their training. However, Post-Middle and Post-Secondary was used to distinguish between those who attended Middle School and those who attended Secondary School. Indeed, Asare and Nti (2014, p.3) confirm that ‘teacher education travels different paths in Ghana’, ‘different modes were adopted for rolling out teacher training programs’ and ‘upon graduation, teachers received varying certificates and diplomas based on their program choice’. Data from the post-middle trained teachers (Hubert, Frank and Mary) appears to suggest that they were better trained to teach in primary school than post-secondary trained teachers (e.g. Grace and Jessica). For example, Grace had some difficulties with teaching in lower grades. She stated that:

I am now teaching in the JHS because with the lower primary there is a lot of work and you need to prepare your lesson notes for all the subjects you teach and you have to make sure you give exercises on every lesson and mark them but with the JHS I have to prepare notes for only the subjects I teach because I am a subject teacher so I prepare my lessons notes for the classes that I teach so I don’t have to prepare lesson notes during the weekend and I can also mark the exercises later in the staff room. Teaching in lower primary was stressful because it was packed from one lesson to the other and

you don't really have time to do all the marking to make sure that everything is done well.

Grace is expressing a difficulty with the work load she received in lower primary, which she found hard to cope with. Her experience somehow supports Frank's view that the post-middle trained teacher was better equipped to teach in primary and particularly in the lower grade classrooms.

In brief, the three-year post-secondary training was a much higher qualification than the four-year post-middle training, because those who took this route had to complete secondary school before entering the training college. This appears to suggest that those who took this route had an 'edge' over the post-middle teachers because they had spent a minimum of thirteen years (compared to ten years for post-middle teachers) in school before starting their teacher training.

As already indicated above, the change from the four-year to two-year path to teacher training experienced by Hubert, was a short-term policy change by the government to achieve the aim of increasing the number of teachers trained for lower grade after independence. In addition, it is clear from the conversations with participants, that although they enjoyed the training, which enabled them to convey what they had learnt to their students, some participants felt the need for further professional development, as discussed in detail below.

Further professional training

The data suggests that after a number of years of teaching, some participants felt the need to improve their teaching or professional practices in line with the changes in the language and literacy policy. For example, according to Mary:

I continued to do Early Childhood Care Education at the University because I wanted to know more about children. I wanted to know more about children because I realised when as I was teaching Primary Two that everything about this particular age group was different.

This appears to be a great achievement for Mary considering the fact that she started her teaching career without a secondary education. Like Mary, Dorothy also obtained a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood and Care. She said, *"I taught for six years and after that I furthered my education at the university, where I studied Early Childhood Education"*. The fact that both Mary and Dorothy attended university as part of their preparation to teach in Kindergarten shows their commitment to improve quality in lower grade teaching and the government's interest in providing quality education and care for young children. This point is noted by

Lillvist, Sandberg, Sheridan and Williams (2014), who argue that professionalism and quality in early years is an area receiving much attention in many countries. Further evidence from Mary and Dorothy shows that Early Childhood Studies at university was instrumental in shaping their opinions and interest in children's language and literacy, which eventually impacted on their classroom practices. For example, Dorothy reveals that in her experience:

At the Training College the emphasis was more on telling children what to do or instructing them to do things i.e. read or write. At first, teaching was rigid. In case I want a child to know how to pronounce a word, I will write it on the board and pronounce it and then let the child pronounce it also. Whether the child understands what you are saying or not, your duty was for the child to get it so it was rigidLater in the university I learnt about a more interactive and facilitative way of teaching children, I also heard about something called reflective writing and reading which influenced my classroom practices...it helped me to see my weaknesses, and enabled me to understand why some of my children do not pick up what I was teaching, and to think of a new way of teaching in class. So you don't plan everything yourself, you plan according to the child's pace and ability.

The example given by Dorothy reveals the differences in the training she had for her initial teacher training and at university. Dorothy's example shows that the method she used in teaching after her initial training was very instructional and rigid, which did not allow some children to learn effectively. In addition, she reported that she was more interested in finishing the lesson than ensuring the children understood what they were being taught. However, Dorothy's university education changed her attitude to teaching, with a change from an instructional to a more facilitating way of teaching, after she had completed her university training. This suggests that the initial teacher training Dorothy received did not prepare her adequately for teaching literacy, including reading at the lower grade. Such interest in post-qualification training is also noted by Guskey (2002, p.382), who argues that teachers take up further training because they believe the training they receive will 'expand their knowledge and skills, contribute to their growth, and enhance their effectiveness with students'.

With regards to the training teachers receive on teaching methods in reading, prior studies by Akyeampong et al. (2013, p.275) show that initial teacher training in some African countries, including Ghana, devote less time to 'how to teach the concepts and skills needed by early learners in mathematics and reading, or in the intensive and extensive engagement with children and how they learn what this will require'. This study is however about preparing teachers for teaching upper grade rather than lower grade. Thus, the inability of some children to understand what they read could be partially due to the training received by teachers during their training to become teachers.

Mary also provided evidence of how university changed her teaching practices from instructional to facilitative teaching and learning methods in the extract below:

Earlier in my career, we were just given a general knowledge of teaching, which was more about instructing children...not about allowing them to learn through play or take their own initiative when it comes to reading and writing...we were just teaching in an abstract world. You will write a sentence and whether the child understood it or not that was not what you wanted. All you want is for the child to read that sentence...but after going to the university, for my early childhood course, I became familiar with a more facilitative way of involving the children in my teaching and learning a lot from them.

Like Dorothy, Mary appears to suggest that her university education changed her method of teaching from an instructional or rote method to a facilitative method of teaching children to read and write because her initial training was more general than specific. Indeed, Agbenyega and Klibthong (2011) note that:

The pedagogical styles the pre-service teachers employed appeared distant from inclusive teaching because recognition for children's voices and their right to contribute freely to discussion are non-existent (p.407).

This statement seems to support the evidence provided by both Mary and Dorothy that the training they received in the training colleges did not encourage them to fully engage children in the learning process. Mary also said:

I realised that my first training as a teacher was not enough for me to teach in the early childhood class (KG) because the training was just for us to have a general knowledge in teaching but in the university we specialised in childcare and development. This really helped me to appreciate the use of the local language.

In the above extract, Mary suggests that her university training was instrumental in her change of attitude towards the local language and its use within children's literacy learning. It would seem that Mary's decision to do a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Studies and subsequent interest in children's language and literacy learning helped her in creating a niche role for herself as a trainer of teachers in children's literacy development. In addition, Mary's comments point to the need for specialist training for teachers who deal directly with young children, as suggested by Morrison (2002) on teacher training in early childhood in Ghana. Judith also attended university to further her own education, which impacted positively on her teaching in lower grade. She stated that:

They started the diploma in education as an upgrade for teachers and also for better quality in education. So for about three years now there is no more three-year

Certification 'A' but Diploma in Basic Education so those of us who did not have the diploma went for another three years training to have Post Diploma.

Although Judith's decision to go to the University was initially to upgrade her qualification and to get more pay, she confirmed that her studies were helpful as she became more aware of children's language and literacy needs, which changed her approach to teaching. She stated, "*Although I did not get any extra money, I enjoy the course because it is helping me in my teaching. I learnt a lot of new things which I did not know about before about literacy*".

Grace was another participant who went to university. However, her university education was not focused on teaching young children. She reported, "*In 2000, I went to the University to study Adult Education for three years on adult literacy learning*". Although Grace did not directly use the skills she learnt here when teaching literacy in lower grades, she reported that she made use of them later as an English language teacher in the Junior High School where she is now. Like the other four participants, Jessica also went to university to study Social Studies, to enable her to teach at a higher grade using the English language, after she realised that she could not teach effectively at the lower grade using the local language as the medium of instruction.

Indeed, the data from participants indicates that university education challenged and improved aspects of their teaching practices. For example, for Mary, Dorothy and Judith, it was about gaining more insight into children's language and literacy learning and new methods of teaching, whilst for Jessica it was about a change from teaching lower grade to teaching in the Junior Secondary school. As indicated by Guskey (2002), undertaking further training by teachers, especially those in lower grades, can help raise the quality and status of teaching, help teachers to evaluate their own practice and increase their confidence, as in the case of Mary and Judith, for example, who supported other teachers with the NALAP policy. It is clear from the data that teachers like Mary, Dorothy and Judith had a higher qualification (university degree) as teachers in lower grade, as compared with Hubert and Frank (without university degrees), who also taught lower grade years ago. This shows that, unlike previous years when teachers in lower grade were mostly post-middle or post-secondary trained, today there are teachers with university degrees doing the same job in lower grade. This implies that some teachers in lower grade have similar, if not higher, qualifications as teachers in the primary and Junior High Schools. Furthermore, the higher qualifications of present day lower grade teachers

reflects the impact of educational reforms in teacher training over the last fifty-seven years of independence.

The next section examines the impact of colonial influences on the training colleges attended by participants and how they affected teaching practices.

5.2.1.2 Colonial influence on training colleges attended by participants

Having analysed the experiences of participants, in terms of the educational environment in the training colleges they attended and how the environment influenced their orientations, from a postcolonial perspective, the participants described both positive and negative consequences of colonial rule on their teacher training. As explained in detail in the literature review chapter, postcolonial theorists, including Said (2003) and Loomba (1998), examine the impact of colonial rule on the cultural values, beliefs, language of indigenous people, and questions the narratives put forward during the colonial era. The positive consequences of colonial rule, as reported by the participants, include: the training of participants to become professional teachers, the effective use of both the English and local languages in schools, and positive change in participants' perceptions of left-handed children in school and the education of girls. The negative consequences include: the conflict between European and Ghanaian cultural values and beliefs, in terms of the use of Ghanaian names, the fear of becoming more European oriented in their preferences, the use of caning as a form of punishment, and the decline in respect for teachers. Participants' experiences of the effect of colonial rule on their teaching practice are discussed in detail below.

Nearly all the training colleges attended by participants in this study were either started by missionaries during the colonial era (or immediately after independence) or by the British colonial government. In addition, some of the colleges attended by female participants were for women, whilst others were co-educational. The presence of both male and female teacher training colleges shows the desire of the missionaries and the colonial government to train both women and men as teachers for the purposes of national development (Takyi and Addai, 2002). Indeed, the training of women as teachers has been of great importance from the colonial era and provisions and programmes have been made over the decades to encourage girls to pursue a teaching career (Graham, 1971). Table 5.2 below presents the training colleges attended by the participants.

Table 5.2
The training colleges attended by the participants, the duration and the qualifications attained at the end of training.

Participant	Type of teacher training college attended	Duration	Certificate obtained
Hubert	Government Faith-based	2 years 2 years	Certificate 'B' Post Middle Certificate 'A' Post 'B'
Frank	Faith-based	4 years	Certificate 'A' Post Middle
Mary	Faith-based	4 years	Certificate 'A' Post Middle
Grace	Faith-based	3 years	Certificate 'A' Post-Secondary
Jessica	Faith-based	3 years	Certificate 'A' Post-Secondary
Dorothy	Faith-based	3 years	Certificate 'A' Post-Secondary
Judith	Faith-based	3 years	Certificate 'A' Post-Secondary

In total, the participants attended six different training colleges across four regions in Ghana (Mary and Dorothy attended the same training college at different times with different qualifications). With the exception of the Government Training College, the remaining five colleges are faith-based and affiliated to various religious organisations, notably, Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist and Seventh Day Adventist. Presently, there are forty-one Colleges of Education (former Teacher Training Colleges) in Ghana, three of which are privately owned and thirty-eight belonging to the state (Asare and Nti, 2014).

Most of the training colleges attended by participants in this study were started during the colonial era and, therefore, highly influenced by European educational philosophy. According to Graham (1971), the training of teachers first started with European missionaries, who needed the assistance of the indigenous population to help them in the propagation of the Christian faith. The indigenes knew and could speak the local languages and could help the missionaries but, before that, they had to be trained. These training centres were in the form of catechists' training schools or seminaries and were later converted into teacher training institutions to train teachers for elementary and secondary schools founded by the missionaries (Salifu and Agbenyega, 2013; Asare-Danso, 2014). The first of such institutions was started by the Basel Mission in Akropong in the Eastern region in 1863, which, according to Asare-Danso (2014, p.58), 'played a pioneering role in the introduction of teacher education in the Gold Coast (now

Ghana)’. Similarly, both the Wesley and Catholic missionaries founded different institutions for Catechists, which were later converted to teacher training institutions or colleges (Graham, 1971). This reveals the critical role played by European missionaries in the development of educational institutions in Ghana (Coultras and Lewin, 2002; Asare-Danso, 2014). Indeed, Miller (1993) is of the view that missionary work, especially the role played by the Basel Mission, had a long term effect on social change in Ghana.

The role played by the Catholic Church in training its students in the Catholic faith is explained by the official of the National Catholic Secretariat, in the following narrative:

The training colleges are part of the educational institutions started by missionaries who come to Ghana, including the Catholic missionaries. Apart from the training colleges, we also have a number of basic, secondary, vocational and technical and tertiary institutions across the country. We believe that once the Christian values are imbibed by the student during their period of training, and when the person becomes a teacher, the inference is that the individual is influenced somehow by the teachings of the church so students should reflect the Catholic faith, they must feel catholic, what you hear, what you see and how you are trained must be Catholic and that is it. So whether they are colleges of education, which is also an aspect of the church’s role of providing teachers in the country, they must also feel the same. I see it as an opportunity for people who come to mission institutions to learn more about us and what we believe in and they will go back with these ideas about the church and this also facilitates peaceful co-existence and to learn from one another, especially at this time where there are many churches.

The data provided by the official confirms the establishment of schools and training colleges by missionary societies and their affiliations in the country. The above statement also shows evangelisation as an important aspect of the ethos of such institutions. Indeed, Ball (1983, p.238) argues that ‘the missions hoped to use the schools to turn the Africans into ‘Good Christians’, a process which involved both ‘civilizing’ and converting them.’ However, the statement also appears to suggest that, in this modern era, there is emphasis on peaceful co-existence with others in view of the different Christian denominations in the country. The fact that not all students may belong to the Catholic Church is accepted.

Not surprisingly, the participants were critical of this ethos; however, the data also indicated that they saw some benefits of the colonial influence on education. Hubert, Mary and Grace all spoke specifically about the use of the left hand, which is perceived in Ghanaian society as not culturally acceptable, even in the classroom, and they observed how education has gradually changed this perception. For example, Hubert said:

When we were on teaching practice we had a boy who was writing with the left hand so the students came to complain to our tutors that a boy in their class was writing with his left hand and the teacher has been punishing him but he is still using the left hand and our tutor from the training college told the teacher not to punish the child to change from the left to the right because that part of the body has been developed in such a way that it has dominion over the right. So I learnt a lesson from it because we do not accept the use of the left hand as Ghanaians. I saw that the school's culture was not the same as the culture at home. Now during occasions like speech and prize giving day we allow children to use the left hand to receive their prizes and the right hand to shake hands with the person giving out the prizes.

The above data from Hubert shows a conflict between Ghanaian and colonial culture, with regard to the perception of the use of the left hand in public and its use in school. The data shows how the use of the left hand was culturally unacceptable, and therefore strongly discouraged by teachers. However, the tutor in this example was able to present a biological argument to support the child's use of the left hand. Hubert's evidence shows that he came to accept the differences between Ghanaian culture as practiced at home and that of the school.

Mary, for her part, commented:

Some time ago in Ghana a child was not supposed to raise the left hand to answer questions from the teacher in the classroom. It was considered that such a child was not from a good home or the child does not have proper training because the usage of the left hand in the Ghanaian culture is an abomination, but now things are different. For example, from my own studies at the university I have come to realise that most of the time it is the intelligent cogent of the child that determines which hand the child should use. Hitherto a child was not supposed to write using the left hand or to accept or receive something from another person using the left hand and all these were barriers in the classroom because the teacher sees the child who is using the left hand as a disrespectful child. Teachers were caning children who were using the left hand to write but it was a result of ignorance. Some of the trained teachers and untrained teachers did not know of the scientific aspect of our body movement... Children who were naturally used to the left hand were forced to use their right hand so they got confused in writing some letters and numbers and instead of using a short time to acquire the skills of writing using one particular hand, they had to learn how to use the other hand in writing and sometimes you see them using both hands and it takes them a longer time for their writing skills to develop.

Mary's comment is similar to that of Hubert in explaining the cultural perception of the use of the left hand in Ghanaian society. Her response also shows that the cultural practice of non-acceptance created problems with children's writing skill development, as they were forced to use a different hand. It is clear from the above statement that she accepted the use of the left hand in her class. Evidence of the change in perception on the use of left hand, as a result of colonial influence on education, was also observed in the following extract from Grace:

The use of the left hand in writing was not accepted. I was told that in the colonial days some teachers would tie a string on a stone around the child's arm to prevent them using the left hand to write. Formerly when I came out of training college, if I happen to see a child using the left hand, I will hold the child's right hand and teach him/her how to use it to write but these days using the left hand to write is acceptable and teachers are no longer forcing children to use the right hand instead of the left hand.

The above example shows a huge change in the understanding of the use of the left hand from colonial times to the present time. It also shows how Grace's classroom practices changed, from forcing children to use their right hand instead of the left, to allowing children to use the hand most comfortable to them. This example of change in perception about children using their left hands shows how the participants believed some aspects of colonial influence improved teaching practice. However, some participants were of the view that the Christian religion, which is based on European culture and British beliefs and values, may contrast with Ghanaian culture and traditions. In addition, most of the participants thought that the influence of foreign missionaries and Western education conflicted with their Ghanaian sociocultural practices, with implications for their classroom teaching. The issues participants talked about included the curriculum, religion, reward and punishment in school, teacher-pupil relationship and the status of teachers in the community. For example, Hubert said:

During our time, we were under colonial rule so the British expected us to learn about them alongside our own history. We completed Form 4 before we had independence so we were taught the proceedings of the British parliament, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the mace-bearer when they go to parliament, the national anthem of Britain- God bless the king, the currency was the British currency, we had to use pounds, shillings and pence until we gained independence. All of them, and especially the English, they made us feel our own names were heathen names so we had to adopt English names and that is why I am called Hubert. They said the African and for that matter the Ghanaian names were connected to fetish.

The above example from Hubert indicates a great sense of resentment about the ways in which colonialism eroded aspects of Ghanaian culture. He went on to explain how Ghanaians had to adopt English names, thus indicating that the very essence of identity was threatened by colonial rule. Indeed, Miller (1993) argues that the evangelisation of Africans by Christian missionaries was not only through education but the conversion of the people based on the missionaries' own religious beliefs. Miller's argument points to the possibility of Christian missionaries' belief that the religion, culture and traditions of the indigenes were inferior and, therefore, the need to impose European philosophy, culture and Western values or a cultural change through Christianity.

Similarly, Frank said:

When the white man brought education to us for the first time, their main aim was to inculcate in us Christianity because if you are able to read and write then you can read the bible, because in those days our great grandfathers had their own religion and way of worshipping. When we were in the middle school and the training college, the syllabus at that time was about foreign religion, foreign culture, everything was foreign, with geography you see everything was foreign because we had to learn about the Australians, the Danish, the French and all that they do. They gave little time to our own culture so by the time you finish your education and you grow up, there is little that you know about your own country, your own culture and way of life.

The data provided by Frank also shows education was about conversion of the students to Christianity. This was achieved through the curriculum, which at the time was heavily European (British) with very little focus on Ghanaian history and culture. Frank expressed the view that education at the time made the Ghanaian child less in tune with his or her own culture and traditions. This apparent shift towards European culture seems to suggest that teachers like Hubert and Frank would have more knowledge on European issues than Ghanaian issues. This could affect what and how they taught at the lower grade after independence, at a time when their teaching practices were expected to reflect more of the Ghanaian culture and less of the European culture.

In addition, Hubert, Frank and Grace all talked about how corporal punishment, such as caning a child in class, was introduced into Ghanaian society as a result of Western education. The following extract from Hubert reveals that:

Schooling was brought by the Europeans, and with it came caning as a method of compelling a child to learn and punishing the child for wrongdoing in class. Ghanaian parents have different ways of punishing children, sometimes you were sent to live with a relative or somebody so that you could be disciplined and for small offences they used their hands or spanked, which was not harsh.

Hubert's comment shows caning of children came with formal education and this practice conflicted with the traditional way of punishing children. Graham (1971, p.34) also noted that caning came through Western education when he said, 'the system of "rewards and punishment" in school must have been similar to that in the contemporary English schools. ...nevertheless, there is evidence to suggest that flogging was systematically employed as punishment for talking and for other offenses'.

Frank's data builds on this when he reported:

Caning is not a cultural practice. It started from the school. When we were children and you are schooling and you abuse your father or mother, they will take you to the school and tell the head teacher, my child does not go for water, sweep, etc. 'I want you to cane him or her' and they will lay you on the table and lash you. This was happening and so as a child you feared the teacher more than your father or mother. This was a very bad practice because culturally you have to obey your parents. You see, when the white man brought education, they had a policy called pay-by-result and they paid the teacher according to the performance of the class so as a teacher during the colonial time you have to put pressure on the children to do well so that you get a better pay and that means caning them.

Frank's data also shows that caning was a practice used in schools and he saw this practice as undermining parents' authority in a way, because children preferred to obey teachers rather than parents for fear of being punished. Perhaps that is why he suggested that some parents took advantage of caning in school to have their children punished by the school for offences carried out at home. In addition, the pay-by or payment by result policy, mentioned by Frank in his comment, was a colonial government's policy, which rewarded teachers on the basis of the performance of their children in the classroom. As a result of this policy, teachers resorted to the use of the cane to force their children to learn, so that they could be better rewarded (Forster, 1967). Frank therefore saw this policy as responsible for the continued use of the cane in schools, even when the policy was no longer in practice.

While Grace also spoke of the practice of caning, she did appear to believe that it could be beneficial. She stated:

Caning was carried out in school but these days we have been told not to do it because there were many accidents, affecting children's eyes, fingers and body marks and the directive came from the ministries so we don't cane children anymore but I think when you spare the rod you spoil the child so we still do it but not in the way it was done in those days. Formerly we could give children up to 20 lashes but not now, this has stopped.

The comment by Grace suggests that caning caused a lot of physical harm to children and, as a result, the Ministry of Education has come up with guidelines on the matter. The evidence provided by Hubert, Frank and Grace shows how colonial influence had some negative consequences and this was evident in the practice of caning.

While the above comments relate to the issue of caning, Dorothy discusses a different issue with regard to the perceived negative influence of colonisation. Speaking of attitudes towards

teachers in the society, she discussed how children are expected to behave towards a teacher or someone older in the community. In the following extract, Dorothy said:

If a child sees a teacher, whether in the classroom or outside, she/he is supposed to greet the teacher politely and offer to help if the teacher is carrying bags or books. But this is no longer the case. Children are no longer ready to greet, carry things for the teacher or even sweep their classrooms. This is not what we were taught at home, for me whatever values we were taught as children, we were expected to hold onto them as adults, because they are still relevant today, especially about how we relate to each other in society. Greeting a teacher for instance is a sign of respect and it is a way to get to know what is happening to a person because we always ask how a person is feeling so, if there is no greeting, one would not know what is happening to the other person or the child.

Dorothy appears to lament some of the positive cultural practices, which she perceived were becoming lost due to the influence of Western education e.g. politeness towards teachers and other senior people in society. This revelation appears to suggest that Western education continues to make the Ghanaian child less Ghanaian in some respects, which is of concern for teachers like Dorothy.

The evidence from the participants above shows that there is conflict between the training participants received based on the European Christian culture and their Ghanaian cultural practices. These findings are supported by Gupta's (2006, p.2) study of Indian teachers, which revealed that 'the teachers in urban India faced a cultural discrepancy between the educational philosophy upon which their professional training was based and the Indian philosophy upon which their actual classroom work was based'. In addition, Bhabha (2004) refers to the conflicts and tensions between cultures of the colonisers and the colonised as a cultural hybridity, with emphasis on how new cultural identities are formed. This raises questions about identity and/or self-representation for teachers and teachers' role in passing on Ghanaian cultural values to children in their classrooms. In this light, Dei (2002) argues for a cultural integration and the need for both teachers and students in Ghana to review and redefine their identity, in order to balance Western values received through formal education with Ghanaian cultural values.

From the above, we can see that, in order to better understand the impact of language and literacy policy on teachers' practices, it is necessary to understand how the experiences of participants in the training colleges they attended influenced their orientations to teaching. The training colleges appear to have had some positive influences on participants, including

enhancing their ability to teach effectively using either English and/or local languages as the medium of instruction in school. In addition, the data revealed that aspects of Western culture helped to prevent Ghanaian teachers from carrying out unhealthy practices, such as preventing children from using their left hand. However, participants also reported some negative consequences of European-influenced education, which included evidence of cross-cultural conflict and a fear of losing the sense of Ghanaian identity. Having explored the broad issue of training, the next section discusses the extent to which specific language and literacy policy changes impacted on participants' classroom practices.

5.2.2 Impact of changes in literacy and language policies on teachers' practices

Here, the extent to which the English-only, local language and NALAP policies impacted on participants' classroom practices is discussed, in order to trace the specific policy changes since 1957. The discussion includes the use of the English-only policy from 1957 to 1970 and 2002 to 2007, the local language policy from 1970 to 2002 and the National Literacy Acceleration Programme (NALAP) from 2009 to date. In addition, it traces these policy changes, in order to better understand the socio-cultural context of the participants' own stories from a postcolonial perspective. Furthermore, it discusses the specific early literacy and language policy changes by successive Ghanaian governments, from the CPP government led by Dr Kwame Nkrumah (1957-1966), to the immediate past NDC government led by President John Dramani Mahama (2012 to 2016). As shown in Table 5.3 below, there have been several educational policy changes between 1957 and 2016, relating specifically to early literacy and language policy changes.

Table 5.3

List of significant early literacy and language policy changes between 1957 and 2016

Government	Year	Lower grade class	Language focus/emphasis
Convention People's Party	1957-1966 /9 years	Class 1-3	English-only
National Liberation Council	1967-1969 /3 years	Class 1 Classes 2, 3	Local languages (Predominant language). English-only
Progress Party	1970-2002 /32year	Class 1-3	Local languages (Predominant local language)
New Patriotic Party	2002-2007 /5 years	KG 1-2; Class 1-3	English-only
New Patriotic Party	2008-2009 /1 years	KG 1- 2; Class 1-3	Local languages (Predominate language)
National Democratic Party	2009-to date	KG 1-2: Class 1-3	NALAP (Bilingualism); (English and Predominant local language)

(Examples of Predominant local languages - Akwapem Twi, Asanti Twi, Ewe, Ga, Dangme, Gonja, Dagbaane, Fante, Nzema, Kasem) Source: Opoku-Amankwah, Edu-Buandoh and Brew-Hammond (2015).

Three specific early literacy and language policy changes occurred between 1957 and 2016. The first occurred when Ghana became independent from Britain in 1957; the policy relates to the adoption of the English language only as the medium of instruction at all levels of education, including the lower grades in all publicly funded schools e.g. Classes 1, 2 and 3. It is not clear the extent to which privately-funded schools at the time implemented the government policies on literacy and language in the lower grades.

The English-only policy was in existence before independence and was continued for another nine years under the CPP government from 1957, until the military overthrow of the government in 1966. The policy continued for another 3 years, in Classes 2 and 3, under the military government led by Lt General Ankrah, until the later half of 1969. During the same period, the use of local languages (e.g. Ewe, Twi, Fante, and Ga) was piloted in Class 1 only, in public schools and eventually fully implemented for about 32 years, from 1970 to 2002, under the Progress Party government led by Dr Kwesi Busia (1970-1972), the Military governments led by General Acheampong's Supreme Military Council-1 (1972-1975), General Frederick Akuffo's Supreme Military Council-2 (1975-1979), Flight Lt. Jerry Rawlings' AFRC government (1979-1991), the NDC government led by Jerry John Rawlings (1992-2000) and, finally, the NPP government led by John Agyekum Kufuor (2001-2002) (Ansah, 2014).

In 2002, the NPP government reversed the literacy and language policy from the use of local language to the use of English-only as the medium of instruction. However, in 2007, following expressions of discomfort by parents and other stakeholders, the policy was again returned to the use of the local language, before the introduction of NALAP (National Literacy Acceleration Programme). Since 2009, NALAP based the literacy and language policy on the use of local language as a medium of instruction with a gradual introduction of English, thus beginning the era of formal Bilingualism or Biliteracy in Ghana; a policy that is still being implemented today. To illustrate the impact of the above changes in language and literacy policies on teachers' practices across the six decades in this study, Table 5.4 below maps each participant's teaching experiences with the period when a policy change occurred. This is followed by a discussion of how participants experienced the use of the policy in the classroom setting.

Table 5.4
Mapping participants with particular language and literacy policy used

Specific Literacy and language Policy	Participants
English-only ^{1957-69; 2002-2007}	Hubert ¹⁹⁶⁴⁻⁶⁷ , Mary ²⁰⁰²⁻²⁰⁰⁷
Local language ¹⁹⁷⁰⁻²⁰⁰²	Frank, Mary, Grace and Jessica

Biliteracy (NALAP) ^{2009-to date}	Mary, Jessica, Judith, Dorothy
Local language and Biliteracy (NALAP)	Mary, Jessica
English-only; Local language; and Biliteracy (NALAP)	Mary

Note: Local languages used: Hubert (Akwapem Twi); Frank (Fante); Mary (Ga); Grace (Dangme); Jessica (Ewe/Ga); Dorothy (Ashanti Twi); Judith (Akwapem Twi) The above table shows that Mary has seen every change, Jessica two/three changes and Hubert, Frank, Grace, Judith and Dorothy, none.

5.2.2.1 English-only as medium of instruction: 1957-1969 (Hubert); 2002-2007 (Mary)

The first time the English-only policy was implemented was from 1957 to 1967, during the period Hubert was teaching in Class 1. When it was reintroduced between 2002 and 2007, Mary was a teacher in Class 2. Although both Hubert and Mary accepted the English-only policy, they faced challenges during the implementation of the policy in the classroom. For example, although English language was the medium of instruction, Hubert found himself using the local Akwapem Twi language in an innovative way to teach mathematics. In contrast, Mary was unable to use the local language to support her classroom teaching, because she did not know the local Ga language well enough. The discussion below provides a detailed evaluation of the effectiveness of the English-only policy, as experienced by both Hubert and Mary in their classrooms.

According to McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh (1975), after independence in 1957 the English language was to be used:

...As the medium of instruction early in the primary course and in urban situations from the beginning where teachers could do so. At the same time the teaching of Ghanaian languages as a class subject has remained compulsory (p.61).

This statement appears to suggest a disparity in the use of the English language between urban and rural primary schools. This means many children in rural areas were not being taught in the English language, but in the local language instead. The fact that local languages were to be taught as a subject shows that, although the emphasis and focus was on children's literacy learning in the English language, the need for the children to learn the local language was not totally abandoned. In addition, the statement shows that some teachers were either unqualified or did not have enough English language skills to teach and help children with their literacy.

Although the English-only policy was not accepted by a majority of parents and other stakeholders after independence in 1957, it was nevertheless adopted as the policy for all levels of education by the CPP government at the time. This lack of acceptance of the policy, coupled with the inability of children to speak the English language, impacted on the teaching practices

of Hubert, who used this policy. When I asked Hubert about the policy he used in the lower grade he said:

I used English in a simple way to teach them (children) and taught mathematics in English and Twi (local language), so it was interwoven with Twi because there were certain things they did not understand but I tried as much as possible to come down to their level

The comment shows that Hubert used English most of the time and he used simple language. However, when it came to the teaching of mathematics, he felt the need to use the local language (Akwapem Twi) to facilitate the process of learning and teaching because of lack of understanding on the part of the children. This lack of understanding compelled Hubert to use innovative methods in his teaching. This is demonstrated in the teaching of mathematics, as follows:

There were certain things the children will not understand no matter how you explain it in English the children will never understand until you add the Twi language. I remember a mathematics lesson when we were doing finding the missing ardent $3 + \square = 7$ you have to formulate a way to teach them. For example, my mother has asked me to get her seven plantains to be given to Kwasi in the kitchen and my mother is sitting outside so, here, take your counting sticks, what number is this? Then they will say 7 (because they have learnt the numerals) so this is the number my mother wants. So count seven and every child will be busily counting. Now you say how many did I give to Kwasi in the kitchen and they will say three so now take that three from the seven and you use simple terms so they can understand. So these are the 3 you brought to Kwasi, how many is are left and they will count 1, 2, 3 and 4, so you say put 4 in the box and then they are able to get the answer so this is a simple method. So at least the Twi should be incorporated.

The above example suggests that despite all Hubert's efforts, the children had difficulty in understanding some lessons, which necessitated the addition of local language. Hubert's data highlights two key weaknesses in the use of the English-only policy on teachers' practices; first, children's lack of knowledge and understanding of the English language forced Hubert to use very simple language in his teaching and, second, Hubert used local language instead of English language to teach mathematics lessons. In contrast, the key strengths in the use of the English-only policy (during the time of independence) relate to the fact that it allowed to some extent, the use of local language for schools in rural areas (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1975) and this enabled Hubert to demonstrate some creative and innovative skills in dealing with the difficult classroom situations he faced, which impacted positively on his practice.

When I asked Hubert if he supported the English-only policy for children in lower grades, he stated that:

I did not really support it because it was very difficult for the children. But it was independence time and everyone was excited that we were no longer under colonial rule so as a teacher you have to do your best for the children. Later when I was head teacher and I was posted to an under-performing school, I used my experience of teaching children English to bring the school up.

Hubert's response shows his dilemma on the issue. On the one hand, he saw the difficulties the use of English had on his teaching but, on the other hand, he felt obliged to support it because of the period in history and the enthusiasm shown by the children towards the English language. I later asked if he would have preferred to use local language, he had this to say:

Since your work will be inspected and an officer will come to see if the policy laid down by government is being followed we had to follow it. That was why I was saying that there were two languages that we were using English and Twi so when we are teaching we restrict ourselves to English. It was only Mathematics and other subjects that sometimes you had to use Twi if the children do not understand your teaching but during the English language and Twi language periods the children should be taught exclusively in English or Twi.

Hubert's response appears to show he would have preferred a policy that encouraged the use of both the local language and English, rather than the use of only English. However, he was happy to use the English-only policy because he could switch to Twi, the local language, to make learning easier for the children and also because it was a government directive. The response also points to code-switching of languages, showing a form of bilingual learning where teachers used English as the medium of instruction but explained certain lessons in the local language. Hubert's narrative points to teaching Twi or the local language as a subject, so that children learn how to read and write a local language. I also asked how other teachers felt about the use of English-only in lower grades, he said:

I will not say all teachers accepted this policy because some teachers had English and others had Twi when they were attending school, so those who had English will say in our time we were taught in English in the lower primary so we feel that helped us so why don't we apply the same thing to help these children. Others too will say they had Twi and it helped them so although some complied, others did so reluctantly.

The above shows a disparity in the use of local languages and English during the colonial era, which meant that, while some children were taught in the English language, others were taught in the local language. Hubert's comments on the disparity in the language used as the medium

of instruction receives support from Ansah (2014), who also notes that between 1951 and 1956 local language was used as a medium of instruction in Class 1 but English was used in Classes 2 and 3. In addition to this, Hubert's evidence shows resistance to the English-only policy by teachers who supported local language as the medium of instruction. Hubert suggests that those who accepted the English-only policy did so because they believed English was a contributing factor to their success as teachers, and those who resisted it did so only because of their own experiences in school. This suggests that teachers' resistance to language and literacy policies began after independence and it is proof that teachers are likely to flout policy if they do not agree with it as suggested by Ball (1987). It is possible that teachers, who resisted the English-only policy, would be using more local language, with the argument that children did not understand their lessons.

The use of English-only in some former colonial African countries has been criticised by Kioko et al. (2014), who claim that:

...the barrier of starting school in a language that is not the learners' home language changes the focus of the learning from learner-centred to teacher-centred, and thus reinforces passiveness and silence in classrooms, which in turn suppresses the young learner's potential and liberty to express themselves freely (p.3).

The above view is shared by Opoku-Amankwa (2009, p.131), who observed, in a study on the English-only policy between 2002 and 2007, that the policy leads to 'lack of confidence, a feeling of inadequacy and generally low levels of self-esteem' for children who are unable to express themselves in English. Hubert's experience with regard to the use of English and the local language in the teaching of mathematics is confirmed by a study conducted by Davies and Agbenyega (2012), in which both languages were used in situations where teachers had to explain difficult concepts to the children. Although the study focused on the teaching of children in upper primary, the findings have implications for teaching in lower grades. These findings suggest that there was a need for flexibility in the implementation of the English-only policy in the lower grades. This suggestion receives support from Ball's (1993) argument that the implementation of some policies needs innovation and adaptation in order to succeed. Also, Hubert's experience of switching from English to the local language is supported by the work of Clegg and Afitska (2011) on code switching in African classrooms, and Bunyi (2005) on the use of Kiswahili and English in Kenyan classrooms. Both writers see these practices as important in African classrooms, where the language used in school is different from the language used in the home setting.

In addition, Hubert's creative ability to use new strategies, based on his understanding of the daily lives of children, helped him to deal with the classroom situation. This form of teaching is supported by Levenson (2013), who argues for the need for creativity and the use of examples from children's lives in solving mathematical problems in classrooms. These findings appear to suggest a sense of responsibility and freedom in the pedagogical decisions Hubert made as a teacher to ensure the needs of the children were met. However, Hubert faced implementation challenges, due to the conflict between the local language and English-only policy decisions and the social and cultural practices of Ghanaian society at the time of independence. This evidence receives support from the work of Ansah (2014) on the 'language in education policies in post-independent Ghana', who argued that the 'conflict between policy decisions' was partially due to the fact that language policy decisions after independence did 'not reflect the sociolinguistic practices in Ghana' (p.1).

Regarding the policy decision to use English as the medium of instruction immediately after independence, Owu-Ewie's (2006) work on the 'English-only policy in education' in Ghana was critical of the CPP government, led by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, for his decision to adopt the English-only policy at the time of independence – bearing in mind Nkrumah's critical position on the negative effect of colonialism and neo-colonialism. Indeed, the use of English and learning of English for young children, whose first language is not English, could still indicate its supremacy over local languages and the preparation of children for taking up future positions in the inherited colonial government administration. Perhaps Nkrumah's decision to adopt the policy was due to his recognition of English as a more widely used or globalised language, which could be more economically beneficial to Ghanaians on the world stage (Nkrumah, 2001). This decision received support from Opoku-Amankwa and Brew-Hammond (2011), who opine that Nkrumah's acceptance of the policy was due to its neutrality in a highly multilingual country like Ghana.

Hubert's statement also shows that children did not seem to be gaining a full understanding of their lessons, which called for a change in his practice. The reason for the children's inability to follow lessons was probably because they did not understand English, due to the use of local language at home. Hubert states that:

During our time (1957-1967) we were restricted to the local language (Akwapem Twi). Everything was in the local language 100% but what is happening now is that someone will start with the local language and then end in English. 'Kwasi, Kɔtɔ ntorewa ene

'yam' fa bra meaning Kwasi go and buy garden eggs and yam', 'to bayire eni 'tin tomatoes' (buy yam and tin of tomatoes).

Hubert's statement shows that local languages were widely spoken during the time of independence, explaining why most children in his class started school having no previous knowledge of either spoken or written English. With regard to the use of local language at home, Dei (2005) argues that local languages are widely used because Ghanaians are proud of their languages, traditions and cultures.

Despite the fact that local language was widely preferred by some, Hubert took the view that using English-only at the time of independence was not culturally good for children:

Most children did not speak English before school, so using only English was not good for them, we could not explain things well to them in English but if we were to use Twi it would have been easier. To me, using English is not good culturally because English is not our language. I remember some professors who were taught only in English and some who changed their names because of school and they all say they lost a lot of their culture.

He was of the view that the fact English was a foreign language made teaching certain aspects of Ghanaian life difficult for the children to comprehend. He explained in later interviews that "Going to school those days made some Ghanaians look down on the language and culture and these people refused to visit their hometowns or have anything to do with the customs and traditions of their people".

The English-only policy continued until the late 1960s, when the local language policy was introduced (Owu-Ewie, 2006). By this time, Hubert had moved on to teach in the upper grade. When asked about any change in the English-only policy he said:

When Nkrumah was overthrown, everything changed. I was no longer teaching in the infant school but I know teachers were asked to go back to using Twi in teaching the children so I can say that was a change. You see it was a Military government and there were people who didn't want teachers to use English so it was like everything Nkrumah did at independence was wrong.

Hubert's statement above, points to a change in policy due to the new military government of the National Liberation Council, which took over power from the CPP government in 1966. Although the implementation of the local language policy was initially well received by successive governments until 2002 (military governments and civilian governments), there was a consensus among policy makers and the general public about the need to improve children's literacy in the English language (Opoku-Amankwa, 2009). This situation contributed to the

reintroduction of the English-only policy (Ansah, 2014; Opoku-Amankwa, 2009; Owu-Ewie, 2006), which was advised as follows:

Instruction at all levels will be in English, however, pupils and students in all Basic schools (both public and private) will be required to study a Ghanaian language as a subject, that is from KG1 to JHS 3. Where there are teachers, French will be taught from JHS 1 to SHS 3 (Ministry of Education, Textbook Development and Distribution Policy, p.12).

Although this new policy is generally similar to the one experienced by Hubert, in terms of the use of English as the medium of instruction, it is different in its emphasis on implementation in both urban and rural areas. Mary received pre-training on the change in policy before teaching in the English language in 2002. She commented:

In 2002, under the government of Kufuor we were made to attend courses and they said everything should be in English from the start, that is, from Class 1 through all the classes... Every government wants to change something in education especially when it comes to literacy. Some government will come and say we want our children to know more Ghanaian language and others would say because English is our national language the child should know more English.

Mary's comments above demonstrate her belief that every government that comes to power wants to change the language and literacy policy for lower grades. Her comments seem to suggest that the New Patriotic Party (NPP) government, headed by John Agyekum Kufuor, was responsible for the discontinuity of the local language policy in its quest to make children learn English at an early age. Her comments also show courses were provided for teachers to help them adapt to the policy change. Given the fact that Mary used English in upper primary, where she was first posted after training, this change of policy would not have had any new impact on what she was already doing. However, for teachers who were using local language, the return to English-only would have meant a big change and adjusting to new ways of doing things. Indeed, a study by Opoku-Amankwa and Brew-Hammond (2011) on primary school teachers' use of the English-only policy showed that the change in policy brought with it a lot of challenges for teachers, with some having the type of experience Hubert had, i.e. using local language in the teaching of mathematics to help children understand lessons. Mary also noticed the challenges teachers faced in using English-only when she said:

The policy at that time was that children should be taught in English-only so that they can learn the English language better. So when you start teaching you use only English language and sometimes you realise children come from places where the background is just the local language so they do not understand and get confused when you start teaching in English language.

The above comment suggests that the reintroduction of the English-only policy was to improve children's English, so that they could do better in school. Indeed, Opoku-Amankwa (2009) also noted that one of the reasons for the reintroduction of the English-only policy was to make children start learning English early, to improve on the use of English in school, given the fact that all examinations, except the local language test of course, were in English. Mary's experience was similar to Hubert's, in the sense that the children they taught did not have enough English language skills to understand being taught solely in English, compelling both Hubert and Mary to resort to innovative means to teach the children in the classroom. Mary said, *"I could not use Ga to explain things to the children because I did not understand it so that was another problem and there were times when I tried using Fante"*. Unlike Hubert, Mary's classroom practice was more challenging because she did not know the local language, Ga, in order to use it in the way Hubert did with Twi in his class. By attempting to use Fante in a school where Ga was the prescribed school language shows her ingenuity in trying to support her children by whatever means. However, this would not be very beneficial to the children because the catchment of her school was within an area with a broad diversity of languages.

Yet despite these difficulties, both Hubert and Mary reported that the English-only policy was beneficial to children. Hubert said *"teaching in English helped many children to learn the English language, which has become our national language, early in school"*. Hubert explained that this was necessary because *"Many children did not know how to speak English language before coming to school"*. This suggests that, by exposing the Ghanaian child to English early in school, children who did not otherwise know much English would learn how to communicate, read and write in English, and thus succeed later in school. Mary also stated *"I think learning English language in lower grade will help children since we use English throughout school in Ghana, all our examinations are in the English language so without English children would fail their examinations and there would be no future for them"*. Mary appears to be suggesting that children's future success depends on their ability to know and use the English language. This shows the place of English in Ghanaian social mobility.

Although both the Convention People's Party (CPP) and New Patriotic Party (NPP) governments appear to have good reasons for the use of the English-only policy, the experiences of Mary and Hubert, as stated earlier, suggest that the policy had some significant negative impacts on their practice. First, the data shows that teachers' practices were affected

negatively because the majority of the children they were teaching could not understand their lessons fully. In some cases, teachers could not explain lessons in the local language because they did not understand the prescribed school language themselves. This pushed participants to adapt their teaching to the needs of the children, by using creative and innovative methods, such as resorting to the use of local language to support their teaching, instead of using only English. It is possible to believe that, based on the experience of the two teachers quoted above, some children would continue to have difficulties with understanding lessons in the English language in the upper grades and throughout their education. The data provided by the two participants appears to suggest that they were given no guidelines on how to use English as the medium of instruction in classrooms where the majority of the children did not understand it, though it appears there were some guidelines on how to teach English and Twi as subjects.

Another negative aspect of the English-only policy relates to alienation from Ghanaian culture. Hubert was of the view that using English-only at the time of independence was not culturally good for children when he said:

Most children did not speak English before school, so using only English was not good for them, we could not explain things well to them in English but if we were to use Twi, it would have been easier. To me, using English is not good culturally because English is not our language. I remember some professors who were taught only in English and some who changed their names because of school and they all say they lost a lot on their culture.

He was of the view that the fact English was a foreign language made teaching certain aspects of Ghanaian life difficult for the children to comprehend. He explained in later interviews that “Going to school those days made some Ghanaians look down on the language and culture and these people refused to visit their hometowns or have anything to do with the customs and traditions of their people”. Hubert’s statement receives support from Arowolo (2010), who argues that the use of English in African schools alienates children from their culture because the mastering of English language takes precedence over their proficiency in African languages, which decline as a result. Ball (1983) also asserts that the acceptance of Western education in Africa committed Africans to Western culture and values, resulting in a rejection of African traditional values and ways of living.

In summary, the data provided by Hubert and Mary show that there were advantages and disadvantages of the English-only policy. Among the advantages was the fact that, by learning English (not only a national language but a global one) early in school, children became more

used to it. Another advantage of early exposure to English, as identified by participants, was the fact that children would be in a better position to pass their examinations, which are conducted in English. Participants felt this could open up opportunities for children's future economic and social progress. However, the data also revealed a number of disadvantages of the policy, according to these participants. Although Hubert and Mary accepted the English-only policy, their data also indicated that in practice the policy was less effective because most children had little or no knowledge of the English language before starting school and could not follow what they were being taught. This made classroom interaction difficult for both teachers and children. Hubert and Mary also provided data to show that some untrained teachers could not use English effectively as a medium of instruction because of a lack in their own educational background.

Again, the refusal of some teachers to switch to the use of English as the medium of instruction during the changeover in policy also points to policy resistance by teachers. From the experiences of Hubert in particular, we can see how the re-emergence of the English-only policy in 2002, after thirty-two years of using local languages in lower grades, revealed a fundamental problem in the way educational policy decisions were made, in general, and, more specifically, how language and literacy policy decisions were taken during the post-colonial era.

These results raise questions, such as why the English-only policy was replaced by the local language policy in 1970, only to be reintroduced in 2002 after about thirty-two years. What went 'wrong' with the use of local languages and/or English only at the lower grade? In response to these questions, it appears that the change in policy, coupled with the inconsistency in the choice of a particular language and literacy policy over the decades following independence, partially accounts for the difficulties Hubert and Mary faced teaching in English in lower grade classrooms.

The next section further explores the answers to these questions, by evaluating the experiences of Frank, Mary, Grace and Jessica on the use of the local language policy in the classroom.

5.2.2.2 Local language as a medium of instruction: 1970-2002 (Frank, Mary, Grace, Jessica); 2007-2009 (Mary)

The first time the local language policy was used for the whole of lower grade after independence was in 1970 by the Progress Party government, led by Kwasi Abrefa Busia; replaced in 2002 by the reintroduction of the English-only policy by the New Patriotic Party of

John Agyekum Kufuor (Ansah, 2014). The reintroduction of the English-only policy ended in the 2007/08 academic year, followed by the use of the local language policy, which was then integrated with the use of English in a Biliteracy policy, in 2009, under the National Literacy Acceleration Programme (NALAP) (Hartwell, 2010).

The local language policy was a means to help children learn English using their local language and it was experienced at different times by Frank, Mary, Grace and Jessica. The results revealed that Frank and Grace accepted the policy, because they felt children needed to be taught in their local language, although, in practice they had some difficulties due to the teaching materials, which were all in English. However, Mary was indifferent towards the policy because she was not able to use the local language to teach in the classroom due to her own lack of knowledge of the Ga language. Like Mary, Jessica could not effectively use the local language in the classroom, and was also very critical of the policy. She felt children needed to understand English, because it is a global language, and that the local language should be used at home. All the participants adopted different innovative ways of using English to support the local language as the medium of instruction, any time they could not use the local language in their teaching. The discussion below provides a detailed account of the effectiveness of the local language policy, as experienced by Frank, Mary, Grace and Jessica, across four decades of the study.

Of the four participants, only Mary experienced the use of the local language policy the first and second time round, before the era of NALAP in 2009, and therefore she had a vast array of experiences to share. Also, Mary is the only participant in the study who experienced the English-only and the local language policy, and did so at different times. The evidence from Mary's data reveals that the main reason for the change from English-only to local language policy in 1970, and the change from local language back to the English-only policy in 2002, was the inability of teachers to use English and/or the local language effectively in the classroom. The above therefore suggests that the policy decision on which language of instruction is appropriate at the lower grade is a key determinant of the effectiveness of teachers in the classroom. These issues are discussed in detail below.

The local language policy, cited in Mfum-Mensah (2005), stated that:

In the first years of primary education, the Ghanaian language prevalent in the local area is to be used as the medium of instruction, whilst English is studied as a subject. From Primary Four onward, English replaces the Ghanaian language as the medium of instruction, and the Ghanaian language becomes another on the timetable (p.76).

An analysis of the above policy shows that children in the lower grade were to be taught in a language of their locality in all subjects on the timetable, with the exception of English, which was to be taught as a subject. Like the English-only policy, English was to remain the medium of instruction from Primary Class 4 onwards, with the local language to be studied as a subject until the end of basic education. In a way, this policy endorses a form of bilingual learning, the use of local language as a medium of instruction and the learning of English. The intention of the policy makers appears to be consistent with the view that learning in a language familiar to the children, or using the child's mother tongue, encourages children to learn better (Kioko et al., 2014; Cummins, 2000). However, rather than the use of the child's first language or mother tongue, the policy was about the use of the prevalent or predominant language spoken in the region where the school was situated. Although the idea of using the mother tongue was appreciated by many teachers, including Frank and Grace, the interpretation of 'mother tongue', to mean the prevalent language of the area where the school is, comes with its own difficulties. This was explained by an official of the Ghana Education Service, who said:

Actually, for language and literacy, we take our mandate from the language policy for schools and Ghana's education policy for language states that we should use the L1 (first language). Here, we are looking at the child's mother tongue but then in Ghana, it is very difficult to find very homogenous societies. There are lots of movement, intermarriages etc. so we define L1 to be not just the mother tongue but also predominant language of an environment. For instance, if you go to Kumasi, you don't need be Ashanti to learn how to speak Twi or if you live in Accra, the predominant language is Ga and in Kumasi it is Twi, in the Volta Region it is Ewe, so the predominant language or playground language. However, sometimes, the predominant language in certain portions or neighborhoods is not the playground language of the child so, in such an environment, we have pockets of settlements so when you go to Kumasi, we have Fanti New Town, you have Anloga, and you have the Zongo where the Northern languages will be playground language for the children.

The explanation given above seems to suggest that the interpretation of the local language policy is not necessarily about a child's first language at home or what is designated the mother tongue, but rather the most common language in a particular area. This appears to suggest that not all children's first languages are accepted for use in school, which is in itself a disadvantage with consequences for teachers' practices. In addition, it appears that the prevalent language of an area may not always be the language of the school because, out of the many languages spoken in the country (about 79), only eleven are selected for learning in school (Ansah, 2014). The reason for the interpretation of children's mother tongue as the 'predominate' language is

because Ghana is a multilingual country and children speak different home languages which might be different from the school language.

Migration and settlement of families in places where their language is different from that of the town or region where the school is situated could also create problems for children in school. To use the mother tongue of every child would, therefore, be very difficult, if not impossible to accomplish, hence the need to use the language of the locality (or the predominant language) where the child lives. In a study by Nyaga and Anthonissen (2012), the writers observed that the use of children's mother tongue in school is difficult in multilingual countries because children come from diverse linguistic backgrounds, with hardly a common language between them. This means children are likely to have different mother tongues or first languages, so the predominant language of the area would then become their common language. The official also said:

Recently on monitoring, we came to a school close to Tema, in fact, in Ashiaman stretch of Tema, we found different languages so you get a child or group of children they speak Ga, others in the same class do not understand any Ga, they speak Ewe, and then another group and you find they are not speaking any of the two. So now, we plan to go back and study the situation because there is no common playground language and if you talk about dominant language, they are not Ga speaking children so all the options we have given in this school do not seem to be working. So the teacher is trying but that is one case out of the many.

In this example, Ashiaman, which is a vast township between Tema and Accra where the Ga language should be the predominant language in school, appears to have children speaking three or more different languages because of the movement of people from different parts of the country to that township. This situation shows the difficulties children would have, not only in the classroom, but also in the playground. Although the official appears to suggest that this is one case out of the many, it can be concluded from her previous statement that this situation exists in some parts of Kumasi, an Ashanti speaking area where there are large settlements of other minority tribes. However, there is a possibility that children may be able to learn the predominant language of the place where they live, so that that they can benefit from its use in the classroom. Interestingly, from what the official said, the policy text does not give anything away on the modality for the use of local language in practice, which is likely to affect what teachers do in their individual classrooms:

Actually, we have had this language policy of teaching the children in LI but by then we had not come out with the strategy to implement it and to train teachers in how it should be done so it was left to the competences of the teacher and it was not the best...

Indeed, the GES official suggested that there was no strategy in place for teachers to follow regarding how to go about using the local language as a medium of teaching. This means teachers would need to make a personal decision on what to do and how to approach using the local language in their individual classrooms. This view receives support from Akyeampong et al. (2013), who argue that teachers in Africa do not receive sufficient training on how to use the local language policy as a medium of instruction in as multilingual classroom. This could have serious consequences for some teachers in practice and could lead to a situation where they may not be engaged with trying to implement the local language policy.

Although the local language policy appears to favour the use of children's home language, Mary commented on how the lack of a common language and the difficulties associated with using multiple languages (multilingualism) posed a challenge for teachers' in implementing the local language policy in the lower grade. In addition, it demonstrates the complex nature of implementing a policy which will impact positively on teachers' classroom practices. When Mary was asked to talk about the extent to which the different languages used by children in the classroom affected her teaching practices, she argued that:

I think because parents move from one place to the other in search of better living conditions, they move along with their children e.g. I am from the Volta region where I speak Ewe and I move to Accra, I move with my children from a place where the Ewe language is spoken to a place where Ga is spoken and my children will have to learn the Ga language to be able to communicate and be accepted in the community. So you realise that, no matter how literate the children are in Ewe language, they will find it difficult learning in the new Ga language because it will not be a familiar language to them, which would affect their learning and the way I teach them because I do not understand all the local languages my children speak, and since I am not very good at speaking Ga I had to use the English language most of the time.

From Mary's comments we can see that some children would have difficulty in school because they may have to learn a new language when they change schools, which could be different from their first language or the language spoken in that part of the country. Mary did not understand the different local languages spoken by children in her classroom, which reduced the effectiveness of her interaction with the children and her teaching practices. Although Mary could have learnt the local Ga language, in order to be more effective in the class, she did not

do so until later in her career. She explained that she engaged in some further training when she was posted to kindergarten:

I was made to go for a language course to learn the Ga language. We had training for teachers during the holidays. You had to go for workshops and it wasn't for you to teach the children but it was for you to be able to communicate with the children in the classroom. We were not being trained to teach the children the local language, we were only prepared to communicate with them.

In her statement, Mary argued that the language course she took was meant to help her use the Ga language as the medium of instruction and not to teach children how to speak, read and write in the Ga language. Given the fact that the local language was to be learnt as a subject, Mary could have learnt the Ga language in more detail to enable her not only to use it in teaching but also to support children's literacy in the local language. In addition Mary's positive attitude to teaching using the local language was the result of her early childhood studies at university, where she gained a better understanding of how to use the language effectively in a classroom situation involving children. This suggests that teachers' attitudes towards local language is complex and cannot simply be changed through further education and professional training.

Furthermore, it seems the effort made by the Ghana Education Service, to help teachers in the use of local languages, was not sufficient. In addition, we can see that the policy on the use of local languages can be effective if teachers who have local language knowledge are posted to lower primary. Mary's comments further suggest that care was not taken by the GES in the placement of teachers, to ensure that teachers with local language knowledge were put in the lower grade classes, where knowledge of the local language was necessary.

Although Hubert did not experience the use of the local language policy directly, as a head teacher at the time when the change from English-only to local language policy occurred in 2002, he knew about the local language policy, and said head teachers "...always ensured that teachers teaching in the lower classes understood the local language...those who could not were put in the upper classes where they can make proper use of the English language". Frank also appeared to suggest that teachers were posted to towns where they knew the local language:

The Ghana Education Service (GES) makes sure you are posted to a place (a class) where you will be comfortable using the local language as the medium of instruction. If you are Akan, you are posted to Akan area so that you are able to communicate with

the children. That was the policy. I don't know whether it is stopped because it would be difficult for someone who is Ewe to be posted to Larteh and be put to say Primary 2 where the children will be speaking Twi or Larteh. The teacher will not understand the children and the children will also not understand the teacher. It will be problematic.

However, when Jessica was posted to the Volta Region, where she could use the Ewe language as the medium of instruction, she preferred to use the English language instead. This shows that although teachers may be posted or placed in classrooms where they know the local language, they may decide not to use that language in their teaching due to their own attitudes and beliefs. Beach (1994) argues that knowledge, beliefs and the sociocultural contexts of classroom situations have much influence on teachers' classroom practices, which appears to be the case in the example given by Jessica above. This resonates with Saracho's (2012) assertion that teachers' classroom practices are greatly influenced by their beliefs and the theories they hold on teaching and learning. It appears from Jessica's attitude that she favoured the use of English over the local language as the medium of instruction. Indeed, Jessica said, "...any time during the Ghanaian language period, I tell other teachers, you are familiar with the language so can you teach the language for me?" Jessica asked other teachers to teach the Ewe language in her class, although she speaks the language and had learnt Ewe in the training college. It appears her unwillingness to use the language was largely due to lack of confidence:

I had a problem with the Ghanaian language. ...I was referred in the Ghanaian language because I did not do Ghanaian language in my basic school and in the secondary so it was not easy for me to learn the language at the training college. I had to write the local language examination again.

In contrast to Jessica's approach in dealing with the use of the local language as the medium of instruction, Grace's first posting, after completing training college, was to an area where she did not speak the local language of the school:

Because I am the master of the class, if I lack that ability to use the language, nobody is coming from his or her class to take the class for me so I had to do it myself. I had to learn Dangme and write Dangme and teach it.

The above statement shows that, though Grace did not speak Dangme, she considered herself in charge of the class and, therefore, the only one who could take decisions and make things better. Unlike Jessica, Grace appears to have a different attitude towards the use of local languages and was prepared to do whatever she could to achieve proficiency.

Jessica also talked about the different languages spoken by children in her Kindergarten class: “...not all the children understand and speak Ga. Some are Akans ... you have to use Twi”. In addition she said, “...some are not used to the Ga and some are not Gas, so they do not understand and so you have to explain what you are teaching in English for them”. Apart from children speaking Twi and Ga in the classroom, the location of Jessica’s school was in a community and catchment area where many Ghanaian languages are spoken, some of which are predominant languages and others minority languages.

Frank also provided evidence pointing to the difficult situation in which the predominant language of his town was not used in the classroom because, “...it is excluded from the local language policy...we have come to a time when our own culture is going; even here the children don’t learn our language in school...children were not being taught in Larteh which is the predominant language of the area...the schools use Akwapem Twi rather than Larteh”. This means not all the predominant languages are actually used in every school as prescribed by the policy. Frank’s view was also echoed in a study by Obeng (1997), which showed children from the Guan areas (Winneba and Larteh, where Efutu and Kyerepong are the predominant languages) did not use their local languages in the classroom, instead they used Fante and Akwapem Twi. Indeed, Opoku-Amankwa et al. (2015) revealed that only eleven languages out of over forty languages have been developed for learning in school, excluding the majority of other languages completely. This means many children will miss out on the use of their first language to develop their skills in the use of other languages, including English. In addition, the inability of the government to develop more local languages for use in schools could also relate to a colonial mentality and attitude, and an inability to know how to deal in a policy context with the numerous local languages in the country.

Having discussed the views of Mary, Frank, Grace and Jessica regarding the use of the local language as the medium of instruction, we now proceed to discuss in detail how the local language policy affected their teaching practices. The discussion starts with Frank, who taught during the second decade of the study (1967-1977) and ends with Jessica, who taught in the fifth decade of the study (1997-2007).

The experiences of Frank, Mary, Grace and Jessica with the local language policy

During the decade in which Frank was teaching lower grade, there was a change from English-only policy to local language policy in the lower grade, so Frank had to use local language as

the medium of instruction. Frank was of the opinion that children needed to be taught in their local language when he said:

English is a foreign language and because children come to school straight from the home where their medium of expression is a local language they cannot be taught in a foreign language which they do not understand and if the teacher should teach them in English, that will make the teacher's work very difficult so as a teacher you have to teach the child in a language he understands until he can speak some English.

I asked Frank why it was important to use the local language and he stated that:

Language is important because it shows my identity first as Guan or Kyerepong and second as a Ghanaian. There are so many ethnic groups so belonging to a particular group shows your identity and we socialise in that language because through birth a child is born in a family and that is the first step. By the time the child grows the child will be meeting other children from their community so the child will be picking up the culture and language especially from the mother through the Ananse stories and all the things our mothers teach. So for me the child learns through his/her language. I believe in the African culture as a means for learning so I make sure that my children first believe in themselves as Guans before any other culture.

Frank's comment suggests he saw the local language policy as important for children's learning and for his own practice as a teacher. This is because, as a teacher, his work would be difficult if he had to teach children in a language they did not understand. Frank also saw children's language as a means of cultural identification, socialisation and learning.

Frank's views on the local language supports the views of those who believe the use of children's local language in school is a more effective means for learning. For example, Ball (1983) argues that it is more beneficial to educate children in their mother tongue, rather than a colonial European language. This argument receives support from Opoku-Amankwa et al. (2015), who promotes the use of local language teaching materials in Ghana. There is evidence to suggest that, although Frank believed in the importance of the local language, he sometimes had to use English during his teaching. For example, when I asked him how he used the local language in his class, he said, "*I used vernacular but we intersperse it with the English language*".

Frank's use of English language to support the use of local language in the classroom appears to be opposite to that of Hubert, (during the English-only policy) who used the local language to support his teaching during the first decade. The different approaches of Frank and Hubert may be due to each teacher's own strategies, in terms of finding creative or innovative ways of

responding to the needs of the children in their class. Frank's approach suggests that some teachers accepted the policy and made serious attempts to implement it in the classroom.

Although Judith was not among the participants to experience the local language policy at this time, her experience with the use of English in support of her teaching at the lower grade helps explain Frank's use of local language alongside English. Judith (under NALAP) said, "*When I am teaching other subjects like Religion and Moral Education I use English because there are some words which are not in Twi (language), so I have to use English*". Although both Frank and Judith support the use of local language with English, the difficulty the two teachers seemed to face was to do with finding appropriate words in the local language for teaching certain concepts.

A study by Davis, Bishop and Seah (2015), on language preference for the teaching of mathematics in primary schools in Ghana, outlines that teaching materials used in schools are written in English, rather than in the local language, which could account for the use of English in support of the local language in class. Similarly, a study conducted by Nyaga and Anthonissen (2012) in Kenya also observed that teachers used English in support of the local language because the materials for teaching and examinations were all in English, which made it difficult for the exclusive use of local language and easier for teachers to use both local language and English in teaching. This suggests that there is a gap in the implementation of the local language policy; this gap is referred to by Knoepfel et al. (2011) as a deficit in policy implementation, resulting from inadequate resources being made available to meet the needs of teachers and children in the classroom.

When Frank was asked his personal view on his preference for the use of English or the local language as a medium of instruction, he was rather critical of the use of English first:

Personally, I don't think our children should be learning to speak English early in lower primary...because learning their mother tongue first before learning the English language helps them to understand things better...not the opposite. This explains why children who went to public school (Middle school) do better in the Secondary school than those who went to private school, where the teachers start using English (as a medium of instruction) from the child's first day in school so the children start rattling the English (language) off. The other reason is that when you look at the textbooks, they are all written by Nigerians. In Nigeria, they do not use English but their own language, for example Yuroba. So I think we should not force our children to speak English. What I realised when I came back from Nigeria was that, when a teacher uses local language in teaching mathematics and science, the children get it better but if an officer comes to see you doing that, you will be in trouble.

Frank is suggesting that children should first learn their mother tongue before learning English, in order to improve their future learning. This shows Frank supports the use of local language in the lower grade. Frank's suggestion of the need for children's first language in African schools receives support from Benson (2002, p.303), who argues that 'the use of the mother tongue in school provides a basis for students to learn subject disciplines and to develop literacy skills upon which competency in the second or foreign language can be built'. In the above comment, Frank used the example of children who attended private school, where the medium of instruction and communication is English from the first day in school, compared to children who attended public schools, where instruction is first in the local language before switching over to the English. This shows that private schools do not follow the local language policy, which manifests as a failing of the local language policy in a way, since it appears that its implementation is somehow selective, depending on the school a child attends. According to Frank, children who were taught using the local language first did better in secondary school, compared with those who were taught in English throughout because the former had a better understanding of their lessons.

Frank argued that making children use English early in school is not beneficial, as it creates future problems in children's learning, particularly in mathematics and science. Although Frank seemed to be advocating for the use of local language in teaching mathematics and science, even in the upper grade, a study by Davis et al. (2015) appears to suggest that some children in upper primary prefer to be taught mathematics in English, so that they can learn English better. The children in that study seemed to accord English greater importance than their own local language. This means that the aftermath of colonial rule is still being felt by children of post-colonial times. When I asked about his thoughts on the English-only policy, he stated that:

It is very difficult to say. During Nkrumah's time although English language was used in school, the local language was encouraged but after the overthrow of his government, some governments chose to use local language and others chose English so you can see that some governments did not promote local language like Nkrumah did. There was a time when the government took away the teaching of culture or religion and moral education where children learn about our culture in the curriculum so which culture will they be learning? I see that these governments think English is better for us, even some teachers do not want to use local language in teaching. But when you read the newspapers some professors are saying we should use our local language in school.

Frank believes learning the English language alienated children from their language and culture because, by using English, children will be exposed to English culture. He also questioned the NPP government's decision to remove a subject from the curriculum, which taught children about Ghanaian culture. Frank's views on the influence of English on culture receives support from Arowolo (2010), who suggests that the use of English in Africa alienates its users from their community and leads to a cultural dualism, where one's African identity is entangled with that of Western culture. I asked Frank to explain what he said and he stated:

We write to NGOs or friends abroad and say when you are coming to Ghana we have no books in our library so bring us books and when they bring the books they will be British books and this is happening everywhere and it is a problem for our culture because the children will be reading about Cinderella and all those sort of books. Go to schools and their libraries and you will see that most of their books are foreign and no Ghanaian story books. Only last Sunday a Japanese lady she was posted to teach in the KG in 2013 for the whole academic year brought some books for the children and they were all were about Japan. Japanese books and some tall dolls so when our children begin to play with these dolls what do you think will happen to these children? They will be thinking everything good is from the white people. And you know what happened? People were clapping their hands in appreciation and I was looking at them.

Frank seems to be quite indignant about donated books from other countries because of his belief that books and artifacts from other cultures are likely to influence children in their attitudes towards their own language and culture. His strong displeasure about books like *Cinderella* and others is because the stories usually depict a country's culture and thinking in one way or another. Reading of such books by Ghanaian children according to him is likely to increase British colonial influence in the country.

The experiences of Mary, as described in detail below, are quite different from Frank's. Mary's first experience of teaching lower primary was in the third decade of the study (1977-1987). During this period, the country was under different military regimes and many teachers were leaving Ghana for Nigeria for economic reasons, leaving many classrooms without teachers (Mfum-Mensah, 2005).

Mary taught upper grade (where she used English in teaching) after training college, so when she was posted to a lower grade she had to use local language, which was Ga. However, she did not know Ga because she had learnt the Fanti language during her training. Unfortunately, she was unable to use the Ga language effectively in the classroom. When I asked Mary about how she dealt with the challenge of using Ga in the classroom, she said: "*I was forced to start using the Ga language which was the local language when I had to teach Primary Two*". She

went on, “*I used English. I could not have used any other language because I did not understand the Ga language well and I was not able to pronounce words well in the language so I had to use English*”. It is clear from Mary’s response that her teaching was done in English and not the local language. This highlights a disadvantage of the posting under the local language policy and its impact on Mary’s practice. If Mary had been posted to teach in a Fanti speaking area, there is a possibility that the policy would have had a different impact on her practice because she would have been able to use it in teaching her class.

Mary’s approach to dealing with the challenge demonstrates that, in a situation where a teacher is unable to use the local language effectively, the teacher may revert to the use of the English-only policy. This finding is supported by Andoh-Kumi (1999), who reveals that one of the problems with the local language policy was that teachers were teaching in places where they did not understand the local language and had to use English instead. Indeed, in Mary’s defense, it was clear that her inability to use the local language was not because she was against its use or was subverting the GES directive, but simply because she did not know the Ga language. She was sincere in her attempt to resolve the issue by attending holiday courses in the Ga language to enable her use it later in her career. I asked Mary about her opinion on the local language policy and she stated that:

I think it is a good policy because we learnt in the training college that children learn better when the language is their own language. But everything depends on the teacher. If the teacher can use it then it is good but if not, as it was in my case, then it is difficult for the children. That is why I made the effort to learn Ga later so that I can use it.

Mary’s response shows she was in favour of the policy, which might be the reason for her change of attitude towards the use of Ga after her University education. However, it could be argued that she could have taken an earlier interest in learning Ga, given the fact that she had lived in Accra before attending training college. The critical issue, however, is that in some of these situations the children did not understand the English language, thus making it more challenging for both the teacher and the children, with serious implications for the implementation of GES’s strategy for posting teachers to lower primary (Awedoba, 2001). Mary’s experience also shows that teachers’ use of local language as a medium of instruction depends on their own education in the local language, or where they are given a post.

Before moving on to the experience of Grace, regarding the use of the local language policy, here is a summary of the main points deduced from the experiences of Frank and Mary: there

was general support for using the local language as the medium of instruction because it was seen as being not only culturally beneficial in supporting children's identity, but also educationally beneficial, in that it allowed children to understand all of their lessons more effectively. However, Mary's story showed that the local language policy soon becomes ineffective if the teacher does not know the local language, or if there are a number of local languages being used.

In contrast to Mary's experience, Grace seems to have dealt with the use of the local language as a medium of instruction differently; firstly, because of the understanding she had regarding children's need to learn in their own language and, secondly, because of her interest in and ability to learn the language of the school where she was posted to teach. When I asked Grace about her view on the local language policy, she said:

The policy was that in the lower primary, the child should be taught in the LI that is the mother tongue and if the child is able to identify things in the local language the child will be able to mention it in the English language so the LI leads them to the English language.

The above response shows that Grace understood the policy to mean the use of local language before the English language. I asked Grace why it is important for teachers to teach through the medium of the mother tongue, she stated that:

As a teacher I think it is important for me to use the mother tongue because I see the Ghanaian language as culturally dynamic because it helps people to socialise with each other... When you watch children playing in school, they do not use English but the local language because it is the language they know best so for me I believe teaching in mother tongue will make children learn faster because they understand what I teach them and they are able to answer my questions.

Grace's response indicates the importance for children of using local language in communication, socialisation and learning, which can contribute to their emotional and intellectual development. This view receives support from Rassool and Edwards (2010, p.277), who assert that research shows 'educating learners in their first language, at least during the Primary school years, provides them with easy access to concepts and thus facilitates cognitive development'

Grace demonstrated how she used the local Dangme language in Class 2, when she said:

I thought it was wise that I had to learn the local language because with the lower primary we use the local language so Dangme will be their mother tongue and that

they will be able to express themselves better. So I had to learn Dangme and how to write Dangme and teach it... It was a little difficult but I was able to make it.

With regard to the research questions, Grace's experience shows that the policy of using the local language was more probably effective if the teacher was willing and able to learn the local language, if she/he did not already speak it. Indeed, Grace could speak the Ga language, which has some similarities to Dangme, and was able to blend the two, evidenced when she said "*I just blended the Ga with Dangme*". Grace displayed her enthusiasm in using the local language when she wrote a poem in Dangme:

During one cultural festival I wrote a poem about corn dough which goes like this 'Ma akɛ pee ɔ banku, ma akɛ pee ɔ koko, ma hu akɛ pee ɔ otim'. So what I was saying is that corn dough is used in making banku, koko, otim etc. I remember that one really because after the programme whenever people see me they say 'ma akɛ pee ɔ ...' and when the parents see me they also say 'ma' then I complete the poem by saying akɛ pee ɔ ...

Grace's attitude appears to indicate that she agreed with the use of the local language policy because it was consistent with her philosophy that children learn better in their mother tongue. As such, she made a deliberate effort to learn and to use it creatively in the classroom. The fact that Grace learnt Dangme and used it in class indicates that the teachers' knowledge of local language is likely to be important for the effectiveness of the local language policy.

In contrast to Grace, Jessica's experience presents a different dimension to teachers' attitudes towards the local language policy. She taught Class Two when the local language policy was still in use, before the move to the English-only policy in 2002, and she is the last participant in the study to have used the local language policy in the fifth decade (1997-2007). This fifth decade saw the civilian governments of Jerry Rawlings and John Kufuor, with many educational reforms being introduced. Jessica was sent to teach in the Volta Region where she could use Ewe, which was her own mother tongue and a language she had learnt in training college. When I asked Jessica her views on the use of the local language policy, she said:

I was using English to teach the children but when we were in the training college, we were told that the medium of instruction in the lower primary should be Ghanaian language from class 1 to 3 because the children will be familiar with that language and anything you teach them they will understand using their mother tongue.

Jessica's views suggest that, although she had a good understanding of the reason behind the local language policy at the lower grade, she preferred to use English language instead. When I asked her to elaborate further on her response, she said, "*I say something in English and if*

they do not understand then I say the same thing in the Ewe language". She argued in favour of reverting to the English-only policy, because:

When I came out of training college I saw that everything the children did was in English so if you use the Ghanaian language too much I feel it will disturb them because when it comes to the teaching of English we do not mix it with Ghanaian language. We were told when it comes to English we should use the English language alone and when we teach the Ghanaian language we should use only Ghanaian language. So when it comes to the Ghanaian language what I do is to call somebody to come to explain whatever it is to the children.... though I knew I had to use the LI, I wasn't using it because I know everywhere you go it's the English so now they have seen that we teachers are not using the Ghanaian language in teaching so they have brought it back.

Jessica's comments highlight a number of points on the messages teachers receive with regards to the language policy and personal attitudes towards it. First, Jessica seems to suggest that, apart from using the local language as a medium of instruction, local language and English language were taught as separate subjects and, during those periods, there was to be no code switching. The comment also shows that she could not teach the local language so she would ask another teacher to do it on her behalf. However, Jessica admitted that she did not use the local language in teaching because of her preference for English and the children's interest in learning a new language. This meant she saw English as more important for children's learning and, as a result, was ready to sidestep the policy and interpret it to suit her beliefs. Jessica's attitude (similar to that of the other participants in the study) was also noted by Robinson (2012), who argued that teachers often interpret policies based on their beliefs and values. A study conducted by Awedoba (2001) and Andoh-Kumi (2000) on language policy in Ghana shows that a number of teachers in lower primary prefer the use of English as the medium of instruction, though they are supposed to use local language in class, because of the global status of English.

Jessica's argument for reverting to the English-only policy of Nkrumah's government may be considered as undermining the local language policy she was supposed to implement. Indeed, her attitude towards the use of local language in school could be compared to those who oppose this policy, seeing it as a means of providing inferior education to Africans (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1975). Her decision not to use local language could be what Bowe et al. (1992) describe as the power of teachers in subverting the status quo. Jessica's practice reveals some similarities with that of Hubert, in terms of the code switching to local language when the children did not understand. Although Hubert used the English-only policy, whilst Jessica used

the local language policy, there are important similarities, in terms of the ways in which both participants sidestepped their policies to do what they felt was in the children's best interest. When I asked Jessica how the children in her class felt about her approach, she said, "*They liked it because the community was rural and English was not a common language so the children were delighted about learning something new*". By contrast, a study by Andoh-Kumi (2000) revealed that, in some situations, children may prefer to be taught in the local language because they do not understand English; they are able to grasp the lesson better in their own language. Furthermore, Jessica's data suggest that, for some teachers, the local language policy was problematic because of their own ability to use the language. For example, when I asked Jessica why she did not teach in Ewe during the Ghanaian language lesson, and had to ask other teachers to do the teaching for her because she had learnt the language in training college, her answer was:

I had a problem with the Ghanaian language. I speak Anlo which is a different dialect to the one spoken in the training college so even during my Ghanaian language class it was not easy. ... I was referred in the Ghanaian language because I did not do any Ghanaian language in my basic school and in the secondary and so I had to write it later.

Jessica's response reveals that she moved against the local language policy for two reasons. Firstly, she believes that children should learn the English language (a global language) and not the local language, for the purpose of progress. This means Jessica felt the local language policy was not in the best interest of the children because education in Ghana operated mainly in the English language. Secondly, she had difficulties with the local language during her training as a teacher because of differences in the 'Anlo' and 'Ewedome' dialects of the Ewe language. This reflects the issues many teachers face when studying the use of local language in the training colleges. Jessica's response further reveals the complexity of understanding the different dialects within the same tribal language, making the decision on which local language a teacher should adopt in practice even more challenging. This is supported by an official of the Ghana Education Service in the following extract:

In Ghana, there are many dialects within a particular language, and it is difficult learning all these different dialects. For example, in the local Twi language, there are differences in Ashanti Twi and Akwapem Twi.... The challenge is, you (or a child) learns a Ghanaian language from primary school up to Junior High Secondary, You don't do it in Senior High, it is an elective subject and very few students offer elective Ghanaian language so when they get to the College of Education and they have to do one Ghanaian language which could be a different dialect from what the child learnt previously.

The evidence provided by both Jessica and the GES official seems to suggest that, since there are different dialects within a language, it is difficult for the training colleges to train teachers sufficiently to deal with the multiple languages and different dialects in the classroom. This suggests the need to train teachers on how to address the problem of different dialects within a particular language, as part of their education. The official also made comments to the effect that local language was not a compulsory subject in the Senior Secondary School. This means some potential teachers would go through secondary school without learning any local language, which they might need in future. Dorothy saw this as a gap in policy for the use of local language as a medium of instruction, when she stated that:

During my time, students were not doing the Ghanaian language because it was optional in the Senior High School and very few people are doing it even now. It is happening in the training colleges too. It is not every teacher who is interested in the Ghanaian language so they don't do it. At first it was compulsory in the training colleges, wherever you come from, you have to do one Ghanaian language and when you fail you fail the whole of the examination but now it is no more compulsory so if you choose French then you don't do the Ghanaian language so how would you teach in the lower grade if you do not know the local language.

Comments from both the GES official and Dorothy show the gap in the policy of teaching local language as a subject in Ghanaian schools. This suggests the need for local language to be studied throughout a child's education from basic to secondary, making it easier for those who choose to become teachers to deal with studying local language in the training college.

The above narrative of the experiences of Frank, Mary, Grace and Jessica, about teaching at the lower grade using the local language policy, raises fundamental questions about their perceptions of the local language policy and the challenges it posed for them. This has serious implications for the formulation and implementation of policy by successive Ghanaian governments. These implications relate to the issue of whether or not to use either English-only or local language only as a medium of instruction. The data collected appears to show that, regardless of which language is used in support of the other, it is difficult to determine whether either approach helps children to pick up enough English by the time they get to upper primary where teaching is solely in English. To resolve these challenges, the Ghanaian government may have to widen participation in the language policy formulation process to involve parents, teachers, children and other stakeholders in discussing the effectiveness of both the English-only and local language policies, in order to address the deficiencies in either policy.

In summary, the local language policy had both positive and negative impact on the classroom experiences of some participants in the study. The main advantages of the local language policy, like the English-only policy, relates to the fact that there was a general feeling of ‘goodwill’ towards the use of the local language policy by teachers. This appears to suggest that the majority of participants in this study are in support of the use of local language in lower grade, which is an important factor for any future policy formulation. There was a general consensus that the use of the local language helped children to learn English, made them literate in their own language, boosted their confidence in the classroom, and made them successful in school. In addition, the local language policy helped children to appreciate the importance of their own language by identifying with their own culture and identity as Ghanaians.

However, there were some disadvantages of the local language policy, which include the fact that teachers simply did not always know the local language and, therefore, could not use it effectively in teaching. There was concern that children needed to learn a global language like English rather than the local language and a belief that the local language hindered children’s progress in the use of English. This appears to show that some Ghanaians still believe in the supremacy of the English language after all these years of independence. Since the outcomes of policy implementation are not always predictable, the inability of the government to provide teaching and learning materials in the local language to support both teachers and children made implementation of the policy a big challenge. Teachers did not have enough vocabulary in the local language to use to support their teaching and they had to use teaching materials in the English language instead of the local language. This made it easier to have more English than local language in most classrooms, highlighting the gap in policy formulation and implementation and calling for more research on local language, the publication of a wider range of teaching and learning materials and local language reading books for children.

Moreover, the use of multiple languages in urban areas made it difficult for teachers to use one particular language in the classroom, which calls for flexibility in the use of the prominent language or a particular school language as the medium of instruction. Again, the fact that some languages are not studied in school means some children from minority groups would not have the privilege of being taught in their own language, which means it could be necessary to expand the number of local languages used in school to cater for minority language groups. The lack of clear guidelines on how to use the local language policy, especially in multilingual classrooms, also posed a problem for teachers. This issue needs resolving to help improve teacher’s practices and to give them confidence in the use of local language in their classrooms.

The challenges of both the local language and English-only language policies and the inability of the two policies to solve children's literacy levels, especially their inability to communicate, read and write in English when they move to upper grade, appear to be the reason behind the implementation of the biliteracy policy (NALAP). This policy combines the use of both the local language and English language, as discussed below, using the experiences of Mary, Jessica, Dorothy and Judith who used the NALAP policy during the last decade of the study (2007-2014).

5.2.2.3 The NALAP Policy: (2009 - to date), Mary, Jessica, Dorothy, Judith

The National Literacy Acceleration Programme (NALAP) is a bilingual approach, which uses a Ghanaian language and English language to literacy learning for children in lower grade (Hartwell, 2010). The policy became necessary as a result of the low literacy rate for children and the inability of either the English-only or local language policies to improve literacy in the lower grades. Mary, Jessica, Dorothy and Judith were the only participants in this study who experienced the NALAP policy. The four participants, who used the NALAP policy, identified both its benefits and limitations when compared with the English-only and local language policies, as shown in Table 5.3 below. The main benefits of the policy reported by the participants include the fact that NALAP provided clear guidelines on how to approach the teaching of literacy in Ghanaian languages and it addressed the issue of children coming to school without any knowledge of English by offering a gradual introduction to the English language. Participants also felt the NALAP policy improved their teaching and children's learning and encouraged best practices and networking. Despite these benefits, participants provided evidence to show that NALAP had some limitations, which, if not addressed, could lead to its failure like the other policies before it. For example, a number of teachers were teaching lower grade without the necessary training in NALAP. In addition, monitoring was rather poor, which could lead to teachers sidestepping the policy and the problem of multilingualism and teacher's language competence could create some problems for the full implementation of the policy.

The discussion below provides a detailed evaluation of the effectiveness of the NALAP policy as experienced by Mary, Jessica, Dorothy and Judith in the last decade of the study. As already discussed in this chapter, before the introduction of the NALAP policy, successive Ghanaian governments had experimented with both the English-only and the local language policies in the lower primary, with perceived relative success, despite the inability of successive governments to fully accept and implement either policy. Participants' data suggest that they

saw NALAP as the government's attempt to resolve the challenges faced by children when they reach the upper grade, where teaching is conducted in the English language, and the inability of either the local or English language policies to improve children's literacy. NALAP was introduced in the 2009-2010 academic year with the aim of using a local language and a gradual introduction of English at the lower grade (Rosekrans et al., 2012 and Hartwell, 2010). Hartwell (2010) states that:

A large proportion of Ghanaians believe that the purpose of schooling is to learn to read and write in English since that provides access to further education and ultimately to remunerative work and status in the formal economy. Thus the use of local language in primary school has always been contentious. NALAP, by linking the capacity to read and write in English to a foundation in a language the pupils understand and speak, overcomes the conflict between L1 education and English education. (p.vi)

The above statement seems to suggest that NALAP is a compromise; an attempt to satisfy those who believe in the use of the local language and those who prefer the use of the English language at an early age. Perhaps this explains why the policy has been in place for some time, and there is not yet any serious indication of policy change in the foreseeable future. Having identified the issues relating to the challenges of successfully implementing either the English-only or local language policies, e.g. children with minimal English language skills, the use of multiple languages in the classroom, teachers with minimal local language skills, posting of untrained teachers to the lower grade etc., it is now useful to explore the participants' perceptions of the NALAP in light of this.

The perceptions of participants of the NALAP policy

The main concept to emerge from participants' data on NALAP showed that the policy was a bilingual literacy programme, based on the use of local language and English language. However, participants' data, as discussed previously under English-only and local language policy, indicate that NALAP must not be treated as simply a compromise between the local language and English language policies. This is because the challenges teachers faced when using either of the policies still prevail, which means there is need for more comprehensive research into teachers' practices under both previous policies to address the current challenges in the implementation of NALAP.

Mary, Jessica, Dorothy and Judith all had a clear understanding of the NALAP policy. For example, Dorothy expressed her views on the NALAP policy by stating that, "*What NALAP policy is saying is that the child's local language should be used in all the subjects in the lower*

primary”, and also talks about how: “to use the local language of the child’s environment to teach the child to read and write”. Mary, for her part, said,

NALAP is here to help children learn better at the infant stages in their local language or the predominant language in the area where they come from...so when you try to use English language later, they will understand it better because they use words in their own local language to learn the English language better.

Although Mary suggests that NALAP uses the children’s language to make them learn better, the earlier evidence from Mary and Jessica on the use of local language showed that, without the teachers’ knowledge and interest in the use of local language, some children will continue to be taught solely in English. Given the limitations of the English-only and local language policies, NALAP has not really solved the problem on local language use. Leheer (2009), in a study on NALAP, argued that the inability of teachers and children to use local language was a major factor affecting NALAP. However, Mary seemed to have gained a deeper understanding of the importance of local language from her university education and experience of teaching under the two previous policies, in addition to training she received on NALAP, when she said:

I realised that my first training as a teacher was not enough for me to teach in the early childhood class because the training was just for us to have a general knowledge in teaching but, in the university, we specialised in childcare and children’s language development. This really helped me to appreciate the use of the local language as suggested by the NALAP policy, besides I have received training on NALAP.

The above comment seems to suggest that perhaps Mary’s attitude towards the use of local language appears to have changed due to a deeper insight into language and literacy policies and her many years of teaching in the lower grade. She further stated that:

I was using only English language when I started teaching Class Two which was very difficult for the children because they did not understand the English language and most parents did not have formal education so teaching in English was a bit difficult for the children so when I specialised in ECCE and NALAP, I realised there was the need to for me to start with the local language first and then use English language. As teachers we were given training on language and literacy and the whole idea was that every teacher teaching in those classes KG to Class 3 should be able to speak the language predominant in the area where he or she is teaching, such that you start teaching the children in that language before you move to English language to make it easier for the children to move from the vernacular to be conversant with the English.

In the above extract, Mary recalled how she used English rather than the local language and how difficult it was for the children who did not know much English. Her comment appears to suggest that she gained a better understanding of the need to teach children using the local language after her studies in Early Childhood and Care Education. In addition, Mary spoke of a training programme for all teachers on NALAP and how teachers were required to use both the local and English languages in teaching, according to NALAP guidelines. The above extract shows a shift in emphasis from English-only or local language to the use of both languages (Bilingualism) and how this was to be done in a phased manner i.e. learning to read and write in the local language first followed by a gradual introduction of the English language. This was to enable children to gain literacy skills in both the local language and English (Biliteracy). In addition, Mary indicates that the NALAP policy requires her to teach the children to speak, read and write first in the local language. Her data suggests that she felt that she was more effective in the use of NALAP than when she was using the English-only and local language policies, because when she was working within the previous policies she could not interact well with children either because she could not use Ga effectively or because children could not speak English; she was now able to use both the local Ga language and the English language when it was necessary.

Mary's ability to use both the local language and English is in line with NALAP policy, which asserts that 'children (should) learn to read and write in a Ghanaian language, with English introduced gradually' (Hartwell, 2010, p.2). This requires children to have proficiency in both local and English language. It also requires children to learn to read and write in both languages. Furthermore, Mary's statement also indicates that unlike the local language policy, NALAP provides teachers with guidance on the gradual transition from local language to English language through the introduction of oral English to written English and finally to English-only when they get to grade four. This practice is confirmed by the Ghana Education Service (GES) official who explains that:

Teachers will do 70% Ghanaian language and 30 % English language or 75% Ghanaian language and 25% English language and KG 2 they will do 20% English 80% local language... In P1 they do lesser L1 and then we increase the L2 and then we keep on increasing in P3. Then in P4 we switch over to English as the medium of instruction and then they only learn the Ghanaian language as a subject.

The above shows that, by increasing English language gradually (from 25 or 30%) and decreasing local language (from 75 or 70% in KG1 and both given equal proportion (50-50%)

in Class 3, the aim is to achieve a gradual balance between the use of local language and English.

Like Mary, Judith (who is still using NALAP) also seemed to see the policy as focusing on the construct of ‘literacy’, which included exposure to local language and English, rather than a specific language, as revealed in the extract below:

NALAP or National Literacy Acceleration Programme... It is about the use of Twi as a medium of instruction and how to go about it and the teaching of language, that is, the use of Twi and English. It is about how to go about the teaching of local language and the English language to help children develop listening, speaking, reading and writing so it is called language and literacy... so when they come to school they have to use the Twi language to develop their second language so that they can pick the second language which is English gradually.

In the extract, Judith seemed to be suggesting that NALAP was about the use of local language and English language where the child is taught using the local language first and is introduced gradually to the English language. She revealed that NALAP was literacy learning in both English and local language, through listening, speaking, reading and writing, which appears to suggest, in her view, that NALAP addresses the problems from the previous English-only and local language policies. In the extract, Judith seems to affirm that the NALAP policy provided guidelines for teachers on how to use local language and English language. This is important because, according to the GES official, previous policies did not have any guidelines for teachers on the use of both languages in class.

In summary, the above evidence clearly confirms that participants perceived the NALAP policy as a policy concerning ‘literacy and language’, rather than a specific language, for children at the lower grade. However, each participant appeared to have a different understanding of the details of the policy and how it should be implemented. Given the strengths and difficulties inherent in the use of both the English-only and local language policies, which have been discussed earlier, the key question is - to what extent is the NALAP simply a compromise or does it actually address the issues that have been identified by the participants in this study? The section below will address some of these issues, as it examines how the NALAP policy affected the classroom practices of the participants in this study, in order to provide suggestions on the successful implementation of the NALAP policy.

A more authentic language and literacy curriculum - Mary, Jessica, Dorothy and Judith

As indicated by this study, Ghana's language policy in the lower grade has been an approach based on the use of either local or English language as a medium of instruction, as a result of colonial rule. This means emphasis was not on how the teacher supported children's literacy practices, particularly how to read and write in local language and in English, but on how to communicate lessons meaningfully to children (although teachers had to teach local language and English language as subjects on the timetable). This appears to show a disjointed approach to literacy learning (reading and writing) in the two languages in the lower grade, which led many children to become unsuccessful in school. As a result, participants saw NALAP as different and a more authentic approach because of its emphasis on language and literacy in the local language of the child, as well as English. The understanding of the policy through training, the availability of instructional materials and guidelines for teachers' use, the emphasis on using the children's environment in their learning and the flexible nature of the policy, led participants to give their support to NALAP.

Mary and Judith provide evidence to show that they had a better understanding of NALAP, as compared to other policies affecting their practices. Since Mary, Jessica, Dorothy and Judith interpreted the text of the NALAP policy in their own way; the expectation is that their understanding of the policy would affect their teaching practices differently. Mary believed NALAP places emphasis on children's literacy learning through interaction with the environment, using a diverse range of learning materials:

When you come to my classroom, I have a round table with drawers at one side, a hospital setting, a home with a Ghanaian kitchen, with all the things you can think of such as onions, pepper, dried fish like 'Keta school boys', black eye beans and many others. I also have different things like plantain, flowers etc. and at the entrance of my classroom is the inscription, 'Welcome'. We are no longer teaching in abstract as we used to do before. Now as a teacher, I bring whatever I want to teach the child into the classroom for the child to see. Now the child is able to see real object for him or herself and this is helping children to learn better.

From the comments above, we can say that for Mary, NALAP was about the children's environment and how this can assist with their learning. She therefore uses food and other items familiar to children from the environment in which they live to help them learn better. She used the term 'abstract' in reference to her teaching, to suggest that she had earlier taught children in a more theoretical or rote learning manner, instead of adopting a facilitative approach as suggested by NALAP. This means the NALAP policy is based more on the social and cultural

environment of the child in line with the understanding that literacy is embedded within one's society, as suggested by Green (1984). Mary's comments showed that previous policies had less emphasis on teachers' innovative and facilitative practices, which made teaching more abstract without examples from real objects or everyday situations that children are most familiar with. In addition, while the previous two policies were more about the medium of instruction and teachers' ability to communicate with children in the classroom, NALAP is more about literacy practices, such as reading and writing in two languages. Indeed, Flores (2016) argues that teaching requires both the teacher and learner to find different perspectives and ideas related to a topic to make learning easier. Mary's example also suggests that teaching under NALAP was more practical than it was under the English-only or local language policies, because teaching is centered on real and everyday situations. When I asked how the new policy impacted on her practice, Mary stated that:

Personally as a teacher the new policy affected my practice because all the time I was always using English language to teach and now the policy says teach in the local language so sometimes even though I am teaching KG I forget to use Ga and I use English language throughout and somewhere along the line I realise I am doing the wrong thing because the policy says... and then I start using local language.

Mary's experience shows that a change in attitude or practice is not often easy. As a teacher who has experienced all three policies, her example points to the need for a conscious effort in remembering the similarities and differences in policies and how to apply new policies in practice. It can be said that her positive attitude towards NALAP is as a result of her university education, the different workshops and courses on literacy, her understanding of the importance of children's first language in literacy development. It appears her long experience of teaching in the lower grade also helped her in knowing when to change her practice to support her children's learning. Mary's experience has a number of implications for language policy implementation. First, Mary's result shows there is need for teachers to remain longer in the lower grade, in order to develop best practice in their teaching, rather than only spending short periods teaching there, as this study shows. Second, her experience and that of others in this study appears to suggest the need for pre-service training and continuous professional development for teachers on children's language and literacy development. Such training will provide teachers with the knowledge and skills they need to be effective in their teaching and these opportunities can help boost teachers' motivation and provide a period for self-evaluation through critical reflection on their practice.

Touching on the role the children's environment has on their language and literacy development, Dorothy said:

The NALAP policy tells us to use the local language of the child's environment to teach the child to read and write. I have given my classroom a name 'Educogenic' environment. It is an educative environment; all my walls have paintings, pictures, drawings, writing etc. so when you get to the entrance of the kindergarten area, you know it is a learning environment. A child is free to go to the swing or go to any of the corners; we have a corner with books and pictures, a mini-store where you can get whatever is available in a main store in town we have a place for crayons and writing materials where the child can do whatever they want to draw, we also have a sand tray, Lego and other things for the children. So the child can choose whatever activity they want.

Dorothy and Mary seemed to have had a similar understanding of the place of the child's environment in literacy learning. For example, Dorothy called her kindergarten 'Educogenic' or an educational environment. It has an outdoor play area with swings and walls decorated with the children's work. She also had different corners; a book area for children to read, a mini store with local items, and a play area. As indicated by Dorothy, she was able to design her classroom based on the local environment because the policy encouraged the use of the children's environment in literacy activities. A study by Cunningham (2010) on the quality of the classroom environment and children's literacy development shows that the two are closely related.

The availability of books and other classroom resources and teachers' knowledge about language and literacy development, according to Cunningham, have much influence on children's literacy development. The activities carried out by Dorothy and Mary further demonstrate that the NALAP policy, unlike the English-only and local language policies, provides teachers with opportunities to become more creative in how they teach literacy. This was made possible because, while both the English-only and local language policies were about which language to use as a medium of instruction, the NALAP policy is more about the development of children's literacy and their ability to read and write in two languages. The NALAP policy appears to be supporting teachers' good practice, as shown by Mary and Dorothy. Indeed, Rosekrans et al. (2012) state that NALAP has a number of innovative aspects to its credit, which became:

a blueprint for high but attainable achievement in learning and they became Ghana's first such document to be written, marking a historical move that departs from the kind of prosaic syllabus construction that characterised colonial and post-colonial periods to the present day (p.604).

The above statement suggests that NALAP supports innovative practices to enable teachers to provide the best strategies for children's learning. Both Mary and Dorothy showed creativity in the design of their individual classrooms to help with the literacy development of the children and they appear to embrace the need to incorporate the local environment of children in their literacy learning. Hartwell (2010, p.vi) asserts that NALAP 'methodology and materials, built on research about how pupils learn to read and the inclusion of Ghanaian culture and life, begins by drawing on pupils' existing experience, knowledge and interest'. It appears that participants, who used NALAP in this study, saw this objective as a challenge to improve the learning environment of the children. It can be argued that the NALAP policy, to a large extent, facilitates creativity in the design of the classroom environment to meet the experience, knowledge and interest of their children.

Although provision is made in the policy for creativity and flexibility, participants were of the view that, without training on how to use NALAP materials, new teachers posted to the lower grade would find it difficult to achieve the aim of NALAP (see discussion on NALAP training below). This also suggests the need for teachers to continue to enhance their knowledge and creative abilities through further professional development. The implication for the future is that the level of flexibility inherent in the NALAP policy should be sustained to allow lower grade teachers the freedom to teach well and effectively and not be constrained by the policy. Indeed, the Ghana News Agency (2010) reported that Mrs Daaku, Literacy Programmes Manager of NALAP, reminds teachers that the major objective of NALAP was to equip the majority of children in the basic education system with the skills of literacy to improve their learning abilities and serve as a springboard for further academic pursuit.

Jessica, who also taught Kindergarten, preferred to comment on how NALAP was helping her children communicate in both the local and English languages in the following extract:

For me I think NALAP is helping the children by communicating and expressing themselves in both languages because when you are teaching and you ask them about things in the English language they are able to say what they are. One day, I was teaching about technology and I thought that was a big word but they (children) were able to tell me technology is about fridge, TV, computer and the rest and those who were not able to speak English tried to say them in other languages.

Jessica's comment shows that her children were doing well in using both languages to improve their communication skills e.g. her Kindergarten children understood and displayed knowledge

of technology and English vocabulary, which she saw as very encouraging. Jessica's comments add to the fact that NALAP is not only about children's environment and its place in learning but also about flexibility in teachers' practices in helping individual children to develop bilingual skills in local languages and English, as prescribed by the policy. As seen in the above comment, Jessica's flexibility is shown in how she allowed individual children, who could not explain technology in English, to do so in their local languages. Judith also provided insight into the impact of the NALAP policy on her children's literacy and her classroom practices, when she said:

At first we were teaching grammar, reading, writing and comprehension all separately but now they have been put all together to help the children develop the oral and writing skills in Twi and English so we have 60 minutes Twi and 30 minutes English.

Judith saw a difference between the teaching of English under the local language policy, where comprehension, grammar and reading were taught separately, and under the NALAP policy, where they are combined during literacy lessons in either the local or English languages. When asked which of the two she preferred, she said:

I prefer this new one because for NALAP there is an improvement in reading. NALAP is trying to improve the teaching of literacy in both languages and this is helping children. Another difference is that the grammar aspect is not separated but combined with reading to help the children to develop oral and comprehension skills. There is an improvement in children's reading because children are able to read better than before, because now the children are acquiring reading skills in both Twi and English at the same time. The children in my class for example are able to read some sentences in English and through that they develop vocabularies to use in other classes until they get to Class 4. This is because they learn the words and use the words to form simple sentences.

In Judith's opinion, NALAP was a more authentic curriculum as compared to the former curriculum on the teaching of English. In addition, she claimed that her teaching improved under NALAP and the children in her class made good progress in developing their reading skills in both the local and English languages. She also suggested that the policy was achieving its objectives because the children in her class were getting more proficient in English, which would help them when they reached Class Four, where teaching is done in English. The main lesson to be learnt here is that, despite participants' misgivings about the policy (discussed in detail later in this section), they all seemed to agree that it was generally beneficial in improving children's literacy in both the local language and English. Indeed, Hartwell (2010) states that:

In NALAP, pupils learn to read and write in a Ghanaian language, with English introduced gradually, and initially only orally. By P2 (primary 2) pupils also start to read

and write in English, and by P3 (primary 3) pupils should be able to read fluently and understand both a Ghanaian language and English (p.9).

Although Mary, Jessica, Dorothy and Judith expressed positive views about the change in policy and how it improved their classroom practices, Jessica was of the view that the change in policy was unnecessary. Her argument was that implementation was going to be difficult for many teachers in Accra:

Some teachers like those of my level, my age group or modern day teachers, did not implement the old policy, how much more this NALAP. It is not everywhere that you see teachers using it. When you come to Accra, most of the teachers are not Ga and we do not even understand the Ga language so how can we go for the course and come back to use the Ga language that we are not familiar with to teach? So we still use English and if you happen to have a Ga teacher, then you can ask that teacher to teach Ga for you.

Jessica's critical comment is important, especially since she had experienced the local language policy earlier in her career and was aware of the challenges it posed for teachers in Accra. Her comments show resistance against the use of local language by teachers under the local language policy and the NALAP policy. She was of the opinion that, since the new policy also involved teaching in the local language, it was not going to be effective in her area because most teachers did not know the Ga language and, as a result, could not use the local language policy effectively. She also revealed that the NALAP training teachers receive on the use of the Ga language was not enough for teaching or communicating with the children in the class. This was probably so, as Hartwell (2010) asserts that the training was on the philosophy for the new policy and about how teachers were to use the teaching materials and guidelines for NALAP. This presupposes that the teacher is already familiar with the local language, which was not always so, as in the case of Jessica and the teachers she referred to.

The issue raised by Jessica is significant because it questions how new policies are formulated and implemented in Ghana. It also raises questions for the Ghana Education Service on how to address posting teachers in urban areas, as well as providing opportunities for the use of other languages like Akan or Ewe by teachers. As a multilingual country, the possibility of using a language other than the predominant language can be helpful, as this may help improve teachers' classroom practices, especially in Accra and other metropolitan cities where teachers may have competency in other languages. For example, in some parts of Accra, Akan or Ewe could be introduced alongside Ga to cater for the needs of children who speak these languages. This is because in some areas, Ga, which is the supposed to be the predominant language, is

actually not because not many people speak it. Furthermore, teachers who might have learnt Akan or Ewe in training college may be able to use these languages instead of Ga. In this way, both teachers and children would benefit more from the language policy, as opposed to current practice. This calls for different policies in different places, rather than one policy to fit all.

Judith also noted the reservations of some teachers on the NALAP policy, when she commented that:

There were teachers who accepted it but some of the teachers' attitude was not good. To them it was too much work because we have one hour Twi and 30 minutes English and they think it is too much. Sometimes the children get tired before the English. Some of the teachers also say they do not get enough exercise on the topics but I have been getting so many exercises and even sometimes I am unable to do all the exercises so I have been telling the teachers and showing them how.

Judith's example shows teachers had different attitudes towards NALAP, which highlights the fact that, though policy formulation may be geared towards providing solutions to certain problems in society or the school, there is no guarantee that it will be acceptable to those who have to implement it. Thus, policy acceptance and implementation is subject to 'whether those involved are in support of the policy or see it as negative' (Fitzgerald and Kay, 2016). In this case, the resistance to new policy was apparently due to the volume of work expected of teachers and their inability to cope with demand. The teachers were also concerned about children's concentration levels due to the stipulated ninety minutes of teaching in local language and in English. Another difficulty the teachers faced was how to generate enough exercises for the children at the end of the lesson. It appears some teachers were not able to cope with the amount of work required in the use of the new policy, how to handle or manage children's time and how to be creative during teaching. These challenges cast some doubt about the extent to which the NALAP policy is manageable or feasible in practice, since its success depends to a large extent on teachers. Indeed, an official of the Ghana Education Service (GES) addressed some of the issues raised by Jessica and Judith:

Normally, when there is a change, we do a lot of sensitisation and orientation to get teachers to understand the philosophy behind the change and also what is expected of them and any time materials are developed, teachers are given some training on how to use them. As for the attitude... it's a mixture; some embraced it, others, because of this Ghanaian perception of 'let's learn English', were not too comfortable especially if the teacher did not speak the language. It was a challenge but we also encouraged them to do peer-teaching to get their own colleagues to help them. But in the peri-urban and rural areas, we had a lot more success than in the very urban areas, where in the class of forty there will be about ten different languages, it becomes more

difficult. So we keep saying that NALAP was successful in the rural areas but not in the urban areas.

The evidence from the GES official shows that the Ministry of Education provides not only training to teachers on what they need to know about any change in policy, but also materials to help explain things. The official's comment further shows that teachers exhibit a number of attitudes from acceptance of the policy to non-acceptance. Some of the reasons for the resistance and non-acceptance of the NALAP policy and the use of local language in teaching was due to the Ghanaian perception of English as being more important or superior to the local language, which is probably due to the country's colonial history and the challenge faced by some teachers, who do not have enough competence in the use of the local language of the school.

Furthermore, it appears that peer-teaching, which took place under the local language policy, was encouraged, so that those who had better knowledge of the local language could help their colleagues who were struggling with local language teaching. The fact that peer-teaching is still happening shows not much progress has been made with the learning and teaching of the local language for teachers. Teachers' inability to use local language appears to be the biggest challenge in the lower grade. As shown in this study, Jessica comes across as the teacher who resisted the use of local language policy because of her struggle with its use, due to her inability to use it effectively under the local language policy.

However, the same issue is prevailing under the NALAP policy. Jessica's resistance to the local language policy was also due to the dilemma she had about which language was most appropriate for the children and her preference for the use of English because of its global appeal. In addition, the GES official appears to suggest that NALAP was more successful in rural areas, due to the fact that children in rural areas were likely to be speaking the local language, unlike the situation in urban areas, where there is rarely a language the whole classroom has in common. Furthermore, most teachers in most rural communities also speak the local language, so it makes it easier for them to use the local language in teaching, as required by the policy. The above challenges point not only to the disadvantages of the implementation of NALAP in some urban communities, but also to some serious implications for adapting the policy, thus, raising questions for teachers' best practice.

Apart from resistance to the policy by some teachers, Dorothy commented that parents in her school also had issues with the policy, when she stated:

It is very difficult because though the policies are good the local community sometimes do not fully accept government policy on the use of local language. ... It is a challenge for us and some children do not understand the local language so it is difficult to use the local language. Parents also have problem with the use of local languages because they often say that the child is using the local language at home and not all of them can speak the local language of this place so for the parents, once the child has come to school, school is where children learn to read and write in English. There was so much pressure from parents that we had to change the policy to suit us, so we are using 30% local language and 70% English language that means the English aspect is more than the Twi.

Dorothy's comments show a form of resistance to the use of local language by parents in her school. This resistance has existed from colonial times, as has been discussed in the literature review, where some Africans saw the use of local language as a means employed by the British of providing inferior education to the colonised people (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1975). Mfum-Mensah (2005) also notes that the non-acceptance of local language use in schools, by some communities in the Northern part of Ghana, was because 'these communities view the English language as a powerful tool for attaining dominance, power and prestige in Ghanaian society' (p.80). These sentiments show the aftermath of colonial rule on the Ghanaian psychic, which, in a way, makes Ghanaians feel the English language is better than their own local languages. It can also be argued that the colonial government structure, inherited at independence, makes it difficult for local language use in many sectors of the country (e.g. the banks, government offices etc.), which means most communities feel they have to resort to the use of English if they are to improve their situation.

Although NALAP tries to incorporate part of the English-only policy by introducing some aspect of it in the lower grade, there is a possibility that the issue of English in lower grade will continue to receive attention for many years to come. It is clear from the study that some parents may still have problems with the NALAP policy and see it as not serving their purpose, if their children are unable to pass their examinations at the Junior High School to enable them move on to Senior High and university in future.

Dorothy's comments further point to parents' attitude and perceptions regarding NALAP. In addition, the parents seem to have exercised their right to demand changes to the policy. It is, however, not clear from Dorothy's comment if they consulted the educational authorities on the changes. The fact that Dorothy's school made changes to the policy suggests some teachers also had reservations about it and showed their resistance by accepting the parents' demands. Dorothy's comment also shows how parents' attitude towards policy and power, as

stakeholders in education, can impact on teachers' practices. She was of the opinion that the desire of the parents of children in her school to have their children learn more English was the result of cultural changes in society. She stated that:

The changes in our cultural practices are affecting our language because nobody wants to be left behind. Everybody wants people to know that their child is in schooling and can speak English so the local language is out of the way and some parents are also working with foreigners so when these friends visit their homes with their kids they want their children to be able to communicate with them. Some don't want their kids to speak their local language at all so they move from their original home to the urban cities and they don't go back home or want their children to go back there.

Dorothy appeared to be concerned with the trend of parents using English rather than the local language at home. This concern is also noted in a recent study by Arthur-Shoba and Quarcoo (2012), who found that many Ghanaian families were increasingly using English language at home instead of the local language. Mary also discussed the interest in English by some parents and saw it as affecting her teaching practice because of the confusion on the correct use of English.

That is a big problem because when the parent is speaking English language to the child they don't realise that the local language of the mother or father is left and would be forgotten. Then there is another problem because some parents do not teach or speak English properly and when the child comes to school and is being taught by the teacher who is an expert in teaching the English language, the child gets confused and so the child is often in a dilemma as to who is teaching him/her the right thing.

Based on her acceptance of the NALAP policy and her role as a trainer of teachers on children's language and literacy, Mary now believes children should be given the opportunity to learn their local language. She sees the change in parents' desire to use English as children's first language and their desire to teach their children English language as a challenge for her teaching practice, because NALAP is not only about the use of English but also the local language as well. Participants' experiences, under both the English-only and local language policies, show that, although NALAP appears to be a compromise between the two, contemporary sociocultural practices may create new difficulties for the acceptance and implementation of NALAP because of the new trend of speaking English at home. In this case, the concerns of many about the damage being done to Ghanaian culture persist. Indeed, the growing trend of some Ghanaian parents using English at home, as identified by Dorothy and Mary, receives support from an official of the Ghana Education Service (GES) who said:

You know the average educated or semi-educated Ghanaian is now starting off his/her children with English no matter how bad. If I am semi-literate I think that my children should have a head start and so from the cradle, I start speaking English to them but research also shows that when you teach children in the language they are competent with, they do better and that is why NALAP because we thought we have not done enough to demonstrate results.

The above comment appears to show that it is not only the elite trying to use English at home, but nearly every Ghanaian. Although the official seems to suggest that NALAP will solve the problem associated with the use of local language in school, NALAP can only succeed if parents, teachers and other stakeholders, including the government, resolve to find lasting solutions to children's local language learning. This shows the need for increased education on the importance of local language in children's learning. The results of this study show that, although most teachers wish to see NALAP succeed, the policy is neither solving the problem of the language policy nor is it addressing Ghanaians' attitude towards the local and English languages. In reaction to the above growing trend, some participants, especially Mary, started thinking about how to develop her teaching practice by helping children to improve their use of both English and local language in school.

The results from the data, as discussed above, demonstrate advantages as well as disadvantages of NALAP, as far as teachers' practices are concerned. With regards to the advantages, participants provided data to show that they had received training on the change in policy and on the philosophy of NALAP, which will help them implement it in the classroom. This means teachers will have a better chance of applying the guidelines effectively and using the NALAP teaching materials in class. In addition, some participants were of the view that the training they received helped in changing their perception of the local language and, as a result, some were now prepared to use it as a medium of instruction. Participants perceived the NALAP policy as bilingual literacy to help children read and write in both the local language and English and they were supportive of the policy.

Participants also saw NALAP as responding to children's literacy needs better than earlier policies, as they saw the progress the children were making. This means NALAP stands a chance of improving children's reading and writing, not only in their own language but also in English. Concerning the extent to which participants adapted their classroom practices to the NALAP policy, the majority of participants saw the policy as improving the quality of their teaching and a means by which to share best practice with other teachers. Participants also felt

they were empowered by the policy to be flexible and creative in designing the learning environment of children.

However, the results showed a number of challenges emerging from participants' data on the NALAP policy. It appears the frequent changes in policy affected the attitude of some participants towards the new policy, which, in turn, reflected negatively on their classroom practices. This means care should be taken in the formulation and implementation of new policy to avoid confusing teachers on what they should do. The data showed that there were still challenges with teachers' knowledge of local languages, which calls for a more renewed effort to solve it. Although NALAP uses both the local and English languages, it is perhaps necessary to discuss the place of English, because of parents' fear and the contemporary trend of using English as the first language in some homes. There is a need for teachers to be trained in the use of local language, which calls for the gap in the curriculum on local language in school to be bridged. It is also clear from the study that the NALAP policy may not be the answer to children's literacy learning in the lower grade. The study also shows the need for flexibility and change to allow different regions to have different policies as a way of approaching this issue.

As discussed in the next section, while Judith, Mary, Dorothy and Jessica saw NALAP training (which was offered to teachers before its use in the classroom) as beneficial to their understanding of children's literacy, they also raised critical questions relating to the adequacy of the training lower grade teachers receive on NALAP before using the policy in the classroom.

NALAP training for teachers in the lower grade

As part of the preparation for the use of the NALAP policy in the classroom, the Ghana Education Service (GES) provided a nationwide training course for head teachers and teachers, who teach in the lower grade in the country, on the 'new approach and use of NALAP materials' (Hartwell, 2010, p.3). Judith, Jessica and Mary talked about attending these training workshops. The evidence from participants' data shows that, although training was given, the quality of training was inadequate, compelling some participants to attend further workshops. Furthermore, the data points to a gap in training for teachers posted to teach in the lower grade and the problem of NALAP trained teachers being posted to teach in higher grades without any replacement. Finally, concern was expressed about the role played by foreign donors in the

training of teachers and how these might affect Ghanaian culture and language policy in the future.

Mary talked about attending different training courses organised by (GES), Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) and foreign donor countries and how the training she received helped in her own understanding of literacy.

In 2009 all teachers teaching from the pre-school through to Primary 3 were made to attend courses organised by the government through GES. I also attended one organised by the Ghana National Association of Teachers GNAT and the Danish government on literacy in early childhood. Because I had flair for literacy I decided to take all these courses because looking at the level of the pupils I was teaching if I do not train myself in literacy it would be difficult for me to adjust to the new policy.

Mary's evidence revealed a personal interest in knowing more about children's literacy by attending a variety of workshops on the subject. It is clear from Mary's comment that having a personal interest in children's literacy and making the effort to avail oneself for training can contribute to changes in classroom practices. Mary's comment seems to suggest she had to attend other courses to improve her understanding of children's literacy, in order to meet the demands of the children in her class. This implies the first training she received from the Ghana Education Service on NALAP was inadequate. She also revealed in the statement above that her decision to attend other literacy courses was because of a personal interest. It can be deduced from her comment that teachers, who had the initial training on NALAP and have had no further training, could experience some difficulties later in their practice. Mary's experience of seeking more knowledge on children's literacy is similar to that of Judith, who also said, "I attended workshops and training on the NALAP in 2009 by GES and by some NGOs that were training teachers on children's literacy". Judith's conversation with me on the subject of training showed that she was not pleased with the quality of the initial training she received.

The data above showed that the GES was not the only group to train teachers on NALAP. This reveals the role played by foreign countries in Ghana's education sector. However, Dorothy seemed to object to this role, when she argued that:

There is so much influence on our language policy by other countries who are the donors, for example, for NALAP, all the books we used first were printed by USAID and they organised the courses but now it is UKAID which is printing the books which means they have taken over or joined with the USAID.

Dorothy seems to be concerned about the neocolonialist influence of Britain and the US on Ghana's education system. Her argument appears to suggest that these colonial powers may

influence language policy in Ghanaian schools to favour the use of more English because they are English-speaking countries. She believes the question of language policy for the lower grade should be reserved for Ghanaians only because of the negative influence of foreign culture, which could trample Ghanaian culture. In fact, she lamented that this influence is the result of Ghana's inability to provide enough funding for its own educational programmes. Dorothy's point on foreign donors was also noted by an official of the Ghana Education Service (GES) with the following comment:

USAID funded NALAP and they funded the Teaching Learning Material Project (TLMP) so two years ago we decided to merge the two programmes and give the teachers a guide that will help them to use the materials. It is just a matter of methodology so when you teach English, you have English material from TLMP and you use it alongside the NALAP material.

The official's evidence shows the support received from USAID for NALAP and other projects for teachers. This indicates that the education sector does not have enough money to fund its projects and has to rely on foreign donors; a point made by Dorothy, who said, "*For now we don't have the means and the donor's money is not for free that is why we should decide on what we want and stick to it*". In addition, Dorothy was of the view that:

If these countries really want to help us, then they should listen to us on the policy we would like to have but not bring what they want because English is not our language. Other nationalities; German, Japanese and Chinese are learning their own languages so why can't the Ghanaian do the same?

In the above comments, Dorothy appears to hold strong postcolonial views on the role played by both the US and Britain in Ghana's language policy debate and is advocating for more dialogue on the needs and wishes of local people. In addition, Dorothy is of the opinion that Ghanaian children could also benefit from learning in their own language, as in other countries, if Ghana was rich and did not have to depend on donations. It is evident from other participants, including Frank, Mary, Grace and Judith, that they prefer the use of local language in school because Ghana has its own languages and children would do better in school if they were taught in a language familiar to them. Indeed, the fact that the country is still receiving money from foreign states on a matter so dear to its citizens means that, even after so many years of independence, Ghana is not totally free of its reliance on Britain, its former colonial ruler, and other countries. Whilst it is good for countries like Britain and the US to support Ghana's education sector with training and teaching materials, there is a need to be more sensitive to local people's views, so as not to create the impression that as stronger or former colonial

powers they still have hegemony over their former colonies. This is because the perception people have about the level of their influence on such matters could affect how policy is implemented. However, since English remains the official language of Ghana and English has global status, it does still require a place in Ghanaian society in a way that will satisfy the majority of people. This implies that English should not play such a dominant role in education in primary school.

The support of USAID for Ghana's education sector and for literacy in schools was reinforced recently, when it was reported that 'USAID and the Ministry of Education had launched the distribution of over 4 million books in English and local Ghanaian languages to public primary schools in all 216 districts' in Ghana (PeaceFm, 2016). This shows that international donor agencies are supporting not only literacy in English but also in local languages in Ghana.

Although Dorothy believed foreign donors influence Ghanaian language policy through the training of teachers and the provision of teaching materials, an official of the Ministry of education thought otherwise. He said:

Because the country has a strategic plan on language policy, which is developed in consultation with all stakeholders, all these partners are on board during the policy process. The issue of influence therefore does not really come in. We work together as a team so it is a partnership.

The above statement suggests that the government of Ghana sees foreign donors as partners who play significant roles, but not donors with superior powers to the government. The literature on language policy for the lower grade in Ghana, and the data collected from participants in this study, seems to suggest that the country's strategic plan on language policy in the lower grade is not working. This is because of the continuous controversy on the adoption of a particular language acceptable to the majority of parents, as well as the composition of commissions for educational reviews seen by the majority of participants as not being very representative. Furthermore, some governments had refused to accept recommendations made by the very committees they established to consider the language policy issue for the lower grade. For example, the refusal of the CPP government and NPP government to accept the recommendations for the use of the local language policy in 1957 and 2002, all add to teachers' perceptions that there is no long-term strategic plan for language policy in the country.

The evidence provided by Mary and Judith shows the inadequacy of the NALAP training they received through the GES workshops, which compelled them to attend future workshops

provided by other donor countries to help them implement NALAP in their schools. Jessica's data also suggests that the training was of poor quality. For example, Jessica was of the view that the training she received was not helpful because she did not derive any benefit from it. She stated *"I happened to attend the course on NALAP but if you ask me what I remember about it, I cannot tell you, because I can remember only three songs in Ga"*. Although NALAP training was about different aspects of the policy, Jessica's comment appears to suggest the training was not about the NALAP policy per se, but how to use local language and songs in teaching. For someone like Jessica, who faced challenges with the local language, this workshop did not help her in any way. In fact, she stated that she saw the training as a waste of her time and not very interesting. Furthermore, Jessica's comment suggests that, although teachers need training on NALAP, the quality of training must be right to benefit them. Jessica's comments also show that the training was not intensive enough to help her and others deal with the challenges of local language and its related issues. This points to the fact that local language competency is an essential part of this new policy and that the previous problems associated with the local language policy are also prevalent in NALAP.

Evidence of the poor quality and inadequacy of the NALAP policy is revealed in the study by Hartwell (2010), who said:

There was almost universal agreement that, while the training was essential, it was too short for teachers to master the new approaches and materials, and it would have been helpful to have the training closer to the time of implementation (p.24).

The above statement from Hartwell reveals that there were many other aspects of NALAP, which were not dealt with adequately and might have had serious consequences for teachers' classroom practices and children's literacy learning. For example, Dorothy argued that she *"did not meet any of those teachers who were trained for the NALAP policy...at least I have had NALAP training and am able to train my preschool teachers...I check what they do in the classroom"*. Because some NALAP trained teachers have left the lower grades, Judith said that *"teachers who are not trained on NALAP cannot teach effectively at the lower grade...as a result, my headmistress has asked me to teach other teachers e.g. KG teachers."* The lack of untrained NALAP teachers in the lower grade and personal interest in children's literacy development appears to have motivated Mary to become an *"instructor and trainer on NALAP. I had training in literacy development organised by MASHAP - it's a programme by the Israeli government in 2012 and because of the experience I have, I am often asked to give training to teachers who have not had any training on NALAP."*

The above evidence from Dorothy, Judith and Mary shows that, due to the inadequate training offered to teachers, coupled with the poor quality of the training in some cases, they had to step in either to help their colleagues or be recruited as trainers for other teachers. This shows a gap in the provision of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of teachers on NALAP. The work of Kennedy (2014) on CPD points to the fact that teachers' professional learning, classroom practices and pupil attainment can be improved through CPD. Based on this evidence, continuing professional development of teachers on NALAP is likely to ensure its effective implementation and boost the confidence of teachers who teach the lower grade.

The fact that Mary, Judith and Dorothy, played different roles in supporting and training others shows how some teachers can be used as a training resource in their locality and elsewhere. By undertaking these tasks, they showed goodwill, resourcefulness, creativity and a supportive attitude towards NALAP, which reinforced their own classroom practices, as discussed earlier.

Finally, participants in the study raised issues relating to the insufficiency of the training materials they received for use in the classroom. For example, Judith did not receive all the necessary materials needed for her class. She said, *"I did not get the alphabet cards"* and *"although there is the Akwapem version, I did not get it"*. This insufficiency of materials was also mentioned by the official of the Ghana Education Service (GES), who said:

Actually, NALAP supplied materials to all districts and all schools but as I said earlier, it's been quite a number of years now and you know with textbooks; for the lower primary, because they are little and they do not handle them properly we are supposed to change them on a three-year cycle and for upper primary onwards, a five-year cycle but we have not been able to replenish the stock as we should and as planned because of funding problems but teachers are very innovative some of them have found ways of either photocopying charts... or copying materials from workbooks into exercise books for children... they found ways of making teaching and learning to go on in the schools.

In the above statement, the GES official appears to suggest that materials were supplied to schools but, due to financial problems, the stock of books have not been regularly replaced. The impact of insufficiency of resources on the successful implementation of NALAP is confirmed by Opoku-Amankwa et al. (2015). In any case, the GES official also points to the fact that teachers are innovative when it comes to situations of insufficient materials for teaching and learning. For example, when Judith was not supplied with alphabet cards, she said *"I made boxes like this □ and wrote the alphabet inside to help me with the teaching of alphabets"*. Mary and Dorothy also show how creative they were when it came to providing

teaching and learning materials for their classrooms, as discussed earlier. This means they did not wait for teaching materials or stopped teaching because of a lack of or insufficient resources, showing how the policy encourages ingenuity and flexibility in dealing with issues. However, as the new policy was intended to resolve some of the weaknesses of the local language policy, inadequate teaching could create difficulties for teachers who may not be as resourceful as Mary, Dorothy and Judith.

Advantages and disadvantages of NALAP

Having discussed what the NALAP policy is, participants' perception of the policy, how they used the policy and the training they received, I will now look at some of the advantages and disadvantages compared to the two preceding policies. I begin with the advantages of NALAP: it is the first policy to officially recognise the bilingual nature of literacy learning in the lower grade. This recognition is very important as it places emphasis on reading and writing in the local language very early on in a child's education. By supporting children's reading and writing in both the local and English languages, children are now developing their literacy skills in the two languages at the same time. This could help change negative attitudes towards the learning of local language in school. Another advantage of NALAP is the fact that the policy appears to be a compromise between the English-only and local language policy and a means of satisfying those who might prefer either the English-only or local language policy. The emphasis on children's language and culture also means the NALAP policy is addressing the issues raised by those who voiced concern that the use of English early in school could contribute towards the eradication of Ghanaian culture. The results also show that, unlike the policies before it, teachers using NALAP have guidelines on the teaching of literacy in the local language and English. In addition, teachers received initial training on the policy and there were further opportunities for training on children's literacy for those who were interested.

NALAP had teaching and learning materials to help teachers, which made their work much easier. The policy gives more freedom for creativity and flexibility and encourages a creative use of the children's environment in the learning process. However, like the other policies before it, NALAP failed to meet all the requirements it was formulated for and participants provided data to show some of the challenges they faced. For example, the problems associated with teachers' knowledge of the local language were not solved by introducing NALAP. As the results of the study show, some teachers had difficulty implementing the policy because of

their inability to use local language effectively in teaching. This calls for a review of the policy for different schools to cater for the local needs of teachers and children, especially in urban and peri-urban areas in the country. The study identified not only a lack of initial training and in-service training for teachers, but also poor quality training, which made some teachers decide to seek further training elsewhere. Furthermore, there appears to be apathy among some teachers about the frequency of policy change in the lower grade, which makes NALAP unpopular simply because it is yet another change in policy. Finally, fears about the influence of Britain, as a former colonial ruler, and America, as a super power, in the language policy means there is a need for transparency and more active involvement with educational authorities in the country.

In summary, the data from the study reveals that NALAP policy was introduced as a result of the failure of the English-only and local language policies to address the literacy problems of children in the lower grade. Mary, Jessica, Dorothy and Judith were the four participants who used the policy. Out of the four, Judith continues to use it as a teacher in Class One, whilst Mary and Dorothy continue to support its use in their new roles as head teachers. All participants broadly agreed with the new policy and went through the training organised by GES to help teachers with their classroom practices, although some were critical of the effectiveness of the training and the local language component of the policy. Participants were of the view that the NALAP policy had a number of strengths, as against other previous policies, because of the guidance and teaching materials they received, which help them to be creative, flexible and resourceful in their work.

In addition, some were of the view that NALAP encouraged the transfer of best practice amongst teachers, whilst at the same time promoting children's literacy learning through interaction with the environment. In contrast, there were a number of key limitations or weaknesses in NALAP. The initial training on NALAP was seen as ineffective and of poor quality by some, coupled with inadequate classroom teaching and learning materials. Another limitation of NALAP appears to be teachers' competency in the use of local language, which is an important aspect of the policy. As a result, NALAP is seen to be more successful in rural areas where the use of a single local language is more common. Some participants were of the opinion that Britain and the US were imposing a neocolonialist influence on Ghana's education system, which could have a negative impact on the implementation of the NALAP policy.

It is important to consider what the implications of the advantages and disadvantages of NALAP are for language policy in general. This study has shown that NALAP is not the ‘answer’ to language and literacy issues in the lower grade because of the challenges posed by the use of local language. Therefore, it would be good to see how the gap in local language learning at the Junior High School and Senior High School can be closed to make it possible for future teachers to take more skills in local language forward into training college. Equally, there is a need for a change in attitude towards local language from the government, society and parents, so that students take on a positive attitude towards local language learning. With regards to training, there is a need for both continuing professional development, as well as high quality training of teachers on NALAP, to empower them to provide high quality teaching in their individual classrooms. As De Vries, Van de Crift and Jasen (2014, p.338) argue, continuing professional development of teachers ‘offers an important potential way to improve schools, increase teacher quality and improve the quality of student learning’. The shortfalls in teaching and learning materials need to be addressed to improve teachers’ work, so that they can help their students to achieve their highest potential in school. Good practice should be encouraged and rewarded, so that teachers feel appreciated in what they do. In line with this, an online database to help new teachers in the lower grade to access information on NALAP and examples of good practices and innovative ideas could be useful.

The discussion below provides a detailed evaluation of participants’ views on how their classroom practices were affected by language and literacy policy formulation and monitoring process.

5.3 Participants’ perceptions on how educational policies are formulated and monitored

All the participants in this study expressed their frustration with the process of policy formulation by successive Ghanaian governments since independence because they felt the process alienated the majority of people, including teachers. In particular, Dorothy and Judith felt the voices of a wide and diverse range of stakeholders needed to be heard, which had not so far been the case and, even when attempts were made to solicit the views of interested parties, this was on a piecemeal basis, involving only an elite few in society. Frank, Jessica and Grace were of the view that the opinions of teachers were completely ignored to say the least, as though teachers at the lower grade were of no value as far as language and literacy policy decisions in the country were concerned. Mary, however, was of the view that the final decision on policy matters was the sole responsibility of the government of the day, which has the

political power to decide what should happen in education, leaving teachers to implement policy in the classroom even if they do not like it per se.

Dorothy, as someone who wants to see the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders in the policy formulation process, said:

I don't think teachers, parents and the general public (stakeholders) have a voice because this has been our problem before these policies were made. Teachers in particular are the implementers of policy, but the voices of everyone affected by the policy should provide input to form the new policy and I don't think this takes place very often. If you listen to teachers, parents and the general public you get to know their concerns and add their input into the new policy. For me, although the policy is out not everyone is following it and there is nothing in place to check that whatever is said in the policy is being followed in the schools

Here, Dorothy seems to be suggesting that the voices of teachers, parents and the general public were not being heard often enough when it came to language policy formulation. The need to include public opinion or the views of a wide range of stakeholders in policy formulation have been highlighted by Fitzgerald and Kay (2016), who argue for consultation with all stakeholders, including parents, teachers and all relevant agencies, thus teachers' voices in particular need to be heard, in order to prevent them from feeling alienated from the process. In addition, because some teachers feel alienated from the policy formulation process, they tend to act on their own initiative. For example, Dorothy said, *"In the classroom I know at least I have a voice, which is why sometimes I tend to interpret the policy to suit my circumstances"*. Her evidence seems to imply that she tends to amend the rules to suit her because she does not feel part of the process of bringing about any change with regard to the language policy. Maybe this could be the reason why she was able to accept parents' views on NALAP and altered it to include more English and less local language. This attitude shows the influence of parents and teachers when they perceive the language policy as having negative effects on children and their classroom practices. As Fitzgerald and Kay (2016, p.77) indicate, 'policy formulation and implementation are not always predictable in terms of outcomes' and 'it is subject to whether or not those involved are in support of the policy or see it as negative'. Judith's view reinforces Dorothy's, when she said:

The Ministry involves very few people in the policy process and so I don't feel my voice really counts at all. But I think my voice counts in my classroom because I am the teacher there. I do what I think is good for my children, in a professional way. I think it would be nice if our policy makers try and get the views of all those who have something to say e.g. parents, community leaders, church groups, donor agencies,

NGOs etc., because it would enrich the process, and make the teacher more confident in the classroom.

An official from the National Catholic Secretariat appeared to share a similar view with Dorothy and Judith on the involvement of the wider community including the church on policy formulation when he said:

Unfortunately, there is a problem and we had a conference recently to discuss government educational policies and our position. Most of the time, the government will consult the Regional Directors and District Directors but not the Managers of schools who are representing the religious bodies in the formulation and implementation of these policies. So I can say that it is the sad aspect of the relationship between the church and government so in most of the formulation of these policies the churches are not consulted.

This evidence shows that, although the church was and still is involved in providing education for a large number of people, they were somehow sidelined when it came to educational policy formulation. Although Grace felt she should be committed to government policies, she felt very frustrated by the inability of GNAT to represent teachers' views. She was of the opinion that teachers were completely ignored and not involved as members when it came to the policy formulation on language and literacy. Grace stated that:

As for GNAT, I am always angry with them because they do not listen to the voices of its members so when we go for meetings our views are not taken seriously so I think we teachers are not well represented by GNAT whenever they meet the government. So sometimes I refuse to go for meetings and I say to those going if you go tell them this or that. I don't see what GNAT is doing. GNAT is just taking our money.

Grace appeared to lay the blame on the Teachers Union i.e. GNAT (Ghana National Association of Teachers), for their inability to stand up for teachers in representing their views. From the evidence, Grace seems to be aware of the involvement of GNAT in policy formulation on behalf of teachers but the members of the association feel they are not well consulted and represented. In addition, she appears to suggest a disconnection between GNAT and its grassroots members, in terms of consultation during formulation of policies, which may indicate a power imbalance between teachers and GNAT. Furthermore, according to Grace:

If a GES official asks me why I am not using the policy correctly, what I will say is that I am not wrong because I am in the classroom; I am here and you did not come to me for my opinion on the problems in the classroom, if you had come to me, I would have given it to you and you would have known my position but since you did not consult me I am doing what will suit the children.

Grace's response indicates that she saw herself as one with authority in her class, with knowledge of what is best for the children. She displays her creative ability to make learning suitable for her class, despite the challenges she might be facing. Thus, the autonomy she has in her classroom makes up for the difficulties of her voice not being heard or taken into account by GNAT.

The non-involvement of teachers in policy formulation, expressed by Dorothy and Grace above, was reinforced by Jessica, who suggested that policy formulation was the business of technocrats, when she said, "*the big people in education (GNAT and GES) who formulate policy and we teachers are completely ignored in the process.*" Jessica therefore appeared to see policy formulation as a process for important people and experts and not for ordinary teachers. This is because the composition of educational review committees in Ghana has been based on experts and usually named by the government (Fredua-Kwarteng, 2015). The membership of these committees is usually perceived as an elite group with representations from different groups of experts with no 'grass root' representation. As a result, teachers like Jessica are likely to assume they are less important when it comes to policy formulation. This also suggests teachers are being somehow sidelined by the system, which is highly influenced by colonialism and by educational experts. However, Smit (2005) argues that teachers have local knowledge on language and other issues affecting children and they should be seen as a valuable asset for policy formulation, which appears to be the argument of the participants in this study. This means teachers want their voices to be heard, not only in their classrooms but also within any policy arena.

Finally, Hubert and Mary seemed to accept the notion that policy formulation is solely the responsibility of governments. For example, Hubert said: "*policy is none of my business as a teacher, I simply do what GES or government tells me to do...it is as simple as that*". Hubert's data was consistent with the view that he was prepared to do what is asked of him as a teacher. For example, he did not abandon the use of English-only as a medium of instruction, even though he was faced with the challenge of children not understanding their lessons. Mary, in support of Hubert, opines that, "*teachers are less powerful, we are only implementers of government policy, and decisions were made on our behalf, leaving us to either ignore or interpret policies according to our best ability*". Mary and Hubert's evidence appears to show the alignment with a top-down model when it comes to policy formulation and implementation, with the political authority or the government at the very top of the hierarchy, the GES somewhere in the middle and teachers at the very bottom as implementers of policy. Hubert's

comment may be attributed to the fact that he was trained at a period when the country had just gained independence and, as such, teachers were willing to do whatever was necessary to help with the education of children. Mary, on the other hand, had been a teacher when the country was undergoing a lot of military upheaval and cultural change (with many teachers leaving the country to neighbouring West African countries) to a period of stability and progress with many consequences for teachers. This seems to suggest that some teachers, like Mary, feel the need to be appreciated for the work they do, despite the financial gains.

Participants' views on language and literacy policy formulation also show how the perception they held on policy formulation impacted positively or negatively on their practices. In the study, most of the participants expressed the view that they did what they thought was best for the children, irrespective of what the policy said, because they could exercise that right as a teacher in their own classroom. For example, Grace was ready to defend herself should an officer question her practice. Dorothy's school had decided to use more English as a medium of instruction, instead of less English under NALAP, and Jessica was content with the use of English instead of local language because English is a global language. The actions of some of the participants in this study resonates with a study by Smit (2005) on teachers and policy formulation in Kenya, where it was found that teachers felt they would resist policy if it was forced on them by the authorities. However, the majority of participants in this study were of the view that they were ready to cooperate with authorities for the sake of the children, while at the same time make their positions known. Participants' views on policy formulation expressed in this study show the importance of teachers' voice and knowledge on classroom practices for any future formulation of language and literacy policy.

In light of the above evidence regarding the process of policy formulation, as seen from participants' perspectives, an official of the Ministry of Education, in answer to the above concerns of participants on policy formulation, had this to say:

The Minister for Education is in charge or responsible for all policies but the minister works with technocrats, for example, the division head of Policy, Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation (PBME). This is the division within the ministry that is in charge of all issues relating to policy, planning, budgeting, monitoring, and evaluation. It is supervised by the chief director. However, it is a sector which has stakeholders, so policy is not made by a person but the ministry together with its relevant stakeholders. In the field of language and literacy the ministry leads the process and brings on board all relevant organisations, especially those who implement the policy so we have a number of stakeholders. The key ones are; GES, which is responsible for education from KG1 to Senior High School, that is the

foundation stage for providing literacy and numeracy skills to children of school going age.

The evidence provided by the official on education policy formulation shows that the Minister of Education has responsibility for the formation of all policies on education. The evidence also shows that the minister works with other officials within the Ministry of Education, as well as the GES, which is in charge of teachers and teaching and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

When I asked him who the stakeholders were, he said:

The academia is a stakeholder, the universities that are responsible for education or preparing teachers are stakeholders, parents are stakeholders, we have the National Parent Teacher Association, the teachers themselves – their association, because they will do the teaching, we have concerned citizens who have interest in how education is developed, we have development partners – people who sometimes support us either through technical assistance, financial assistance or both - these are also stakeholders, all our relevant agencies and we have about twenty-two of them e.g. WAEC, because they supervise examinations so they are a key stakeholder, National Council for Tertiary Education, Encyclopedia Africana etc., all those who have something to do with language and teaching or producing graduates and yourself as a Ghanaian.

From the above extracts, we can see that, in contrast to the views of Dorothy and Judith (who thought few stakeholders were involved in the process), the policy formulation process comprises of many and varied stakeholders, including the GES, universities, experts, donors, pressure groups like parents associations, GNAT and donor agencies. However, it appears the membership of the committee is usually small (made up of representatives of each group of stakeholders), making it almost impossible for many individual voices to be heard. The above statement also points to a group of technocrats leaving very little room for ‘ordinary people’, to have a say in the matter.

Indeed, Fredua-Kwarteng (2015), argues that:

National education policy-making in former British colonies in Africa (i.e. the Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia) follows a consistent model that favours the participation of tiny segments of the population who possess English language facility (p.83).

The above statements from Fredua-Kwarteng and the Ministry of Education official show that the setup of these commissions is influenced by colonialism, where education policies were reviewed by colonial government commissions made up of a small group of representatives.

As a result of this, many people who could offer insight and information into education policies are excluded from the process. Again, the huge population of teachers in the country makes it almost impossible for GNAT to represent the voices of all teachers and, even if it does, the composition and the interest of other members of the review committee are likely to be overshadowed. Thus, the evidence from Jessica and Grace, who were of the view that teachers were apparently completely ignored in the policy formulation process, may be accepted to some extent. Furthermore, the members of such committees or commissions appear to be elitist; people who themselves benefitted from Western education during the colonial era. Such a group would, therefore, exclude a number of people, especially those in the rural or minority areas whose voices also need to be heard.

Finally, the evidence from Judith points to the need to involve a wider range of stakeholders, including foreign or donor agencies, in the policy formulation process (although Dorothy in particular was critical about foreign donors and the influence they may have in promoting English, which could contribute to erasing some of the good cultural practices of Ghanaians). Though this concern shows the need to include the participation of foreign donors, it should, however, be overseen by Ghanaian educationalists, so that the cultural needs of children are preserved. This view receives support from Kuyini (2013), who provides details of some of the support given by different donor agencies for different educational reforms in the country and the lack of adequate local content or input.

The idea that the co-coordinator sees policy formulation as teamwork, involving a number of stakeholders, including the teachers' union, appears to suggest that the process is not as top-down as some participants have claimed. Kirk and MacDonald (2001) argue that:

The notion of partnership seems to promise a fusion or integration of 'top-down or 'bottom-up' strategies for reform in education, bringing together as it does a range of stakeholders who each have an interest in the nature of change in schools (p. 553).

The participants in this study did not seem to agree with the view that policy formulation is a partnership between government and stakeholders. The reasons stated for this are that some feel teachers' voices are not heard on matters in which they are well experienced, and that all those who make up the government's commissions are technocrats and elite members of society; some see policy as an imposition from the government. The above perceptions have implications for policy formulation, as it requires the government to make changes to some of the colonial systems inherited after independence.

In terms of how the different policies were monitored by GES officials, Hubert and Frank provided information about officials paying visits to their schools and, as a result, teachers had to ensure that they were using the language policy. In addition, Frank was of the view that sometimes some officials paid ‘lip service’ to the official policy of the use of local language in schools. He stated that:

Those in the office who are supposed to come and supervise and advise feel that it should be done that way - using English to teach because they also have children in the public school which is free and they do not have to spend so much money to educate their children in private schools. At the same time they want their children to do well like children in private schools so the education officers close their eyes on that. So now it has become unofficial policy all over, you go to every school and the medium of instruction is English.

Frank seemed to see some monitoring officers as making active decisions with regards to how to deal with teachers’ practices in school. The inability of the officers to ensure that teachers were using the language policy could relate to implementation difficulties. Based on the data from this study, it is possible that some of these officials prefer the use of English because they also see learning in English as more advantageous than in the local language. It is also possible that there is some form of inefficiency in the way monitoring is done. This also implies that the local language component of NALAP may suffer, since there is greater emphasis on the use of English.

Jessica and Dorothy felt the NALAP policy was not being well monitored. They feared that the inability of GES officials in monitoring what was going on in schools could jeopardise the full implementation of the policy. This means both Jessica and Dorothy feel NALAP could work if the difficulties associated with it are addressed. According to Jessica:

None of us understood Ga so we boycotted its use in the classroom. At times when the headmistress goes for meetings and comes back she will tell us officers will be coming round to monitor and to see how we are practicing the NALAP and whenever she says that our answer is, ‘We are waiting for them’ because we know they don’t come anyway.

From the above extract, we can see that Jessica was of the view that she could continue using English instead of local language because officials were not visiting her school to check on the use of the policy by teachers. However, she also said:

NALAP is a good policy but there is need for effective monitoring but we do not see officials in the school monitoring the policy so they must come to the schools to see how

the teachers are using it to teach the children and by so doing I think it will go a long way to help the children.

The above comment seems to contradict Jessica's position on NALAP; on the one hand she appeared not to like the policy, saying the policy change was not necessary, while, on the other hand, she wished to see it succeed by asking for more monitoring of teachers. She did explain later that her problem with NALAP was not her dislike of it as a policy, but rather because of her difficulties with the local language, which gave her no confidence in her teaching. According to Jessica, the presence of GES officials would help her make extra effort in using the local language, which might help her enjoy her teaching. This shows monitoring of teachers can be a source of motivation for some and can lead to good practice in the classroom. Jessica appeared to be voicing her frustration on the ineffectiveness of school inspectors and the impact of this on teachers' practices. The issue of poor monitoring and evaluation of the policy is supported by Dorothy, who also said:

For me, although the policy is out not everyone is following it and there is no monitoring or nothing in place to check that whatever is said in the policy is being followed by teachers. The policy is good if only supervision and monitoring is strengthened ... if you introduce a policy there should be a way out, how to monitor, how to evaluate it over a period of time, for example, after a number of years the authorities can check to see if the policy is working or not...

Indeed, Dorothy's comment seems to suggest that, in areas where there is effective monitoring and evaluation, the benefit of the policy is readily acknowledged. This further suggests some teachers were actively seeking support for the NALAP policy to succeed. The fact that both Jessica and Dorothy felt NALAP was not being monitored and evaluated means that a critical aspect of policy formulation and implementation, which deals with monitoring and evaluation, was receiving less attention. However, according to the official of the Ghana Education Service (GES):

During the training, we did a lot of monitoring but we operate a decentralised education system so apart from headquarters, the regions and the districts also have their own monitoring mechanisms. We have an inspectorate system that starts from national to regional and to district. CRDD is not in the district so it depends on others in the district for information but from time to time they carry out research and assessment so as to find out how the policies are working.

The above statement shows some monitoring was done in the initial stages when the policy was first introduced. This evidence of the early monitoring of NALAP is also noted by Hartwell (2010) in a study on NALAP implementation. However, Hartwell noted there were problems

with the implementation of the policy from low to partial and full implementation, as a result of issues relating to training of teachers on NALAP, inadequate materials, teacher's inability to use local language and lack of a common classroom language. In addition, it appears the inspectors from the Inspectorate Division in the Districts and Regions, who are mandated to carry out inspection and monitoring of education policies in schools, were not up to the task, leading to Jessica and Dorothy's assertion that the policy was not being monitored sufficiently. Opoku-Asare (2006) also noted that inspection of schools in Ghana was inadequate and has been an area of great challenge for the GES. Some of the challenges noted by Opoku-Asare include: lack of logistics, lack of focus on real issues concerning teaching and learning in the schools by inspectors, and inadequate training of school inspectors. These findings show that participants in this study are in favour of monitoring and would like to see the Inspectorate Division of the GES do the work assigned to them to ensure quality of teaching and the success of NALAP.

In summary, the evidence provided above by participants reveals that policy formulation should not be left to the elite in society and foreign donors. There is a need for change in the composition of educational review committees inherited from the British colonial administration; a wider consultation including the active involvement of teachers in the process. The results of the study also show that monitoring of teachers is needed if the NALAP policy is to be successful and effective monitoring could motivate some teachers to improve upon what they do. Finally, there is concern that foreign donors may promote English and contribute to the eradication of some of the good cultural practices of Ghanaians.

5.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter uses a postcolonial perspective to discuss and interpret the key findings from the thesis, in light of gaps in the literature and prior studies on language and policy changes in the lower grade. More specifically, this chapter provides a narrative account of the English-only, local language and biliteracy policies, which have been implemented since 1957, and evaluates the impact of these policy changes on teachers' practices over six decades from 1957 to 2014. The narrative on the participants' professional life histories covers a number of issues, including: entry routes to teaching career, training to become a professional teacher and opportunities for further development, as well as the colonial influence on the Training Colleges attended by participants. This is followed by an evaluation of how the change from English-only to local language policy and finally to the NALAP policy impacted on

participants' teaching practices in the classroom. The chapter ends with considering participants' views on how education policies are formulated in the country.

In terms of the training received by teachers, the findings of the study show a conflict between the Ghanaian culture and European culture, as a result of the colonial influence on teacher education. While this study is highlighting a number of concerns about the influence of colonialism (eradication of culture etc.) the study did also point out some positive factors (such as children being allowed to use their left hand). There was also a general view that caning was not helpful to children, mainly because of the physical and psychological harm it brought them and also because of human rights issues. In addition, the findings show that teachers in the last decade of the study and those who used NALAP had higher qualifications, compared to those who taught the lower grade during the earlier decades of the study.

On language policy changes, the findings show that there were three major policy changes to affect teachers' practices. The study identified frequent political upheavals and government interventions in educational reforms as partly responsible for some of the changes. Conflict between children's home language and regional identity were identified as having a serious impact on any language policy. The findings on the English-only policy support the assertion that it is a barrier to children's learning and progress. In addition, there is disagreement between governments and the country's educational experts and popular opinion on the use of English in the lower grade. The findings point to the fact that local language is the preferred policy for younger children.

In relation to NALAP, the findings show teachers generally had a positive attitude towards the policy and wanted to see it succeed, despite the difficulties associated with its implementation. Participants saw a need for high quality training of teachers and mentioned that sharing of good practice among teachers and the availability of teaching materials, including big books, alphabet cards etc., in both the local and English languages, was necessary to make the policy succeed. The study's findings also show that lack of preservice and CPD for new teachers in the lower grade and lack of monitoring or supervision of teachers could jeopardise the initial ground gained by the policy. There is a need for more consultation on the place of English in the lower grade, as a result of contemporary trends. The study's findings also revealed strong postcolonial views of participants that need addressing.

On policy formulation and monitoring, the findings support the need for a wider consultation and a stronger role for teachers, which requires changes to the policy formulation process.

There was concern about the role of foreign donors and the influence they may have in promoting English.

It was clear that a life history approach enabled a deep and complex picture to be built up about the participants' views and practices on language and literacy learning and teaching. In the concluding chapter, I will move on to consider the implication of the study for research, policy and practice.

Chapter Six

Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This main purpose of this chapter is to conclude the thesis and provide practical recommendations on how the changes in language and literacy policies identified in this thesis can inform government policy-makers, teachers, and other stakeholders. Although the findings of the study cannot be generalised to a great extent, they provide a deep insight into how language and literacy policy changes have impacted on teaching practices in the lower grade in Ghana since 1957: these findings have implications for how future language and literacy policies for early education are formulated, implemented and monitored.

The chapter is divided into four sections. Section 6.2 discusses the extent to which the key research questions have been answered, using teachers' views on policy formulation and their personal experiences as teachers in the lower grade. The research questions were as follows:

RQ1. What have been the key changes in language and literacy policy since independence when seen through a postcolonial lens? RQ2. How have teachers experienced changes in language and literacy policy in terms of their classroom practices? RQ3. What are teacher' views on how language and literacy policy has been developed and implemented?

Section 6.3 critically evaluates the implications of the findings for Ghanaian government policy-makers, the Ghana Education Service (GES), donor agencies, and teachers, and considers the impact of policy continuity and discontinuity on teachers' practices in Ghana. Section 6.4 highlights the general and specific contributions the thesis makes to knowledge. In addition, a discussion is included about the major limitations of the study, and areas for future research at the post-doctoral level are outlined. Finally, Section 6.5 provides a critical personal reflection on the researcher's PhD journey.

6.2 The extent to which the thesis' key research questions have been answered

This section discusses the extent to which the first two research questions (RQ1 and RQ2) have been answered using teachers' views on the different language and literacy policies and their classroom practices for the lower grade. The main themes relating to the two key research questions are 'the changes in language and literacy policies'^{RQ1} and 'the impact of the policy changes on teachers' classroom practices'^{RQ2} since independence in 1957. An assessment of the extent to which the first key research question, relating to the changes in language and literacy policy since 1957, is now discussed.

6.2.1 The changes in language and literacy policy from 1957 to date

This theme traces the different language and literacy policies used at the lower grade from independence to date, and attempts to answer the first research question, which is; what are the language and literacy policy changes since independence?

In Ghana, children's learning and ability to progress in school and in society is closely associated with the language of instruction, especially at the lower grade, which is the focus of this study. The study identifies four significant changes in the language and literacy policies for the lower grade from 1957 to date, involving three key policies, namely, the English-only policy, the local language policy and the National Literacy Acceleration Programme (NALAP). The first change was in 1967 from the English-only policy to the local language policy under the National Liberation Council (NLC) military government. The second change occurred in 2002 from local language policy to English-only policy, under the National Patriotic Party (NPP) government. 2008 witnessed the third change in policy from the English-only back to the local language policy. Finally, in 2009, there was a change in policy from the local language policy to the NALAP policy, which integrated the local language and English-only policies.

This study identifies several reasons for the four significant changes in the language and literacy policies since 1957. From independence in 1957, the CPP government, led by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, adopted the English-only policy for two main reasons. First, in order to resolve the stalemate, which occurred before independence in 1957, over whether or not to use the local language or English language as the medium of instruction, the new government decided to opt for the English-only policy. Second, although it was more expedient for most postcolonial governments simply to continue using the language of their former colonial government, the adoption of the English-only in Ghana was politically motivated, in the sense that the new government argued that, since English is a universal language, there is greater advantage to using it as the national language, while maintaining the use of local languages. The findings from this study indicate that it was the perception of the teachers interviewed that the English-only policy was meant to satisfy many Ghanaians, who believed learning English was the gateway to success and economic progress for the individual.

However, some participants saw the policy as operating within a colonial context, where children were being alienated from their culture by not being given instruction through their local language. Participants who opposed the use of the policy also argued it was not responding to the needs of many children, who came from homes and communities where

English was rarely used. The fact that many children came to school with no previous knowledge of English, and yet were required to learn through that medium of instruction, made it difficult for them to interact effectively with their teachers in the classroom.

Table 6.1 below provides a summary of the main reasons for the changes in policies from 1957 based on the findings from this study.

Table 6.1
A summary of the main reasons for the changes in language and literacy policy since 1957

Significant changes in Policy	Main reasons based on findings in this study
The FIRST change took place in 1967.	Motivated by the nationalistic orientation of the NLC Military government; appeal to the cultural sentiments and preferences of most Ghanaians
The SECOND change led to the replacement of the local language policy with the English-only policy in 2002.	English language is a global and the national language; many teachers lack knowledge of local languages and the skills to use them in teaching; most of the teaching and learning materials were not written in the local language, making difficult for teachers to teach literacy effectively.
The THIRD change occurred in 2008, during the second term of the NPP government, there was the change from the English-only back to the local language policy.	The findings from this study suggest that the main reason for the change could be attributed to the fact that, at the time, most Ghanaians were disappointed with the government over the use of the English-only policy because they preferred the use of the local language policy.
The FOURTH policy change in 2009, from the local language policy to NALAP.	The main reason for this policy emanates from the need to develop a bilingual literacy policy based on the advantages of using multiple languages as a basis for literacy. The NALAP, therefore, represents an attempt to integrate the benefits of using both the local language and English language policies in the development of early literacy – there has not been any policy change since.

From the above table, we can see that the first significant change took place in 1967, following the overthrow of the CPP government in 1966, and the decision by the NLC government to replace the English-only policy with a local language policy for the lower grade. The findings from this study reveal that the main reason for this change in policy appears to be motivated by the nationalistic orientation of the NLC military government, which wanted to appeal to the cultural sentiments and preferences of most Ghanaians at the time to adopt local languages at the lower grade. This is confirmed by Owu-Ewie (2006), who indicated that the change in government brought about language policy change for the lower grade, with only Class 1 using

local language until 1970, when it was introduced in all three lower grade classes. However, the implementation of the local language policy ran into difficulties over time because of the use of the prevalent language of an area, rather than the actual first language or ‘mother tongue’ of the child as the medium of instruction. By using the prevalent language of the area, children whose home language was different from the one spoken in the place where they live may not have had the privilege of learning in their own languages. This is a clear indication of a policy that could not support all Ghanaian children in the use of their mother tongue.

Some participants reported that the local language policy was culturally, socially and pedagogically beneficial to young children because they used it so extensively. This made children get to know the local language better, use it more in communicating and socialising and learn better when it is used. The difficulties described above, coupled with the desire for more English language learning and teaching, brought an end to the English-only policy in 2002. This change in policy from English-only to local language by the National Liberation Council (NLC) shows political support for the use of local language in the lower grade. It also shows that policy may not always be favourable to all because it may not meet the requirements of everyone, as suggested by Fitzgerald and Kay (2016).

The second significant change led to the replacement of the local language policy with the English-only policy in 2002. Some of the main reasons given by the then New Patriotic Party (NPP) government, led by President John Agyekum Kufuor, for reintroducing the English-only policy, re-echoed the reasons given by the CPP government, that, since English is a global and the national language, it should be promoted at the lower grade in order to boost children’s literacy development. Another reason for the reintroduction of the English-only policy, which affected the teachers interviewed in this study, was the fact that some of the participants lacked knowledge of local languages and the skills to use them in teaching. From this study, we can see that the English-only policy was first introduced by the CPP government immediately after independence and reintroduced between 2002 and 2007 by John Agyekum Kufuor under the NPP government (Opoku-Amankwa, 2009), suggesting that the CPP and NPP governments had similar ideas of promoting English as the language of instruction at the lower grade.

The third significant change occurred in 2008 during the second term of the NPP government, which witnessed the change from the English-only back to the local language policy. The findings from this study suggested that the main reason for the change could be attributed to

the fact that, at the time, most Ghanaians were disappointed with the government over the use of the English-only policy because they preferred the use of the local language policy.

This, finally, led to the fourth significant policy change in 2009, from the local language policy to the bilingual NALAP policy, where both the local language and English were used for literacy learning. The data suggested that the main reason for this policy emanates from the need to develop a bilingual literacy policy, based on the advantages of using multiple languages within the context of literacy. The NALAP, therefore, represents an attempt to integrate the benefits of using both the local language and English language policies in the development of early literacy, which is in line with research in the area of bilingual literacy (Cummins, 2000). This study reveals that NALAP is the first policy to introduce bilingualism for children in the country. It emphasises the use of the child's local language in learning a second language, which is English in this case. This policy is still in use and there is no sign of a change being proposed.

In summary, the above discussion shows how the first research question has been answered, by providing a critical analysis of these three language policies, which have been in existence since independence in Ghana. These findings have serious implications for the process of formulating, implementing and controlling language and literacy policies in Ghana. Before discussing the implications of these findings, the next section first discusses how the changes in these three policies affected teachers' classroom practices post-independence (addressing RQ2).

6.2.2 English-only policy and teachers' practices (1957-1967; 2002-2007)

The study highlights teachers' use of an English-only policy in the lower grade, an area which has not been the focus of many studies in Ghana. The results show that, though some teachers in the study accepted this policy because they saw English as a global language, the knowledge of which could be beneficial to children, other participants had strong feelings against it because they viewed it as alienating the children from their own language and culture. Table 6.2 below presents teachers' views on the key benefits and limitations of using the English-only policy.

Table 6.2
Key benefits and limitations of the English-only policy

Benefits	Limitations
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children are introduced to English language from an early grade. 2. Children are better prepared to follow lessons in English when they move to the upper grade. 3. Children are better prepared for future success in school, leading to economic and social benefits. 4. Prepares children for future participation in the global world where English remains a universal language. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At independence, many children found learning in the English language very difficult because they came from homes and communities where English was not the language commonly spoken. Between 2002 and 2007 there were still many children, particularly in rural areas, who experienced the same difficulty. 2. There were fewer classroom interactions between teachers and children because many children could not communicate effectively in the English language. 3. Many teachers were compelled to use the local language during lessons i.e. evidence of code-switching between local language and English. 4. Unlike the 2002-07 period, at Independence there were many untrained teachers who could not teach in English. 5. Many teachers were fearful that English language alienates children from their culture and traditions.

From the above table, we can see that some participants saw the policy as important, especially at the time of independence, and argued that children needed to learn English because it was the country's official language. Other participants maintained that using the English language early was likely to help children speak, read and write in English. Also, some of the participants argued that by learning the English language early, children will be better prepared for future success in school, leading to economic and social benefits. In addition, participants thought the English language was necessary for making progress at higher levels of education, where the language of instruction and assessment remains English. However, some participants were of the view that the use of the English language, rather than the child's own language, was likely to create the impression that English was more important than their own local language. Indeed, some participants felt the use of the English-only policy could alienate children from their traditions and culture and create an identity crisis for some of them. Some participants also argued that the English-only policy was a way of perpetuating the colonial notion that the use of the English language was the only path to future success.

These findings suggest that teachers who used the English-only policy during the two periods, 1957-1967 and 2002-2007, faced a number of challenges that affected the quality of their teaching practices. The biggest challenge the participants in this study faced was children's inability to understand lessons taught in the English language. This difficulty was not eroded with time, as it was observed during Hubert's teaching straight after independence and Mary's teaching two decades later. This means the problem of children not knowing enough English was not only peculiar to the period after independence but was evident many years later. This resonates with the work of Opoku-Amankwa (2009), who argued that the use of English as a medium of instruction impeded children's progress in school, as they were unable to communicate effectively in English. In terms of theory development, these findings build on Opoku-Amankwa's work by showing that teachers felt as if an English-only policy impeded children's progress, but this study goes on to show how teachers found their own strategies to deal with this problem, even if this meant that they were moving away from the policy. As children did not understand the English language, participants argued that this affected the quality of the interaction they had with children during teaching.

Where participants were unable to communicate effectively with children, they saw it as a challenge and communicated with the children in the local language, even though they were not supposed to. This provides evidence of code-switching between English and the local language. For example, Hubert switched to the local Akwapem language, in order to make his teaching more meaningful to the children in his class. Hubert's experience is similar in a way to the experiences of teachers in other former British colonial countries, like Kenya (Kioko et al., 2014; Davies and Agbenyega, 2012). Clegg and Afitska (2001) argue that this practice of code switching is necessary, especially in the lower grade, where English language is used as the medium of instruction. These findings support the view that code-switching is necessary where children's home language is different from the language at school. The evidence of code-switching in classrooms further suggests a need for emphasis on bilingual learning in Ghana, where children's local language is used in teaching and English is introduced gradually, until children can use both languages effectively.

This study also found that the inability of some teachers, like Mary, to use the local language to support their teaching, meant that some teachers could not support children's learning effectively. As a result, some parents felt that the English-only policy was preventing their children from understanding lessons in class; this partially explains why, although both Hubert and Mary accepted the policy, they did not totally agree with it. In addition to parents and

teachers, who did not fully accept the English-only policy, Mfum-Mensah (2005) also reveals that educational experts and the majority of Ghanaians did not support the policy when it was reintroduced in 2002, mainly because they thought the change in policy was politically motivated, following the government's decision to overturn the Anamuah Commission to have local language as the medium of instruction in the lower grade.

A further disadvantage of the English-only policy, which some participants talked about, was the issue of untrained or pupil teachers teaching lower grades, who could not use the English language. For example, Hubert argued that some untrained teachers employed in non-priority schools could not use the English language or teach it, leading to many children doing poorly in school. Mary also talked about some teachers and pupil teachers in rural areas, who were so used to teaching in the local language, during the local language policy, that they simply continued using the local language when the change in policy from local language to English-only took place in 2002. It is important to point out that this was a different issue to teachers who were trying to use the policy but adapted their teaching (therefore used local language at times) to support the children's learning. These teachers (identified by Hubert and Mary) appeared to be either unable or unwilling to use English at all, which was clearly problematic.

These findings, therefore, support the assertion that the English-only policy was, in many cases, identified as a barrier to children's learning and progress. In addition, the findings support the concern raised in prior studies by Kioko et al. (2014) and Brock-Utne et al. (2004) that the use of English in many African schools impedes the progress of many children.

6.2.3 Impact of the change from English-only policy to local language policy on teachers' practices (1970-2002; 2008-2009)

The English-only policy was followed by the local language policy from 1970 to 2002 and from 2008 to 2009. Four participants taught under this policy. The results of this study show that the local language policy, when compared with the English-only policy, was implemented for the longest period i.e. over 32 years since independence. This suggests that the local language policy was preferred over the English-only policy. There was overwhelming evidence from the data that participants saw the local language policy as a way of making learning more meaningful for children because it sought to address the difficulties most children had with the English-only policy, such as a lack of understanding and difficulties with classroom interaction. These findings support various studies, including Kioko et al., (2014), Nyaga and Anthonissen (2012), Cummins, (2000) and Owu-Ewie (2006), on the importance of teaching children using a language familiar to

them. Table 6.3 below highlights the key benefits and limitations of adopting the local language policy when compared, with the English-only policy as identified in this present study.

Table 6.3
Benefits and limitations of local language policy

Benefits	Limitations
1. Children understand lessons better in their own language, rather than in the English language.	1. Not all the local languages were used as a medium of instruction in schools.
2. Children and teachers have better classroom interaction in the local language, than in English.	2. Teachers had no clear guidelines on how to teach using the local language and how to use it in multilingual classrooms.
3. Children identify with their own culture and traditions.	3. Inability of some teachers to use local language because of their own education in the local knowledge.
4. Children use local language (L1) to learn a second language (L2).	4. Some teachers had negative attitudes towards the use of local language because English was the language of instruction at higher levels of education.
5. Local language is seen as a successful medium for communication and socialisation.	
6. Supports children’s intellectual knowledge.	

These data build on previous studies, as they highlight the specific issues that policy makers must focus on when forming language policy. In particular, it shows how policy-makers need to understand how teachers’ classroom practices are affected by their knowledge of and ability to use the local language(s) prevalent in their local areas within the classroom. This study identified five key issues which affected teachers’ ability to use the local language effectively in the lower grade.

First, the curriculum in secondary schools does not make the learning of local languages a compulsory subject, which deprived many potential teachers of continuing to learn local languages. Learning local language before entering training college would have given potential teachers more confidence in further developing their competencies in the use of local languages. The second problem identified by participants was the inconsistency in government policy on which language to use as the medium of instruction. For example,

some participants felt the changes in language policy from 2002 to date, from local language to English and back to local language, and later to NALAP, were confusing. These participants therefore resisted some of the policy changes. The third issue, which participants identified as creating problems for the smooth implementation of the local language policy, was the ineffectiveness of the Ghana Education Service in implementing the policy when posting teachers to the lower grade. For example, in this study some participants said they were posted to teach in schools where they could not use the local language and they would have preferred being posted to areas where they were familiar with it. Others also said they would have preferred to teach in the upper grade rather than stay at the lower grade because of their local language difficulties. The fourth problem identified in this study relates to the lack of clear guidance on how to teach in a particular local language in multilingual classrooms in urban areas. The lack of clear guidance on this issue made teaching difficult, leading to resistance to the local language policy by those teaching in urban areas.

The fifth and final problem, which contributed to some resistance to the use of local languages, was the belief of some participants in this study that English is a global language and, therefore, superior to the local language. This led some to concentrate on using English as a medium of instruction.

Addressing these issues would ensure that teachers who do not have the knowledge and skills, or are reluctant to use the local language, are given the necessary support and directed training (given the points raised above), in order to improve their skills, knowledge and motivation for teaching. The issue of lack of ability to use the local language is confirmed by Andoh-Kumi (1999), who reports that many Ghanaian teachers do not have sufficient local language knowledge to use it in the lower grade. In addition, policy makers need to recognise that teachers' lack of knowledge appears to be due to a gap in the curriculum for Senior Secondary School, where local language is not a compulsory subject for students. This means some potential teachers would pass through Senior High School without any local language learning but would be required not only to learn a local language for themselves in Training College or College of Education but also be able to use it as the medium of instruction at the lower grade.

While this study has revealed that the local language policy was clearly more popular than the English-only policy, it also helps to identify the reasons why post-colonial Ghanaian

governments had struggled to successfully implement this policy. For example, while the local language policy dictated that teachers should teach through the medium of the children's local language, it appears that successive governments did not provide teachers with the opportunities to learn the local language through the context of their own education.

In addition, policy makers need to acknowledge the fact that the posting of teachers also complicated the problem, because some teachers, who had knowledge in a particular language, were posted to areas where they could not make use of that language. This study, therefore, provides a deeper understanding of the issues surrounding which local language to use and how to effectively train and motivate teachers to use the local language in the classroom. This is needed in order to resolve the problem of how posting affects teachers' ability to know and use a particular local language, which was identified by Balwanz and Darvas (2013) and Cobbald (2007).

The need to encourage teachers to learn and use the local language is complicated by the fact that the local language policy has a preference for the prevalent language of a region. This study reveals a policy inadequacy, in terms of which local language should be used at the lower grade: should it be the 'child's first language' or the 'prevalent language of an area'? The answer to this question would inform theory and future language policy development, because the issue of children from minority tribes being left out in the use of their mother tongue (Obeng, 1977), in a multilingual country like Ghana, needs to be addressed, to enable children to cultivate their first languages.

Finally, from the above, we can see that, although teachers had difficulties with the local language policy, as with the English-only policy, they found their own ways to overcome some of these problems through their own resourcefulness, creativity, and self-motivation. How these findings impact on the introduction of the bilingual or NALAP policy is discussed in the next section.

6.2.4 Impact of the change from local language policy to the NALAP policy on teachers' practices (2009 – to date)

According to Rosekran et al. (2012), the biliteracy or National Literacy Acceleration Programme (NALAP) was introduced as a compromise between the English-only and local language policies and is a significant shift in the language and literacy policy in Ghana since independence. All the teachers and experts who took part in this study acknowledged that the

move from a single language policy (English-only or local language) to a bilingual (local language and English language) policy is an important policy change since independence in 1957. Before beginning the debate about whether or not the NALAP policy addressed the limitations inherent in the use of either the English-only or the local language policy, Table 6.4 highlights the five key benefits of the NALAP policy, as identified by participants, in terms of how it addressed the key limitations of the English-only and local language policies. From the table we can see that the key benefits relate to five thematic areas of policy, namely, (1) the gradual pace of introduction of children to the English language, (2) clarity in the guidance on how English and local languages are to be taught at the lower grade, (3) influence of local language on culture and traditions, (4) teacher-children classroom interaction, and (5) ability to use different languages in the classroom.

In addition to the benefits listed in the above, there were three other benefits from the NALAP policy, which had a more positive impact on teachers' attitudes towards NALAP in comparison with the English-only and local language policies. First, the training teachers received on the policy before its implementation was deemed useful by those participants who could use local language in teaching (however, those participants who could not use local language in teaching did not agree with this). These participants said the training was of high quality because it exposed them to bilingual learning and information on how to teach children to read and write in a local language and the English language. Second, participants who experienced the NALAP policy said it provided clarity on how to use the teaching materials, including big books, alphabet cards, etc. in both the local and English languages, which made teaching easier. Finally, some participants said that NALAP provided more room for creativity and innovation in the design of their kindergarten classrooms.

Despite the above benefits of the NALAP policy to teachers, there is evidence that the policy did not adequately address some of the limitations of the earlier two policies, and the problems associated with implementing bilingual policies.

Table 6.4
Key benefits and limitations of the NALAP policy relative to the English-only and local language policies

Key benefits	Key limitation
1. Under the English-only policy, children who came from homes and communities where English was not the language commonly spoken found it difficult to learn in the English language; the NALAP policy addressed this	1. Insufficient knowledge of local and English languages by some teachers to support children's language and literacy development

difficulty by encouraging gradual introduction of the English language from KG1 to Grade 3	
2. Unlike the local language policy, which lacked clear guidance on the use of local language, NALAP has clear guidelines on how to use and teach literacy in the local language.	2. Negative attitude towards the use of local language by some teachers, parents and stakeholders.
3. Because NALAP acknowledges the importance of using local language, teachers are less fearful that the English language will alienate children from their culture and traditions, which was the case under the English-only policy.	3. Problem of multiple or diverse language backgrounds of children in class makes it difficult for teachers to interact effectively with children
4. Under the English-only policy, there was less classroom interaction between teachers and children because many children could not communicate effectively in the English language; NALAP addressed this problem through gradual introduction of the English language alongside the use of the local language.	4. NALAP Training and retention of teachers to teach lower grades
5. The problem of code-switching between local language and English language, which was experienced by teachers under the English-only and local language policies, was resolved in some way under the NALAP policy, which requires the use of both languages	5. Insufficient monitoring of teachers using NALAP means teachers who do not want to use local language continue to teach in lower grades which defeat the purpose of the policy.

The first key limitation relates to the fact that it was reported that some teachers had insufficient knowledge of the local and English language. This problem appeared to take root under the English-only policy, where there were many untrained teachers who could not teach in the English language. Also, under the local language policy, some teachers were not able to use the local language because of their lack of education. According to the teachers interviewed, these problems resurfaced under the NALAP policy and remain unsolved to date. For example, the teachers interviewed argued that, though they had some training on the use of the local language, they were still less confident in using it in the classroom.

The second key limitation relates to the Ghanaian attitude towards English language as superior to the local language. For example, under the local language policy, some of the teachers interviewed created a problem for themselves by ignoring the requirement to teach in the local language and chose to teach in English instead. Similarly, some participants gave examples of other teachers who side-stepped the English-only policy and taught in the local language instead of English, because they were unable to use English to teach. These attitudes under the

two previous policies remain unresolved under NALAP, complicated by the fact that, as well as teachers, some parents and the general public continue to believe that English is more important than the local language and vice versa. This suggests that teachers will always resist policy if they feel uncomfortable about its use.

The third limitation related to the problem of the multiple local languages environment in which children in Ghana learn. In relation to this, the teachers interviewed in this study argued that, under the local language policy, because some teachers did not know the different local languages of their children, let alone how to use these different languages to teach, they found it difficult to handle classrooms with children from multiple local language backgrounds. This was not, however, a problem under the English-only policy because English was the only medium of instruction. These findings have implications for the bilingual or NALAP policy, in the sense that teachers are expected to start teaching in the local language before gradually introducing the English language. These challenges suggest that the problem of knowing a particular local language and how to use it in classrooms with multiple local languages remains unsolved under the NALAP policy. This is a particular issue in the urban and peri-urban areas of the country because these areas are home to children from nearly all the regions of Ghana, where many different languages are spoken. These challenges need to be addressed if the benefits of the NALAP, outlined above, are to be sustained.

The fourth limitation relates to NALAP training and the retention of teachers to teach in the lower grades. This study highlights three issues in relation to this. Firstly, some teachers reported that though the training provided by the Ghana Education Service on the NALAP policy was good, the quality was not high enough to meet their teaching requirement. They felt they had not been sufficiently trained in children's literacy development, including their bilingual literacy learning; this led some of them to seek further training elsewhere to meet the learning needs of their children. Participants in this study suggested that NALAP would work better if the training had adequately explained the benefits of bilingualism and biliteracy within the Ghanaian contexts. Secondly, the lack of in-service training for newly posted teachers to lower grade made teaching difficult for these teachers because of the lack of knowledge on the content and teaching methodology of NALAP. Thirdly, there were issues raised about discontinuity in NALAP pedagogy for some children, as some of the trained teachers in NALAP left the lower grade to teach in the upper grade, which left some lower grade classrooms without NALAP-trained teachers. The overall argument is that the success of NALAP depends on teachers receiving adequate continuing training on the content, philosophy

and practical relevance of NALAP, to ensure high quality provision, as well as the retention, of skilled lower grade teachers.

Finally, the fifth limitation relates to the insufficient monitoring of teachers using NALAP policy in the classroom. The teachers interviewed in this study argued that NALAP was not being sufficiently monitored, which affected their confidence in the use of policy. Some participants were of the opinion that monitoring and supervision could help resolve the difficulties they had in not being able to use local languages effectively in the classroom. This suggests that, although the participants in this study were in favour of NALAP and were ready to support it, the lack of monitoring and supervision by Ghana Education officials prevented them from discussing their difficulties.

In summary, the broad analysis of the three language and literacy policies led to the identification of key benefits and limitations of the English-only, local language and NALAP policies. More specifically, the key benefits of the NALAP policy were analysed relative to the key limitations identified within both the English-only and local language policies preceding it. The key limitations of the three policies point broadly to the inherent failure in the language and literacy policy formulation process, since independence in 1957, to address the fundamental issue of teachers' inability to use local languages and English (by pupil teachers) at the lower grade. It is imperative, therefore, for policy-makers to critically evaluate teachers' resistance to using a language (local or English) specific policy. The next section discusses the views of the teachers interviewed on their experiences with the policy formulation process since 1957, addressing RQ3.

6.2.5 Participants' views on the language and literacy policy formulation process

Although participants offered different views on the language and literacy policy formulation process, the general consensus was that the voices of all who would be affected by the policy, especially the views of teachers who have first-hand information and experience of the benefits and limitations of the three policies, ought to be heard, in order to make the policies more effective. This overwhelming view from the teachers interviewed in this study supports the assertion in the literature that, in Ghana, education policy formulation, in general, was left to the government and foreign donors, and involves an elite group, excluding teachers, parents and a larger proportion of the country's population (Fredua-Kwarteng, 2015; Fobih et al. 1995). In order to get more stakeholders involved in the policy formulation process, participants in this study suggested that the role of government and foreign donors should be reduced, by

involving teachers, local experts, and other stakeholders, including community leaders and so on.

As the teachers interviewed challenged the notion of being seen only as implementers of government policies, with no voice or opportunity to contribute their knowledge on issues, this study builds on the existing literature, which highlights the importance of teachers' knowledge in the formulation and successful implementation of educational policy (Kirk and McDonald, 2001; Smit, 2005). For example, one of the failures of the three policies, as reported in this study, is teachers' inability to address the problem of lack of interaction between themselves and their children in the classroom, which affected their classroom practices. In addition, the teachers interviewed were of the view that there is a need for a change in the pre-determined committees made up of a few experts (chosen by government to reform the country's education), to a wider consultation involving teachers, parents, local non-governmental organisations and the general public. Also, they were concerned that the inclusion of foreign donors, such as Britain and the United States of America, may influence the direction of future language policy in favour of English.

The study revealed that, while some participants resisted policy changes, others tried to adapt to the changes. For example, as indicated in this study, the language and literacy policies had undergone three changes from English-only to local language, from local language to English-only, from English-only to local language and finally to NALAP. During these changes, teachers had to use either English or the local language or both in teaching. However, some participants resisted some of the policies because of differences in their values and beliefs on the use of a particular language. Others also resisted policy changes because they did not agree with them or simply because of their inability to use the required language. A reference to the work of Ball (1987) reveals that resistance towards changes in education policy in the UK were also a result of a conflict between interest and personal belief of teachers as shown in this study.

These three key problems, relating to how participants in this study viewed the process of policy formulation and implementation, could likely have been addressed more effectively if these teachers had been able to play an active role in meeting with policy makers to identify the root causes of the problems, as part of a policy consultation. In addition, there is a need for policy makers to find ways to help teachers cope with language and policy changes in the lower grade, by providing more training to explain reasons for change and supporting teachers in

their practice. The implications of the findings from this study are discussed in detail in the next section.

6.3 Implications for policy and practice

The study has a number of implications for policy and practice for the lower grade because colonial rule and its legacy continue to drive language policy in Ghana. These implications relate to the strategic role of government policy makers in the Ministry of Education and their donor partners, the Ghana Education Service (GES), the teacher training institutions, and teachers in the lower grades. These implications are discussed in detail below.

6.3.1. Implications and recommendations for government policy decisions – Ministry of Education

This section presents the implications of the findings from this study for government policy makers at the Ministry of Education. Successive Ghanaian governments, since independence in 1957, through the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service (GES) determined which language should be used as the medium of instruction in the lower grade. As shown in the study, the language and literacy policies in the lower grade have undergone a number of changes since independence, with implications for future formulation and implementation of policy.

The study identified change in government, rise in nationalism, and the effect of postcolonialism as the main drivers for policy change. For example, the switch from English-only to local language in 1967 and local language to English-only in 2002, occurred as a result of change in government. In addition, the change from English-only to local language was the result of a rise in nationalism and popular cultural sentiments, which called for the use of the local languages by most Ghanaians at the time. Furthermore, the reintroduction of the English-only policy, where government argued that since the national language of Ghana was already English, it must be used as the language of instruction, went against popular support for the use of local language, leading to the return of the local language policy. The final change to the bilingual policy in 2009 appears to be the result of the impact of colonial rule and the recognition of the need for bilingual learning to help address the literacy needs of children. This is in order for children to benefit from the advantages of using multiple languages, that is, the local and English language, within the context of literacy.

The implication is that an independent body should be tasked with language and literacy policy formulation for the lower grade, so that change in government does not affect policy change in

the lower grade. The government could start this process by engaging local educationists, literacy researchers, non-government agencies and interested members of the public, in continuing research and debate into finding answers to children's future literacy development. Since lack of teacher involvement in policy making was identified as one of the reasons for resisting policy, lower grade teachers' knowledge could be utilised by engaging them more often in the future.

Furthermore, the concern that UK and USA Donor Agencies could use their funding power to impose their preference for the use of English in Ghana implies the need for sensitivity on the part of donor agencies to the voice of local people. It is important to note that all the participants in this study see the constant changes in policy as a problem, which needs to be addressed by government policy makers at the Ministry of Education; therefore, successive governments need to deal with reasons for the constant changes or discontinuity of the language and literacy policy in lower grade proactively, to ensure changes do not affect teachers' motivation and practice.

The study now makes the following recommendations in Table 6.5 for policy-makers within the Ministry of Education.

Table 6.5
Recommendations for policy-makers:

- To initiate a policy review to consider the compulsory learning of local languages in high schools and the use of the prevalent language of an area as the medium of instruction.
- To make more funding and other resources available for local language learning at all levels of education, from kindergarten to universities.
- To collaborate effectively with donor countries on how to address the sensitivities of citizens with regards to the languages and cultural values they wish for their children and society.
- To involve more teachers, local educational experts and parents on lower grade policy issue
- To support the setting up of independent bodies other than the government to advise on language and literacy policy development issues e.g. to explore what to do with the minority languages, which are at present not catered for in schools.

The findings from this study show that the Ghana Education Service (GES) plays a very important role in the professional life of teachers because they are employers of teachers in public schools in Ghana. The study now looks at the implication of the study for this body and makes recommendations.

6.3.2 Implications and recommendations for the Ghana Education Service

The Ministry of Education, through the Ghana Education Service (GES), implements the language and literacy policy decisions by the government of the day. There are three main implications of the findings from this study, relating to the deployment and staffing of schools, lack of continuous professional development (CPD) in general (but even worse for lower grade teachers) and insufficient monitoring and supervision. For example, in relation to deployment and staffing, some teachers in this study who knew a particular local language, were posted to areas where a different local language was in use, making it difficult for them to teach effectively in the classroom. Second, teachers across all policies were claiming that they needed more training in how to implement the policy, especially in classrooms with children from diverse language backgrounds.

This means there is need for the Ghana Education Service to ensure that specific and supportive training is made available to all teachers, especially those at the lower grade, so that teachers know how to implement the policy. Third, the lack of effective monitoring of language and literacy policy implementation in school calls for the need for the development of a regular and comprehensive framework for the monitoring and supervision of teachers, especially those in the lower grade. Perhaps the inspectorate division of the Ghana Education Service could be independent or semi-autonomous, so that they have all the resources they need to carry out their mandate.

The study therefore makes the following recommendations in Table 6.6 for the Ghana Education Service, the government body responsible for the employment of teachers. The recommendations are based on the findings from participants' experience as teachers working under the GES.

Table 6.6
Recommendations for the Ghana Education Service

- To ensure that specific and supportive training is made available to all so that teachers know how to implement the policy.
- To ensure supportive training is made available to teachers on methods of teaching in multilingual classrooms.
- To intensify their regular supervision and monitoring of the use of language and literacy policies, and provide support to teachers who need it.
- To support independent research organisations to help generate new ideas on policy and practice of literacy in Ghana.
- To intensify their collaboration with Teacher Training Institutions and the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) to resolve the inconsistencies in posting of teachers to the lower grade.

Having discussed the implications of the study for the Ghana Education Service (GES) followed by some recommendations, I now move on to do the same for teacher training colleges.

6.3.3 Implications and recommendations for teacher training

Although the study did not set out to study teacher training institutions, the findings showed the importance and role played by teacher education in teachers' classroom practices. A number of issues were identified concerning the training of teachers and it is hoped that these recommendations in Table 6.7 can help improve the training teachers are offered with regard to children's language and literacy.

Table 6.7
Recommendations for teacher training institutions

- To encourage students to appreciate the value of both the local and English language in a child's literacy development.
- To ensure that teaching practices include strategies for teaching classrooms where children have multiple languages to make it easier for teachers to handle such classrooms in the future.

- There is a need for trainers of teachers to ensure that students receive extensive training on children's literacy development, bilingual literacy and teaching methods for supporting children's emergent literacy for lower grade teachers.
- To collaborate with GES on posting of lower grade teachers to avoid mismatch i.e. to match the local languages studied with the vacancies they have in schools.

The final set of implications discussed below are for teachers and the study achieves its fourth research objective by providing a framework to support teachers' classroom practices.

6.3.4 Implications and recommendations for teachers at the lower grade

The fact that this research focuses on the experiences of teachers at the lower grade under different language and literacy policies since independence suggests that the findings in this study have serious implications for teachers in three key areas, which are: their teaching practices; their continuing professional career development and their social wellbeing. With regard to teachers' practices, the key limitations of the English-only, local language, and NALAP policies and how they impact on teachers' classroom teaching need to be resolved. For example, all lower grade teachers need to be qualified with sufficient knowledge of the local and English language, so that they can appreciate the equal importance of both in the classroom. Where teachers find it difficult to handle classrooms with children from multiple local language backgrounds, the Ghana Education Service could support them with workshops on teaching methods and how to adopt innovative approaches, including the use of other local languages to resolve the problem in the short-term.

Finally, the findings have implications for the social well-being of teachers in three key areas. First, some lower grade teachers left to teach at the upper grade because the lack of support from their schools and the Ghana Education Service (GES) which left them feeling unfulfilled. Second, the lack of an effective way of monitoring their performance in the classroom meant that they felt they were less valued by the GES, which made them less confident in the implementation of policy in the classroom. Third, teachers felt they had no voice in policy formulation, although they had a lot of knowledge and experience to share and this sometimes affected their morale. This means the government and GES ought to find ways to support and motivate lower grade teachers through continuous professional development and for the GES to conduct monitoring and inspection in a more supportive manner while ensuring quality at the same time.

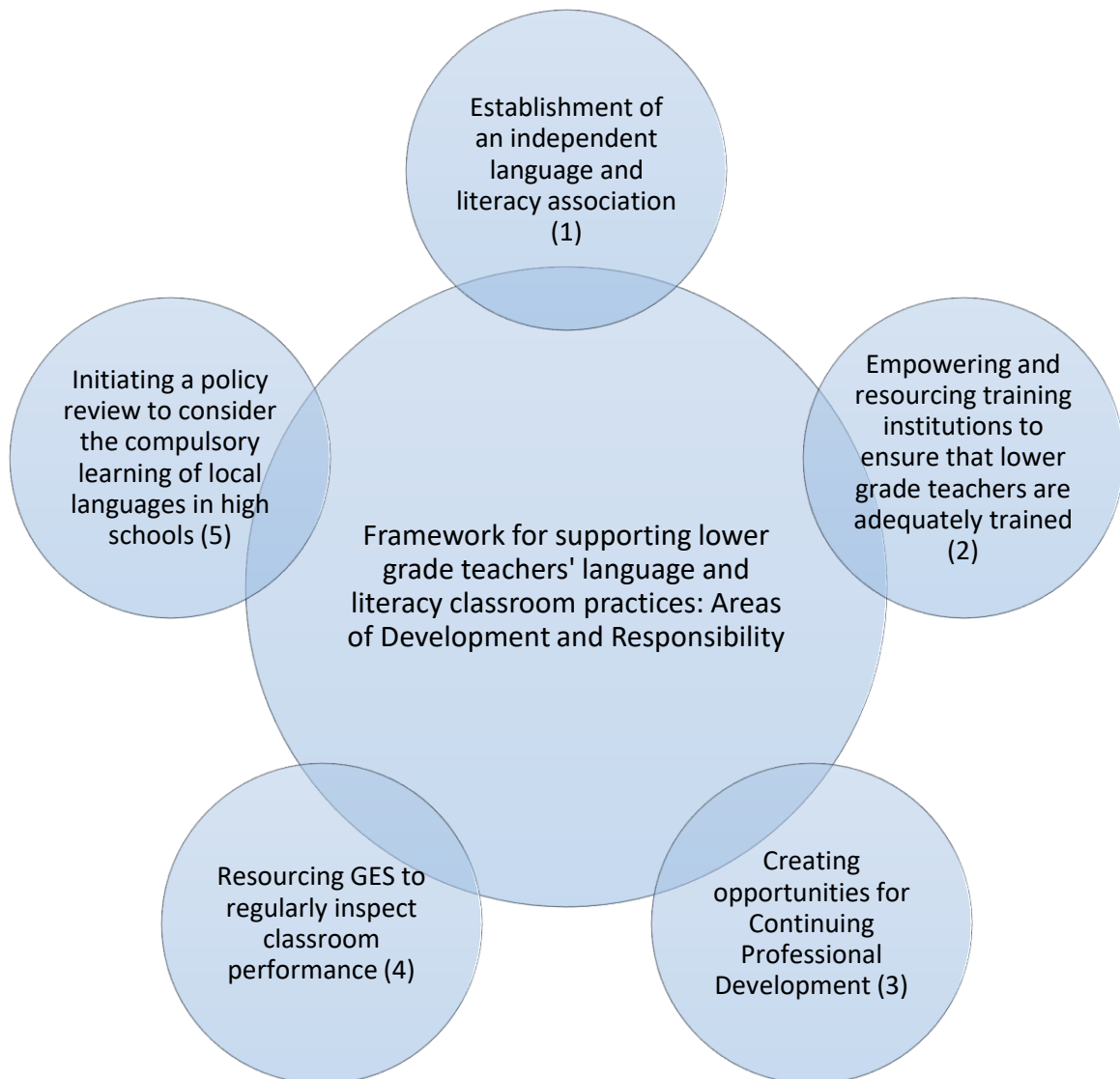
The awareness of the above implications of the findings in this study for the government of Ghanaian government, the Ministry of Education, the Ghana Education Service and lower grade teachers led to the development of a framework for supporting lower grade teachers in the next section.

6.3.5 Framework for supporting lower grade teachers

The continuities and discontinuities in the implementation of these policies since 1957 affected the teachers interviewed in this study differently. As such, one of the key research objectives (RO3) is to use their experiences as a basis for developing a framework for supporting lower grade teachers, to better deal with future policy changes.

Therefore, Figure 6.2 presents a framework identifying five areas of support or building blocks for lower grade teachers: (1) The establishment of an independent language and literacy association; such an association could be comprised of teachers and language and literacy experts to discuss and influence language and literacy policy in schools; (2) The empowering and resourcing of training institutions by government to ensure that lower grade teachers are adequately trained in the use of both the local and English language prior posting to the classroom; (3) Creating opportunities for continuing professional development in literacy skills in the English language and multiple local languages for all lower grade teachers; (4) Resourcing the GES monitoring and evaluation team to inspect the classroom performance of lower grade teachers more consistently and regularly; (5) Initiating a policy review to consider the compulsory learning of local languages in high schools prior to entry into teacher training institutions.

Figure 6.1
Framework for supporting lower grade teachers



The framework is based on the proposal that an independent language and literacy association, comprised of teachers and language and literacy experts, is established, in order to help generate new ideas and lead research on policy and practice of literacy in Ghana. This will enable members to influence Ghanaian government policy through the Ministry of Education to achieve the following four goals:

- *To empower and resource training institutions to ensure that lower grade teachers are adequately trained in the use of both the local and English language prior to posting to the classroom,*
- *To create more opportunities for continuing professional development in literacy skills in the English language and multiple local languages,*

- *To resource the GES monitoring and evaluation team to inspect the classroom performance of lower grade teachers regularly, and*
- *To initiate a policy review to consider the compulsory learning of local languages in high schools prior to entry into teacher training institutions, and to review the policy on using the prevalent language of an area as the medium of instruction.*

The fact that these proposals are grounded in the actual data collected in this study suggests that the framework is valid in the sense that it reflects the experiences detailed in the life histories of the teachers interviewed. The next section offers a number of practical recommendations to the key players in this study, based on the framework above.

In sum, since change is important in finding solutions to problems, this study found that the government of Ghana made changes with regard to the language and literacy policy in the lower grade to address the literacy learning of children. However, since change is not always welcome, there was resistance by teachers to some of the changes. Again, other factors like the use of a predominant local language, inadequate pre-service preparation of teachers to use local language, public interest, optional learning of local language in the Senior High School and insufficient funding, made it difficult for some of the policies to be fully implemented.

6.4 Limitations of the study

This study aimed to look at the language and literacy policies in the lower grade from independence to the present time and examine how the policy changes impacted on teachers' practices. Although the three research questions (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3,) have been answered to a great extent, by achieving the three research objectives (RO1, RO2, RO3), there are areas with some theoretical and methodological limitations, which are discussed below.

Although the use of postcolonial theory enabled me to consider the issues in this study, from the point of view of the colonial powers and the colonised, this has limited my views and interpretation of the findings because the use of another theory would have produced different results or findings e.g. Ansah (2014) used sociolinguistic theory to investigate the fluctuations in language policies in post-independence Ghana. Another limitation is the fact that I only had seven participants and only two male teachers. The understanding of the impact of policy changes on teachers could have produced a better understanding if the study had included more male teachers or more retired female teachers and teachers working in all the eleven regions of Ghana.

As in all qualitative research based on life history methods and interpretivism, the extent to which the findings in this study can be generalised is limited to the experiences of the seven teachers interviewed, which is the paradox of case study. However, the implications of the findings have a wider application to other stakeholders e.g. policy makers in government, the Ministry of Education, the Ghana Education Service and teacher training institutions, as suggested by the framework developed in this study to support lower grade teachers (Figure 6.2).

In terms of the use of the methods for data collection and analysis, I found that the in-depth interviewing, transcription and the manual and NVivo contents analysis were very time-consuming and expensive.

6.5 Key areas for future research

Given the limitations discussed above, there is need for further research to involve more teachers who teach lower grades across the country. Such a research could also adopt the same life history methodology, underpinned by interpretivist and postcolonial models, to further explore and evaluate the continuities and discontinuities in the English-only, local and NALAP policies since 1957. Another area which needs further research is how to teach in multiple or diverse language classroom environments. This is in response to the difficulties expressed by teachers in this study on their experiences of teaching in urban areas where children come from different language backgrounds. Future research is also needed to explore the impact of NALAP on children's literacy development. The views expressed by teachers on how language and literacy policy formulation impact on their classroom practices merits a future research in that area. This would elicit views from a diverse group of stakeholders e.g. ministers of education, foreign donor agencies, heads of teacher training institutions, community leaders, parents, teachers, and children so that policy formulation process is not left to a few elite (Fredua-Kwarteng, 2015). Such research will help all stakeholders to understand how policies are formed as well as highlight the need for more consultation for better understanding and implementation.

6.6 Contributions to knowledge

This study contributes to knowledge in three different ways. The contributions are (1) theoretical – the use of a postcolonial lens on Ghana's language and literacy policy (2) methodological – life histories of teachers (3) empirical – offering understanding of teachers' experiences of policy development. In a broad sense, the findings of this study demonstrates

the usefulness of adopting postcolonial theory in early childhood studies in countries which were formerly colonised by Britain.

My research makes a significant contribution to the knowledge on language and literacy policies in lower grades from Ghana's independence in 1957 to 2014. In particular, I have focused on these policies from a postcolonial perspective by looking at Ghana's colonial past, examining the reasons for a language policy and tracing the changes that have occurred in the past six decades. There are a number of previous studies on Ghana's language policy from a postcolonial perspective, like the study carried out by Mfum-Mensah (2005), on the use of vernacular in two communities in the Northern region of Ghana, and that of Davis and Agbenyega (2012) on head teachers' and teachers' knowledge of the language policy. These studies have only looked at a particular language policy, such as the use of local language as a medium of instruction as in the case of Mfum-Mensah (2005). My study, on the other hand, has traced all the language policies since independence, in addition to the current biliteracy policy used in lower grades.

Further, it is the first study on how language and literacy policy changes have affected teachers at the lower grades in Ghana. The study also makes contributions to postcolonial theory in the field of childhood, language and literacy policy changes and teachers practices. The use of postcolonial theory in this study throws light on how Ghanaian children's language and literacy learning is modelled on that of the West, rather than children's indigenous cultural settings, and furthers understanding of young children's language and literacy learning within the Ghanaian context. This is important, because Graff (1982) suggests there is no one single route to universal literacy, so there is need for more understanding of literacy learning within a postcolonial context, as this study has offered.

My study also contributes significantly to methodology, in terms of the use of life history in studying Ghanaian teachers' lives and educational matters in Ghana. The use of life history has provided a deeper understanding of teachers' classroom practices in the lower grades. It has also given voice to teachers through the sharing of their subjective views on educational policy that affect them as teachers. Some teachers in this study were of the view that reflecting on their lives has helped them to be more conscious of their role as teachers supporting children's language and literacy development and their resolve to take advantage of future continuing professional training; this is an indication that the study is already making an impact. Furthermore, this study makes major contributions towards teachers' understanding of policy

formulation and teachers' concern over the role of foreign donors, which could perpetuate the use of English in schools. Finally, this study makes a significant contribution to understanding teachers' use of the National Literacy Acceleration Programme since its inception in 2009.

In summary, this study has shown the complex nature of language and literacy policy implementation in the lower grade. This study has illustrated in many ways the challenges teachers face in the classroom and how each policy change impacts on what they do. However, with guided support and training, teachers could be motivated to offer their best in supporting the young children who pass through their classrooms, so that they can achieve success in their academic future.

Postscript

As I come to the end of this study, I believe a personal reflection on what I have learnt during these three and a half years of research, and how what I have learnt will influence my future plans, is appropriate. I agree with Ely et al. (1997) that doing a research study makes one look inward, into ones' inner self bringing about changes. My interactions with staff and colleagues in the School of Education (University of Sheffield), either during staff and student seminars, meeting at conferences or during conversations when we talk about our work, has helped shape my own research. My greatest challenge has been to unpick all the little details that may be hidden in a particular statement and to put my point across without adding too much personal value to it as an interpretivist researcher. This has helped me see things in a wider perspective rather than having or holding onto one viewpoint. Using a life history methodology made me reflect on my own personal life history and journey from being a former teacher to researching Ghanaian teachers. Having a deep understanding of the complex nature of the language and literacy policy through studying teachers' lives has helped change my own perception about teachers' classroom practices. I now appreciate the difficulties faced by lower grade teachers in Ghana. In view of this, I have resolved to develop a Facebook page titled 'Ghana Centre for Early Childhood Literacy', which relates to the start-up of a consultancy in the future to support teachers and encourage further research on children's literacy in Ghana.

Personally, the experience of doing a PhD and meeting and networking with others will influence what I do in the future. In terms of my future plans, I see myself writing some papers for publications, getting a job and becoming more active both the United Kingdom Literacy Association (UKLA) and British Educational Research Association (BERA) to which I belong. I may also write a book on the history of Ghanaian teachers.

Since coming to the end of this thesis writing, there has been a general election and a change in government from the National Democratic Party (NDC) to the New Patriotic Party (NPP) in Ghana. The new government is under the leadership of Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo Addo. It is possible that with the change in government the existing language and literacy policy NALAP would remain as it is, or be modified. It is also possible that the policy could be changed altogether. A change or modification in policy is most likely to bring about further changes in teachers' classroom practices. While we wait for what is to come, the minister designate for the Education Ministry, Dr Mathew Opoku Prempeh, during his vetting for the post, was asked of his opinion on the use of multiple languages (predominant language of a place) as the medium of instruction in lower grades. His response was:

We train ourselves to become globally competitive and when you look around the world there is a language of trade, business, ICT, where even countries with one language learn that as a second language. Thank God, we, because of our colonial past have that language, English ... I think we have to look at it again especially for a country with many languages. Going to pick one and saying that it should be the dominant language and everybody should learn is problematic....everybody has a proud culture and history, whose history or language, culture should be lost in making one dominant language (Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, 2017).

When asked if his answer meant advocating for a single language for instruction at the formative years to achieve global competitiveness he had this to say:

That will make the confusion ease up a bit. The body of knowledge shows that if the primary language of instruction is not the mother tongue or the language of the child, the child will have to translate it into the native language before he/she interprets it in English ... so I think we are benefitting so much from English being our second language ... we have to educate our kids...we have to drill them to speak and write good English and do things in English. It does not make us less human. That is the reality that we have to face (Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, 2017).

The minister's answer appears to favour the use of the English-only policy as he made reference to the first English-only policy by the first President Dr. Kwame Nkrumah at independence. The former Minister of Education in the NDC government, Professor Naana Agyemang, on the other hand, appears to favour the use of local language as discussed earlier (in Chapter One). This highlights the difference in approach to the debate on the language policy by the two political parties, NDC and NPP. It is important to remember that the NPP government favoured the use of English as the medium of instruction for all levels of education from 2002 to 2007 when they were last in power.

Again, an argument put forward by Palham Oyiye of the World Organisation for Early Childhood Development and Education Programme (OMEP, Ghana Chapter) on the need for early childhood educators to be posted to teach within early childhood settings seems to suggest that early childhood trained teachers are being posted to teach in classes they are not trained for (Ghanaweb, 2017). This applies to the importance of initial training, teacher's competencies in teaching lower grades and placement of teachers as discussed in this study.

These recent developments make this study very topical. Language and literacy policy for children in the 4-8 years ought to be placed firmly at the centre of educational policy as the impact of poor literacy is likely to affect children's progress and success in school and in society. The complex nature of the language and literacy policy in Ghana shows the debate should not be left solely to politicians but to the wider society: local educationists, teachers, parents, children and other stakeholders need to be involved. This is not just an issue for parliamentarians, as suggested by the new minister in the following statement: "We have to, as a group, as parliament think about what to do because parliament approves policy and decide for the country where we have to go". A policy which supports not only English but children's own local language is as important as today as it was during the time of independence.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Ethical Approval



**The
School
Of
Education.**

Head of School
Professor Cathy Nutbrown

School of Education
388 Glossop Road
Sheffield
S10 2JA

Telephone: +44 (0)114 222 8096
Email: mphil-phd@sheffield.ac.uk

19th May 2014

Dear Philomena

ETHICAL APPROVAL LETTER

Postcolonial theory and early literacy development in Ghana

Thank you for submitting your ethics application. I am writing to confirm that your application has now been approved.

We recommend you refer to the reviewers' additional comments (please see attached). You should discuss how you are going to respond to these comments with your supervisor BEFORE you proceed with your research.

This letter is evidence that your application has been approved and should be included as an Appendix in your final submission.

Good luck with your research.

Yours sincerely

Professor Dan Goodley
Chair of the School of Education Ethics Review Panel

cc Rachael Levy
Enc Ethical Review Feedback Sheet(s)

Appendix B - Example of participant interview (Hubert's 1st interview)

Q. Can you tell me something about yourself?

A. I am Hubert, a Ghanaian by nationality and a citizen of Dawu in Akwapem in the Eastern region. I am now a retired teacher. I was born at Dawu where I started my primary school in 1947. In 1948, my father who was a teacher was transferred to Akyem Tafo so I did part of my primary to middle school in that town. My father was transferred to many other towns in the Eastern region and finally to Ashanti region where I completed Middle Form four with distinction. I retired about fifteen years ago after serving for about thirty-five years.

Q. What did you do after form four?

I wanted to be a teacher like my father and two brothers so I wrote the pupil teacher's selection exams, which was prevailing at the time and my performance was very high. As a result, I was put in the middle school to teach but I was in the school for only a year because I wanted to go to the training college. I later wrote the teacher training exams and attended an interview and got admission to the training college on in the Brong-Ahafo region on 7th January 1960 for two years. But the course was shortened because the Nkrumah changed the academic year from January to September. At our time the academic year was different it was from January to December so the first term holidays was Easter time and the second term holidays was in August and the third term holidays in December and in January you were promoted to the next class unlike now when you are promoted in September. So it was during our time when we were in our second year that this change took place. So I came out with certificate 'B'

Q. Did you remain a Certificate 'B' teacher?

No. After teaching for two years, you write an examination to qualify you to do a Certificate 'A' course in a teacher training college which I did, so a Certificate 'B' teacher is therefore given the chance to upgrade to Certificate 'A' post 'B'. In those days, you were trained to manage any school because you could be posted to a newly opened school as the head teacher

Q. Why did you have to start as a pupil teacher?

A. Because those days, we were required to have classroom experience and the understanding was that you must have classroom experience before going to the training college, so I had no choice but to write the entrance examination.

Q. You talked about the change in academic year. Why did that happen?

A. What we heard was that the ministry of education for that matter the president Nkrumah, we heard that those who attended universities abroad had to stay at home for a long time before they could be employed in January so Nkrumah shifted it to be at par with Britain because some time ago we were under colonial rule so even though we had independence still Britain was our mother so the academic year was changed to be at par with what was happening in other countries.

Q. What were some of the things you studied in the training college?

A. We had English, mathematics, education which is a subject taught in the training college. If now are not a teacher as soon as you hear about education you think it is about reading and writing but when you go to training college it entails a lot. There you would be taught school management, how to be a head teacher, general supervisor of a school, how to ensure that you can supervise examinations held in your school, teaching and setting examples so even if you are a detached head you have to seek permission from a teacher to teach so that other teachers can emulate your example and the whole organisation of the school is to be brought to a very high standard because you will receive the lion's share of praise for the success of work done in the school as well as the blame for its downfall.

Q. Was becoming a teacher popular during your time?

A. Yes, a lot of people went to the training college at that time because the government had a policy which was compulsory education and if education is compulsory it means every school going child should be given the opportunity to receive formal education so if it is compulsory it means several children will have to go to school so teachers were needed so for that reason the duration of the teacher training course which some time ago in the colonial era was 4 years was now shortened to two years to enable the government get enough teachers to manage the schools. As I said earlier, those who did the two years course and came out with Certificate 'B' were given the chance to write an examination to go to the training college for another two years to be qualify as a Certificate 'A' teacher. Similarly, some attended secondary school, in those days the duration of secondary school was five years so that those who could not gain admission to the university had to go to teacher training for two years so they had two- year post-secondary and their certificate was Certificate 'A' Post-Secondary. Now we have a third policy which is the three years from Senior Secondary School you proceed to teacher training for three years but have academic training for two years and in your final year that is your third

year you go to teaching practice for a whole year. So you will be posted to a school and you are called a mentee and you have a teacher as your mentor.

Q. How long was your teaching practice?

A. We had 3 weeks teaching practice ...I went to class 1 my first teaching practice and the second was class 5 so if you are put in the lower primary for the first teaching practice your second, will be in the upper primary. First year we had no teaching practice we were doing academic work then in our second year first term we had teaching practice and the second term also and third term we had to prepare for our final exams

Q. How long did you teach?

A. As a trained teacher, I taught for thirty-five years then after that because of my experiences some proprietors of private schools wanted to tap on my expertise so I was employed by a private school as the head teacher of the school for a year but the place was far so left that school and I worked in another school for seven years but because of my age I told the head teacher I would like resign, go home and rest and that is what I am doing now

Q. So are you retired now?

A. I am but I now serve my church in diverse ways as a preacher, a leader, and an organist. I teach bible lessons at a centre for teaching the youth and I also preach every Thursday between 4:30 am and 5:00am. I think my profession as a teacher has helped me in my new position because, I prepare lesson notes and it is the same method that I use in preaching. After narrating everything, I sum up because I know they will forget because my preaching is usually long.

Q. What memories do you have of your 35 years as a teacher?

Teaching is an enjoyable profession because the children share their experiences with you as a teacher so I also learnt a great deal from the children over the years. You see, teaching is not a matter of lecturing so as you teach you elicit information from children and you will be surprised at what children say, especially things you do not know yourself. When I look back, I can say it was a give and take affair. So I also enjoyed what the children gave me during my teaching so it was giving and taking. Oh, I forgot to tell you that the owner of my last school rewarded me with a corn mill because he said he was impressed by my hard work.

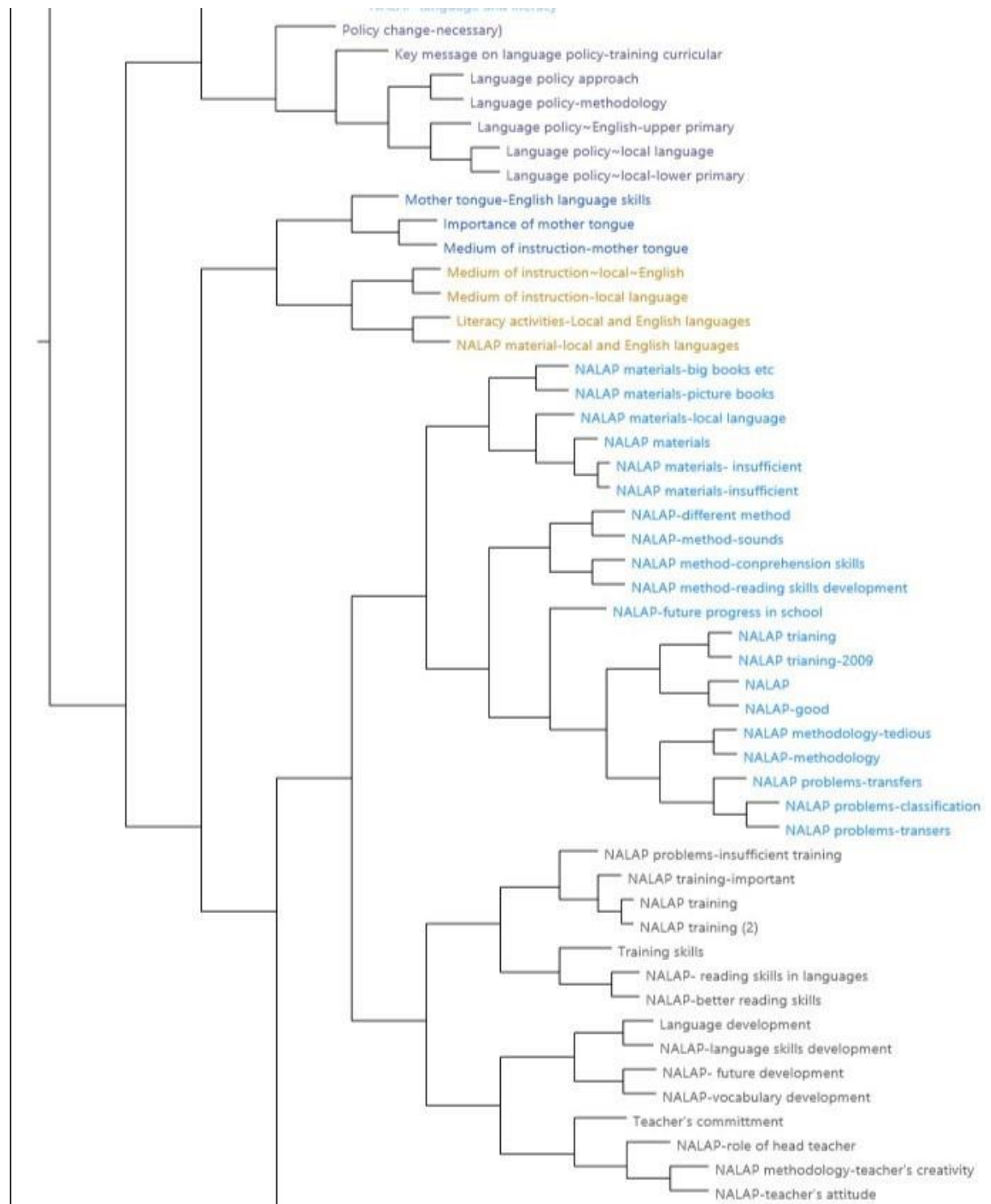
Q. Do you sometimes meet some of your former pupils and how do they react when they see you?

A. Last year, 1st July 2013, seven pupils from my last school visited me and presented me with assorted gifts. I was happy to see them because some have completed university and they had good jobs. They said I gave them a sound foundation for life so they came to show their appreciation. In fact I managed and made that school a special school because it was a new school and many of the children were from the community but I made sure they did well in the examination so they could gain admission to the secondary school.

Q. Is there anything you would like to say?

A lot of changes have taken place since independence. During our time, not all school had Kindergarten. The KG started as day nursery where in the big towns like Accra, Koforidua, etc., parents who were government workers or those running their shops could take their children who had not attain the age of six to attend school. They just took their children there to enable them get the chance to do their business but later on it became a policy that before a child is enrolled in Class1 he or she should have at attended KG for two years and at the age of six the child should be enrolled in class 1.

Appendix D - Example of NVivo cluster analysis - part of word similarity of Judith's 2nd interview



APPENDIX E - A figure showing themes from Mary's 2nd interview

