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Challenges in implementation of language policy among zongo community schools in Ghana

Mohammed Sadat
Department of Communication Studies
University of Professional Studies, Accra

Ibrahim Khidir Ibrahim
Ibadur Rahman Academy, Kumasi

Abstract: Language policy in education has a checked history in Ghana. Ghana's language policy states that one of the recognized local languages should be used as a medium of instruction at the lower primary. However, this policy is not being followed by some public schools in zongos 'migrant communities'. The paper investigates the implementation of language policy in public schools located in the zongos. Data was collected from three public schools located in three different zongos in Accra. The study discovers that public schools located in zongo communities do not follow the language policy which stipulates that one of the local languages should be the medium of instruction. Secondly, the paper finds out that codeswitching, as a language contact phenomenon, is widespread in zongo schools. Also, some of the teachers use Hausa as a language of instruction, which is not one of the approved languages mentioned by the policy. The non-compliance has led to poor performance in Ghanaian language (Asante Twi)

Key words: language policy; policy makers; education; zongo; Hausa.

Introduction

It has always been difficult for policy makers to choose a particular policy direction over the other and language policy in education is no exception. Making a policy on language in Africa has been a bottleneck for the policy makers especially, the policy regarding the language of education. This difficulty has arisen because of the numerous languages we have especially in the sub-Saharan Africa. Ouadraogo (2000) confirms that because of the multilingual situation in Africa, education and language issues have been the difficult for policy makers.

In Ghana, it has always been the choice between the colonial masters' language (English) as against the local languages. This struggle always favors English because of its wide range of usage in all official communications of the government. Furthermore, English is a second language in Ghana and it has a lot of written materials more than what pertains in the local languages. Sixty years after independence, Ghana is still perplexed about which language to choose as the medium of instruction in the lower primary school. On 24 of January, 2017, during his vetting process as the Ghana's Minister of Education at the Parliament House, Dr. Matthew Opoku Prempeh categorically stated that English alone should be the medium of instruction in our school. Pathetically, some of our ministers do not see the direct effect of their policy because their wards do not attend public schools where the policy is being implemented.

The current policy states that one of the prescribed local languages should be used as the medium of instruction at the lower primary class while English takes over as the medium of instruction from the upper primary class (Hartwell, 2010). With this arrangement, there has been a public outcry from some section of Ghanaians that the policy is not being adhered to. This policy has led to interesting discussions in the media because the policy makers themselves do not follow their own policy. they either send their wards abroad for schooling or private schools where a strict English-only medium is the order of the day.

Zongo in Hausa means the camping place of a caravan, who have the intension of proceeding to their destination after their dealings (Sadat, 2016). Zongo communities are found in all fourteen regions of Ghana. These communities are densely populated and the people are with much lower incomes. Most of the settlers work in the informal sector. The location of the zongos in the cities made some section of Ghanaians refer to them as the inner cities. In other words, they are located within cities and because of their location they have booming market centers. Dakubu (1997:130) established that 'by the beginning of the 20th century virtually all the major towns of any commercial significance in southern Ghana had a zongo.'

According to Bari (2009), the zongos began as settlements of traders and these settlements established by traders are those that evolved into the zongo communities of today whose population are predominantly Muslims. He added that Ghana has presently an estimated 300 zongo communities. It implies that the towns were established before the zongos. That is why every zongo has a name of a town prefixing their names. For

instance, Madina Zongo located in Madina, Elmina Zongo in Elmina, and Tafo Zongo in Tafo. The zongos have contributed to the early development of education in Ghana. Addae (2001) argues that by the sixteenth century, Muslims had established large schools and centers in Ghana—particularly in the North. He further contended that scholars at these centers of learning were sensitive to intellectual and literacy influences from other parts of the Muslim world.

Hausa is the lingua franca in the zongos and most of the activities are done in Hausa. The medium of instruction in their schools also known as *makaranta*[i] is Hausa. The community portrays itself as Hausa speaking community and this has made some of the residents claim Hausa as their ethnic affiliations even though they are not Hausa by ethnicity (Sadat, 2016). Most Ghanaians are of the view that Hausa is mostly spoken in the northern part of Ghana, but the majority of the speakers are found in the southern Ghana. Dakubu (1988:170) sees 'Hausa more as an urban than a geographical phenomenon.' She is of the view that the most important characteristics of the distribution of Hausa is not the distinction between north and the south, but town and countryside.

In the past, people living in the zongos did not send their children to schools. The assumption was that their children might be converted to a different faith because those schools were owned by missionaries. Therefore, some parents were reluctant to send their children to school and this particular action had led to a high illiteracy rate in English among the zongo communities. Meanwhile, the zongos were running an educational system (*makaranta)* where Arabic and Islamic studies were taught. According to Mumuni (2003), these educational facilities were being run by individuals in their houses and at times in the mosque with no well-designed curriculum.

The first zongo settlers were quite comfortable with the *makaranta* system at the time. They had a notion that they were only strangers in the zongos to conduct their trading activities but when they were done they would return to wherever they were coming from. With time, the settlers had their second generation and they saw the need to integrate themselves to the larger society. Some were not ready to attend any school except the makaranta owned the zongo people. Therefore, this made it easier for the Islamic Education Unit (IEU) to absorb such institutions. Initially some had reservation about schools who accepted the Islamic Education Unit but with time the perception had been positive. Public perception of Islamic schools that integrate the secular subjects are quite positive among parents and the zongo communities at large. Boyle, Seebaway, Lansah and Boukamhi (2007) claim that the Islamic schools had a significant impact on education in Ghana, with 213,893 children enrolled in Islamic education unit schools alone. Most of these schools are located in the zongos where the lingua franca is Hausa.

According to Sulemanu (2002), Islamic schools are grouped into three major categories in Ghana; conventional Qur'anic schools, Arabic schools, and Arabic-English schools under Islamic Education Unit. The conventional Qur'anic schools are called *makaranta* and focus exclusively on Qur'anic memorization. This type normally takes place in the mosques especially in the evening and at weekends. At times this type also takes place in the teacher's house depending on the availability of space. The second type is the Arabic schools where some secular subjects have been introduced into the curriculum but the language of instruction is Arabicand the focus is still heavily tilted toward religious subjects. The third group falls under the management of the Islamic Education Unit (IUE). These schools are officially and legally government schools that teach the Ghana Education Service curriculum in addition to the Arabic and Islamic studies. The government supplies the teaching and learning materials just like any other public school and pays the teachers including some of the Arabic teachers. The focus of this study is on the third group.

National Literacy Acceleration Program (NALAP)

The National Literacy Acceleration Program (NALAP) was introduced by the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service, with assistance from United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in June, 2006. It is a policy that aims at improving pupils' ability to read and write in the early grades using a bilingual Ghanaian and English languages approach. The national implementation of the program began during the 2009/2010 school year and includes the production and dissemination of teacher guides and instructional materials; training for national and district education staff, and workshops for all primary head teachers and lower grade teachers; and a public awareness and publicity campaign.

The cardinal principle of Ghana's NALAP is to increase the literacy rate for early grade primary school pupils. Hartwell (2010:1) confirms that the National Assessments indicate that 'the great majority of primary pupils cannot read with understanding in their first language or in English.'. The program has been devised to improve Ghana's low rates of pupil literacy and numeracy. The synopsis of NALAP is what Hartwell (2010:iv) stated:

> 'NALAP is based on the premise that pupils learn to read and write best when they do so in a language that they understand and speak. In NALAP, pupils learn how to read and write in a Ghanaian language,

> with English introduced gradually, and initially only orally. By P2 pupils also start to learn to read and write in English, and by P3 pupils should be able to read with fluency and understanding in both a Ghanaian language and English.'

Some of the public schools located in zongos do not follow the NALAP. Public primary schools are supposed to abide by the NALAP which states that the medium of instruction in the lower primary school is initially the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community. The change-over to English normally occurs in the class 4 of primary school and one of the major Ghanaian languages continues as a subject up to the secondary school (Ameyaw-Akumfi, 2002).

With this policy, some pupils who happen to find themselves outside their local language community are forced to learn the language of their new community and this leads to a delay in acquiring proficiency. The purpose of this study is primarily to investigate some of the impediments on the implementation of language policy in education is being implemented in public schools located in the zongos. The study will therefore assist policy makers to reconsider the effectiveness of NALAP's implementation strategies in order to understand what is happening on the ground, what gaps exist, and what strategies might be best employed to address the gaps, both in the short and long term. Other players in the education sector will also benefit from the study in order to restructure their teaching methods in the zongo schools. More importantly, this work will help Ghana Education Service assess whether and how some of these schools could be assisted in terms of language policy in order to expand access to quality formal education for zongo populations in Ghana.

Existing Works

The Islamic Education Unit (IEU) of the Ghana Education Services was established in 1987 to oversee the activities of these Arabic-English schools. Boyle et al. (2007) claim that the task of the IEU was to absorb other Qur'anic schools into the main educational sector so that pupils of these schools could benefit from secular education. Its main objective was to coordinate and regulate teaching/learning activities leading to the provision of an all-round education to the Muslim child. Currently, Islamic Education Unit has over 2600 schools in Ghana and most of these schools are located in over 2500 zongos across the country Boyle et al. (2007). Islamic Education Unit is one of the several units under the Ghana Education Service. There is not enough research on Islamic schools in Ghana however, there are several works on Islamic Education in Nigeria, (Mumuni 2003)

Braimah (1973) traced the origins of the *makaranta* system in Accra by citing some of the *makaranta* at Cowlane, Tudu, and Zongo-Lane[ii], among others. He also provided a catalogue of teachers who initiated these *makaranta*. Addae (2001) also observed that by the sixteenth century, Muslims had established large schools in Ghana—particularly in the North.

Sulemana (2002) also identified three forms of literacy acquisition in the Ghanaian *makaranta*: the *madrasa*[iii]system, the *madrasa* mode, and the secular method. These forms produced scholars with different approaches to teaching and learning Islamic literacy before Ghana's Independence in 1956. He has also identified problems in the *makaranta* system, such as lack of teaching and learning materials (TLMs), lack of qualified teachers, lack of infrastructure, little effective coordination of teaching and learning processes, and lack of supervision. Sulemanu (2002) finally described the *makaranta* system as a place of rote learning to read and write Arabic text. Other areas of study in the *makaranta* system include theology, mathematics, grammar, and ethics.

The language contact issue in the zongo schools is widespread. There are several languages in the zongos but Hausa is the lingua franca (Sadat. 2016). Historically, language contacts have taken place under different kind of conditions such as wars, colonialism, slavery, and migrations. In the zongos, however, the language contact situations come as a result of urbanization, trade or migration. Although the dominant trend in language contact studies has been in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), language contact is a social phenomenon. As claimed by Sankoff (2001:639) 'language contact is not individual enterprise but it has always been the historical product of social forces.'

Sankoff (2001:639) argues 'the linguistic outcomes of language contact are determined in large part by the history of social relations among populations, including economic, political and demographic factors.' Thomason and Kaufman (1988:21) identify two outcomes of language contact based on the direction of influence: *borrowing* and *substratum interference*. They reserve the term *borrowing* to refer only to "the incorporation of foreign elements into the speakers' native language. On the other hand, when the native language structures influence the second language, they speak of *substratum interference*. (Thomason and Kaufman,1988)

Codeswitching is a commonly seen phenomenon especially in foreign language classrooms and multilingual communities. Numan and Carter (2001:275) briefly define the term as 'a phenomenon of switching from one language to another in the same discourse.' Sert (2005:1) is of the view that codeswitching in English

Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms comes into use either in the teachers' or the students' discourse. He added that even though codeswitching is not favored by many educators, one should understand its underlying reasons and the functions of switching between the native language and the foreign language. This understanding will create awareness about its use in classroom discourse for language teachers. If this awareness is created, the teachers can judge for themselves either to abolish or control its use during language instruction.

Codeswitching in the classroom can be grouped into *teachers' classroom discourse* and *students' classroom discourse*. Mattson and Burenhult (1999:61) establish the teachers' classroom discourse into following aspects: topic switch, affective functions, and repetitive functions. The functional perspectives of students' discourse are: equivalence, floor holding, reiteration, and conflict control. According to Trudgill (2000:105) 'speakers switch to manipulate or influence or define the situation as they wish, and to convey nuances of meaning and personal intention.' In other words, bilinguals modify language for the sake of personal intentions. In this respect, Sert (2005) claims that codeswitching is a tool for creating linguistic solidarity especially between individuals who share the same ethno-cultural identity.

Although in this study, we could have both teachers' classroom discourse and students' classroom discourse, these data were drawn from only the teachers' perspective. There are commonalities in functions of code switching in natural contexts outside the classroom and applications in language classrooms. To confirm this, Sert (2005:1) says 'it should be kept in mind that a language classroom is a social group; therefore, a phenomenon related to naturally occurring daily discourse of any social group has the potential to be applicable to and valid for any language classroom.'

The teachers use of codeswitching can be conscious and unconscious behavior. we believe either of these may be beneficial in language learning environments. In explaining the teachers' function, Sert (2005) explains the topic switch function as the teacher alters his/her language according to the topic that is under discussion and this is mostly observed in grammar instruction. Cole (1998) confirmed that a teacher can exploit students' previous L1 learning experience to increase their understanding of L2. This is exactly the claim of the teachers.Sert (2005) confirmed that the use of codeswitching somehow builds a bridge from known to unknown and may be considered as an important element in language teaching when used efficiently.

Despite all these positives of codeswitching in the classroom, others are of the view that it has negative effects on students. Cook (2002:333) is concerned with the application of codeswitching in classes, which do not share the same native language by students may create problems, as some of the students (though few in number) will somehow be neglected. In this respect, Sert (2005) mentions the competence of the teacher in mother tongue of students also plays a vital role, if positive contributions of code switching are expected.

Methodology

The paper deployed a qualitative approach that allowed for further probing of responses andco-creation of knowledge based on the experiences of respondents and researchers. Qualitative approach offers an opportunity for a detailed and analytical richness beyond surface responses for analysis (Sławecki, 2018).A purposeful sample of three schools in three districts within Greater Accra Region were selected for the study. The motivation for adopting the purposive sampling technique is that it allows discretion to be used in the selection of the small samples from different groups or categories of interest from the entire population (Saunders et al., 2012). Fifteen teachers were engaged in this study. Five teachers were selected from each of the three schools. These five schools were selected because they are located in the zongos and secondly, they have teachers who are first language speakers of Hausa. The five teachers were selected from lower primary (Kindergarten 1, kindergarten 2, stage 1, stage 2 and stage 3) to fill the questionnaire. Three of the teachers have taught for more than 10 years, 7 have taught for 6 years and 5 of them have taught for 4 years.

Follow up semi-structure interviewed was also conducted to verify the data. Semi-structured interviews allow the conduction of face-to face interviews with the selected respondents. The rationale is to gain primary or first-hand information from the respondents. we also observed teaching and learning process from each school. This offers me the opportunity to observe the teaching and learning processes in the classrooms.

In other to protect the interest of respondents' and their institutions, ethical clearance and protocols were followed. The processes of ethical clearance and protocols covered the entire research processes which made up of gaining access to informants, data collection, analysis, reporting and publication of results. The interviews took place in the Greater-Accra Region of Ghana which serves as Ghana's national capital.

Analysis and Results

The schools under the Islamic Education Unit have two curricula; the Ghana Education Service curriculum and the Arabic curriculum. The Ghana Education Service curriculum comprises all the subjects run

by the Service. Arabic curriculum is more of a religious one which involves about seven different subjects. Hausa is used as the medium of instruction for all Arabic subjects. Hausa is the language of instruction used by the Arabic teachers and this already makes the pupils comfortable with the language as a medium of instruction. The Arabic-related subjects are part of their curriculum so they are found on their timetable. The study finds out that Hausa is frequently used in the classroom by both teachers and the students.

Some of the teachers in the Islamic schools speak Hausa. For religious reasons, the Islamic teachers want to be posted to the Islamic schools after their teachers' training. The data of this study attest to the fact that teachers in the zongo schools speak Hausa. Out of 15 respondents, 9 speak Hausa as their first language and 4 speak Hausa as a second language. Only 2 do not speak Hausa. Thirteen (13) teachers admit that they switch to Hausa to explain topics in their teaching and according to them, it helps in the teaching and learning process. Some of the teachers mentioned that using Hausa in the classroom make the students understand their teaching because the pupils hear and use it everywhere in their community. Talking about the significant role of Hausa in Ghana, Anyidoho and Dakubu (2008:143) affirm that 'besides the indigenous languages, two languages belonging to very different language families are used throughout the country: Hausa, a Chadic (Afro-Asiatic) language, and English, a Germanic (Indo-European) language.'

In zongos schools, Hausa is spoken by the pupils who are of different ethnic backgrounds. Some of the teachers who speak Hausa use the language in the classroom. Some of them claimed that the language makes the students responsive to the class activities. This have a positive impact in the classroom such as student-teacher relationships and opportunities for interaction may make a difference in the pupils' performance.

Again, In Ghanaian classroom the languages between which alternation is performed are the native language of the students, and the English that students are expected to gain competence in. Most pupils in the zongo schools have Hausa as their lingua franca even though some claimed to be natives. some of the teachers complain that the pupils sometimes get confused as to which language to use in the classroom. The teachers attribute this to the high multilingual nature of the environment. Even though Hausa is the dominant language in the zongos, many languages are spoken in the zongos.

Moreover, codeswitching is also conspicuously noticeable in the zongos schools. Codeswitching is a widely observed phenomenon especially in foreign language classrooms and multilingual communities. Sert (2005:1) observes that codeswitching in English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms can be seen either in the teachers' or the students' speech. He further said one should understand the purposes of the switch because the understanding may create awareness about its importance during language instruction.

Also**,** it is a common knowledge that most Ghanaians are bilingual and therefore codeswitch a lot. Apart from the rampant use of codeswitching on the street of the zongos, it also takes place right in their classrooms. The study finds that there was persistent codeswitching in the classroom in all the schools visited. All the teachers interviewed codeswitch in their teaching. In other words, they use more than one language in their teaching. Out of the 15 teachers, 14 of them say they codeswitch during teaching in the classroom. These teachers use either two languages (English and Hausa) or three languages (English, Hausa and Akan). The teachers gave different reasons for codeswitching. Most of the teachers claim that they codeswitch in order to enhance their teaching methods in the classrooms. The reason given by the teachers is one of the general reasons why people codeswitch, especially when one needs an available expression or words. It is therefore a clear indication that the lingua franca of the people of the zongos is Hausa. Therefore, it is not surprising to see this trend in the schools. Changing codes in the classroom is a normal phenomenon in the lower primary. Sert (2005) argues that a language classroom is a social group; therefore, a phenomenon related to naturally occurring daily discourse of any social group can also occur in any language classroom. Cole (1998) added that a teacher sometimes based on the students' previous L1 learning experience to increase their understanding of L2. This is largely seen in all the schools visited.

Sert (2005) established that the use of codeswitching somehow builds a bridge from known to unknown and may be considered as an important element in language teaching when used efficiently. We realized in one of my observation a class 2 teacher was drilling key words in listening comprehension. There was a word 'mosque'and the teacher said: **masalachi** 'mosque' in Hausa. This is an affective function of codeswitching that expresses emotions and this is done by teacher in order to build solidarity and intimate relations with the students. The other function of code switching in classroom settings by a teacher is the repetitive function. The repetitive function of codeswitching is very common in all the schools visited. This is when the teacher uses code switching in order to transfer the necessary knowledge to students for clarity.

Arabic is also part of the languages taught in schools visited and this creates a number of problems. The teachers in the zongo schools opine that the writing system of Arabic creates problem for beginners. Unlike English, Arabic is written from right to left. One teacher showed an exercise book of a student, though a newcomer, who has written a phrase in English from write to left in class three. In addition, Al-Khatib (2001) argues that learners of Arabic usually transfer the stylistic features of Arabic to the target language, English. For

example, they tend to write long sentences without coordinating conjunctions. It also realized that the use of Arabic affects their pronunciation of some English words. Arabic teaching also reduces the number of the contact hours of the other subjects including English.

Comparatively, their contact hours are drastically reduced due to the teaching of Arabic. This according to the teachers affects the teaching of English related subjects.Moreover, the use of Hausa also affects their pronunciation. According to the teachers, some pupils pronounce every letter they see in a word. The teacher attributed this trend to Hausa influence because in Hausa there is no silent sound.

Again, the study finds out that some teachers do not know the details of the NALAP therefore, they want it to be reviewed in order to include Hausa since Hausa is the first language of the pupils. As mentioned by Hartwell (2010), the selection of an appropriate language can be easily determined by observing the language pupils use in the playground**.** All the teachers affirmed that they know about NALAP. However, their knowledge about NALAP varied from one teacher to the other. Fifty-three percent (53 %) of the teachers have accurate knowledge about NALAP. These teachers mentioned that NALP is meant to 'use the local languages to teach at the lower level'. Thirty-three (33%) percent said that NALAP is teaching the local language at all levels. Fourteen (14%) percent of the teachers said NALAP is teaching adults in the classroom. These teachers are of the view that NALAP is all about 'adult education'.

The study also found out that the materials on the prescribed local languages are woefully inadequate. This has been supported by Awedoba (2001) who observed that vast majority of written materials available have been English language texts with very limited access to text in Ghanaian languages. In view of this, local materials should be made available to enhance the teaching and learning processes in the lower primary. Hartwell (2010) attests to the fact that there are cases where the schools selected in Accra received materials in a language which the majority of the pupils in the school do not understand or speak. Hartwell added that there are schools, particularly where pupils and teachers do not know or speak one of the 11 official languages. Some of these schools are found in the zongos. It is against this backdrop that the study recommends the use of Hausa in the NALAP.

Some instructors therefore improvise by using a non-prescribed language in the classroom. These instructors use any available language which is not prescribed by the policy for explanations in classrooms. In the zongo schools, the reality of policy implementation is that the predominant lingua franca of the areas in which the schools are located is Hausa, which is not part of NALAP since it is considered a non-Ghanaian language, historically. Some teachers therefore blend Hausa with the other local Ghanaian languages while teaching. This, according to the teachers is affecting the performance of the students especially the Asante Twi.

Conclusion

There is a copious evidence that show that children do better when they receive instruction in their L1. Here is a case where some sections of students are being deprived of this excellent opportunity through no fault of theirs, especially those in the zongos communities. Ghanaian cities are gradually becoming cosmopolitan and therefore having students with different language background in the same localities. Hence, it will not be prudent to pick the local language of the locality as the language of instruction because that language may not be the dominant language in the class. In other words, many students may be deprived of their language rights when a particular language is chosen. A clear example is the LA-Nkwantang cluster of schools. These schools are found in Nkwantang near Madina, a suburb of Accra. The community is supposed to be a Ga community but because of the commercial activities of the area, it has become a linguistically complex community in Accra.

At the primary level, the schools use Ga as the medium of instruction. At the Junior High School (JHS) level, the schools teach three local languages (Ga, Twi, and Ewe) as subject of studies for Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). When it is time for a local language, the students will be grouped into three different groups. This is a clear indication that the teachers are well aware that the students are of different linguistic backgrounds. Ironically, these same students are taught only one local language (Ga) at the lower primary levels. We see this as unfair because the dominant students in one particular school (Nkwantang 7&8 primary and JHS) reveals that Twi speakers are the dominant, followed by Ewe speakers, Hausa speakers and Ga has the lowest number of speakers. However, Ga is used as the language of instruction at the lower primary.

Meanwhile the literature indicates that in order to accelerate progress, the target language should constantly be the focus of instruction. Krashen and Terrell (1983) acknowledge that the constant use of the target language by the instructor in the teaching/learning process plays a major role in enhancing proficiency in the language. We have a lot of trained English teachers but when it comes to our local languages, some schools hardly have a trained teacher and even those who have them are not maximizing their full potential. The locally trained teachers themselves prefer to teach English or social studies. The fact is that the students sometimes look down upon the teachers who handle the local languages so the teachers want to show that they can handle other subjects.

Recommendations

In order to have a well-grounded local language policy, a massive corpus development of our local languages should be embarked upon. Owu-Ewie (2006) asserts that this can be achieved if the government provides funds for the corpus development of our local languages to incorporate technical and scientific terms into the various Ghanaian languages and also develop the written forms of the less developed ones. If this is done and done well, the students and the teachers will accord some respect to our local languages.

It is very important to have children receiving instruction in their native language. That is why some people see the mother tongue education as a right of a child. According to Pattanayak, (1986) children's native languages as media of instruction play a very key role in the entire educational life and mother tongue education is not only a right but a need as well, for every child. Owu-Ewie (2006) is of the view that it is absolutely wrong to deny our learners language rights and claim to give them fundamental rights. Owu-Ewie (2006:79) added that 'Rights without language rights are vacuous. Language Rights + Human rights = Linguistic human rights.'

It is very prudent for the policy makers to consider the happenings on the ground in other to make the implementation of their policies feasible and practical. It is in this light that the study recommends that Hausa should be encouraged in the zongo schools in order to increase the proficiency level of the pupils. As it stands now teachers codeswitch a lot in the classroom especially at the lower level. As most language experts agree that learners do well when taught in the language they best understand. In this regard, we recommend that Hausa, even though not an indigenous Ghanaian language, should be given a second look in the NALAP program. This will capture the schools in the zongo areas in Ghana and will help accelerate proficiency. This recommendation was also made by Professor Felix K. Ameka of Leiden University on 29th October, 2015 during the panel discussions on language policy, at the 1st School of Languages Conference, ISSER, University of Ghana.

We believe it is a common fact that Hausa has come to stay as one of the useful languages in Ghana, especially in the zongos and market centers as Dakubu (1988) mentions and supported by Dako (2012) who confirms that Hausa is one of the non-local languages mostly used in Ghana. We should also recognize the fact that the role played by Hausa in Ghana started way back in colonial days. In this regard, Anyidoho and Dakubu (2008:145) have this to say:

> 'Colonial language policy is also the reason why Hausa is an inter-ethnic lingua franca. When the colonial regime established a local police force, and later an army division to fight in its wars, it recruited mainly men from the savannah regions extending from today's northern Ghana to Nigeria. Hausa was deliberately promoted as the language to be used with and within the lower ranks. Hausa is still maintained as a language of inter-ethnic communication in towns among people originating from outside southern Ghana, especially from areas to the northeast. For Ghanaian speakers, Hausa is certainly not a language of ethnic identity, any more than English is. However, for many it does signify a kind of Ghanaian identity, or rather an urban identity related to 'Ghana' as a modern, urban idea associated with national government and the inter-regional, inter-ethnic institutions it sponsors.'

In recognition of the zongos in Ghana, the government of Ghana in 2017, created the Ministry responsible for the zongo development. This is a clear indication that the authorities have recognized the important role played by the zongos in national development, therefore, their language should be given a place in the educational system in order to enhance the proficiency of the residents.

More importantly, the study reveals that the NALAP program is not known by some teachers, therefore publicity should be intensified in other to make it popular among the teachers and the nation at large. On the issue of contact hours, we recommend that the authorities of the Islamic Education Unit to increase the contact hours in the schools. In other words, the contact hours should be extended in order to cater for the lost hours used for teaching Arabic.

Further Research

The results of this study have raised some important questions warranting further research into the zongo schools. Future research is needed regarding the nature of the contact that students encounter outside the classroom. Also, further investigation of the influence of Hausa on students' performance at the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) should be conducted. Answers to these questions would be potentially beneficial to teachers, administrators and staff who aim to facilitate students' comprehension at the lower primary.

This study did not measure student achievement among students in zongo schools. However, it discusses the critical issues in the zongo schools in relation to medium of instruction in the classroom and implementation of language policy in education. It realized that the teachers have added a Hausa which is not part of the

language policy for the public schools. The study therefore recommends that the policy makers should consider Hausa as one of the languages to be used at the lower primary schools in the zongos.

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i'Makaranta' is a Hausa word and it is the name given to the schools and learning centers for Arabic and Islamic studies. It is mostly found in the zongos.
ii'They are all suburbs of Accra
iii'Madrasa' is an Arabic word for school