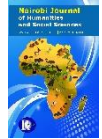




The use of home language: Quality way for students advancement in education



Research article



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Abstract

This paper examined the advancement of quality education in line with Home Language (HL). The study confirmed that using Home language as a medium of instruction is one of the mechanisms of quality education. The investigation was conducted with five hundred (500) pupils from the basic schools in Atebubu Municipality. A purposive sampling approached was used to elicit significant information for the investigation. The results showed that Home Language bridge the gap between the home culture and the school culture. It therefore, boost the pupil's confidence in participating in the teaching and learning process. The investigation has also drawn attention to how students feel uncomfortable when a foreign language is used in the lesson delivery. One other formidable point the study established was that advanced and developed countries have used only the mother tongue (OMT) medium of instruction in their education. It was realized among other things that any quality education beholds the use of Home Language as a medium of instruction.

Keywords: advancement, bilingual, education, home-language, instruction, medium, mother-tongue



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Public Interest Statement

Various aspects of discussions are currently underway concerning the medium of instruction in various educational levels all over the world. While one school of thought advocating for monolingual medium of instruction, another school of thought was calling for bilingual and multilingual. Among the aforementioned medium of instruction monolingual; a person who knows and uses only one language or a person who has an active knowledge of only one language though perhaps a passive knowledge of others is said to be ensured quality and proper advancement in child's education. The use of children's Home language / mother tongue to start and even maintain it in their education seen to be emotionally, psychologically and linguistically beneficial, but many African countries including Ghana accorded the latter.

Introduction

Language is a system conventional spoken, manual or written symbols by means of which human beings express themselves. Function of language include releasing, emotion, communication, expression of identity, play. Home language (HL) is a heritage language of an individual. It is also the native language that affirm individual cultural identity. The language a child is more competent and efficient in its usage or the language the child is well verse in and therefore can speak it fluently and freely, so home language (HL) can be seen as any language which school-aged children can speak fluently and competently.

Extant research show that many African elites prefer only the target language of education (e.g English only) language of instruction (Brock-Utne, 2010; Bronteng, Berson & Berson, 2019; Edu- Buandoh & Otchere, 2012) and so do not give proper attention to any other language policy. Edu- Buandoh and Otchere's (2012) study showed that most Ghanaian students prefer the only English Language of instruction to the combination of the native and English language. Brock-Utne (2010) and Trudell (2009) indicated that most African countries prefer using their colonial master's language for their educational purposes. A current research by Bronteng et al. (2019) confirmed this assertion.

There has been justification that in the current direction of the enactors of the educational language policies are interested in policy that encourages only the target language of the school, which often times are foreign languages to learner in the detriment of the home or native language. The stakeholders therefore discouraged the language of medium instruction apart from the foreign language.

The use of only English as a medium of instruction is pointed as mismatch between the home culture and the school culture. The school environment or culture seen entirely different from the home culture. In such situation the linguistic background of individual learners is always not considered. Mismatch between these cultures work against the

quality education delivery on the side of the teachers and impeded success of learners from diverse background.

Brown (2002) defines teaching as showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, giving instructions, guiding in the study of something, providing with knowledge, causing to know of understand. Teaching is guiding, direct and facilitating learning, enabling the learner to learn, setting the conditions for learning. One's understanding of how the learner learns will determine one's philosophy of education, teaching style, approach, methods and classroom techniques.

Learning is traditionally viewed as acquiring or getting knowledge of a subject or a skill by study experience or instruction. It is a relative permanent change in a behavioral tendency and is the result of reinforced practice (Kimble & Garmezy, 1963). These two essential concepts cannot be adequately and effectively implemented without the use of language; therefore, language serve as vehicle that teaching and learning travelled on.

The flexibility of language as a tool for communication depends on combining smaller elements or segments into larger structures. It is an undeniable fact that, language is not learnt in a vacuum and nobody is born with the ability to learn a particular language. When we move towards cultural transmission as a feature of human language, it means that human language is acquired within an environment or a cultural setting and is therefore not an inborn facility. However, most elites in African countries as delighted using their colonial master's language as a medium of instructions which consequently deprived their learners from active participation in the teaching and learning processes.

The language this paper seeks to interrogate, has been given a serval names just to bring to the attention of the stakeholders of importance to the school aged children in our various societies. Frist language is the language the child is born into or introduced to from the initial stages from his/ her life. First language which is usually called Mother Tongue can also be referred to as Native Language (NL), Home Language (HL), Heritage language (HeL) or Primary Language (PL).

The home language (HL) is one of the education instruments that prepare children for their transition into upper primary and be young. It is an established fact that when children understand concepts taught and develop interest in learning, it form part of their daily routines and experience. The language of instruction that is home language (HL) foster the comprehension of the early concepts taught should be given necessary attention.

Theoretical issues and other Literature

L. Vygotsky's (1962) stated that, language plays a central role in the theory of human cognitive development. Language plays multiple roles including culturally shaping the

overt behavior of individuals as well as influencing their covert behavior, such as thinking. Language has been defined as a psychological tool that shapes other mental functions while at the same time being socially-shaped itself (Kozulin, 1986). Vygotsky believed that language and thought initially have different roots but converge during the course of development and are influenced bi-directionally thereafter (Kozulin, 1986). The view that the environment influences and changes behavior different in ways based on the historical and present context has also been incorporated into behavioral theory by several developmental behavior analysts (Morris, 1988; Hayes, Hayes, & Reese, 1983; Pelaez-Nogueras & Gewirtz, 1997). That the individual's history with the environment. The current state of the organism, and other environmental influences combined to alter the probability, rate, form and production of behavior is an overriding theme in Kantor's (1975) conceptualization of the event field in Interbehaviorism.

Bukholder & Pelaez (2000) posited that, Vygotsky's emphasis on context, setting, and his use of culture make his theoretical approach to child psychology particularly interesting and a good fit within the overall framework of behavioral psychology. It is therefore, projected that environment is one of the factors that determine child language and enhances the competencies of the child expressed him or herself in the language in question. Looking at the psychological behavior of children acquisition of language the home language fosters the development of the other unfamiliar language.

Authorities advocated for social justice with special attention to equity in education frown on social injustices and oppression in all forms or anything that militates against equity (Adams & Bell, 2016; Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010) to them, every student or child has the right to quality education. They again indicated that, there should be equity in the provision of Education to all children. Therefore, any barrier to learning is an infringement on children right to education. It was supportively clear that, building bridges across child home language to disposed him or her will be a great mistake committed. It breaks the chain of equity and inclusivity.

Swadener et al. (2013) posited that, barrier to learning is any factor, internal and or external, that constitutes an obstacle to a learner's ability to productively benefit from schooling. This follows the students have the right to access education that is provided in the familiar language that is (HL). Thus, education that is transmitted in unfamiliar language that foreign language (FL) is a barrier to learning pushing it towards the concept of cultural and social injustices.

This fact is also established in the United Nations Convention on the right of the child (UNCRC) convention on the right of the child (CRC) that every child has the right to education as well as be allowed to use his or her heritage language. Studies have shown that quality education is achieved when it is channeled through familiar and meaningful

mode (Swadener et al., 2013; UNESCO 2016) students who are taught in language other than their heritage language or familiar language usually struggle with success in their education.

The reality in Ghana is that, most early childhood classroom serves children who have limited exposure to the home language (HL). Therefore, most of the children who are very active at home show lower participation in school due to the unfamiliarity of the school's culture which has language as its cornerstone, thereby making most learners become tongue – tied (Taylor, 2009). This is linguistics disability cause by the use of unfamiliar language makes it difficult for them to share the funds of knowledge they have. Skutnabb – Kangas (2008) attested to the fact that, the strict use of unfamiliar language in education attitude as a serious indictment on the part of policy-makers because denying learners' access to the home language (HL) in education is doing a great disservice to them. The writer sees the confirmable attitude as linguistic genocide. The author regards the use of learners' home language (HL) in education as their linguistic right and their right for quality education.

Anyidoho (2018) ... communication is an indispensable tool in human society as it is an avenue for humans to successfully give or share with others their thoughts, feelings, ideas, and information. Though humans communicate through body movements, signs, and other means, by far superior in terms of accuracy, effectiveness and efficiency is speech and the writing systems based on it. When people come together to achieve a common purpose in the home, community, society, and nation, speech becomes a requisite tool for the success of that enterprise. Basic phenomena such as the socialization of the young and the transmission of culture are very much enhanced through verbal language. In the globalized world, classroom education, which is the most viable avenue for training and passing on information and knowledge to younger generations, is also severely hampered without speech and writing.

Methodology

The research design adopted for the study was survey. It was a type of descriptive investigation which specifies the nature of a given phenomenon. It determines and reports how things look like. Besides, it recognizes the natural setting as the direct source of data and the students were the purposive. The approach of the study was mix- method in nature. In all five hundred (500) respondents were observed and interviewed in basic school primary category. The breakdown of the schools and students were as follows: fifty (50) students at Atecoe Demonstration Primary school, fifty (50) students at Owusu Asare M/A Primary school, fifty (50) students at Methodist Primary school , fifty (50) students at Anglican Primary school, fifty (50) students at New Konkrompe D/A Primary school, fifty

(50) students at St. Martin's R/C Primary school, fifty (50) students at Atebubu M/A Primary school, fifty (50) students at English and Arabic Primary school, fifty (50) students at Tuse M/A Primary school and fifty (50) students at J.M.J Primary school.

3.1 Research Site

The data was collected in the Bono East Region of Ghana in a town called Atebubu a, predominantly farming community in the Atebubu Amantin Municipal. According to 2010 population census there were about seven thousand eight hundred and three (7,803) Ghanaian living in the above-mentioned district. Inasmuch as the populace were farmers other sectors for instance politics, education, health and their culture placed at outstanding position. The site was suitable for the investigation based on the location of the Municipal as a center in the Bono East Region. The study was therefore carried out at both public and private schools. Close attention was paid to all respondents during the interview and observation to monitor the effect of the Home Language (HL) position in these school.

Data Collection Tools: The tool used for collecting data for this study were interview and questionnaire. The interview was conduct in the lower primary whereas questionnaire was generated and upper primary students administer them. On the 25th day of May, 2018 to 1st day of May, 2019. Permission was sought and granted by the Municipal Director of Education as well as the head teachers of the target schools. A tape recorder was used to record all the responses of the lower primary students and later transcribed them for the analysis. Two hundred and fifty respondents were used as interviewees to collect the data. The interview and questionnaire were all administered in their schools and particularly their classroom. These activities were carried out in their own environment to avoid fear and panic.

Table 1 Sample Size

Gender	Number
Male	250
Female	250
Total	500

Table 2: Distribution of sample by schools and age bracket

Primary schools	Number of respondents	Age bracket
Atecoe Demonstration	50	(8-12) years
Owusu Asare	50	(9- 13) years
Methodist	50	(8- 13) years
New Konkrompe	50	(9- 12) years
St. Martin's R/C	50	(9-12) years
Atebubu M/A	50	(8-12) years
English & Arabic	50	(8-14) years
Tuse M/A	50	(9- 14) years
J.M.J	50	(8- 12) years
Anglican	50	(9- 12) years

Table 3: Home Language (HL) proficiency

School	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Atecoe Demonstration Primary	50 (45)	(100)90
Owusu Asare Primary	50 (40)	(100)80
Methodist Primary	50 (50)	(100)100
New Konkrompe M/A Primary	50 (45)	(100)90
St. Martin's R/C Primary	50 (40)	(100)80
Atebubu M/A Primary	50 (35)	(100)70
English & Arabic Primary	50 (30)	(100)60
Tuse M/A Primary	50 (35)	(100)70
J. M. J Primary	50 (50)	(100)100
Anglican Primary	50 (40)	(100)80
Total	(500) 410	(100)82

The table above shows that, out of the total number of 500 respondents that represented the school in the municipality 82% can use Home Language (HL) very well. Out of 500 students 410 made themselves available to be interviewed and administered the questionnaire.

Discussions

Table 4. Educational content and Home Language.

Home language as Medium of Instruction	Number of respondents	Percentages (%)
Yes	399	97.3
No	11	2.7
Total	410	100

From the above tables, it was cleared that out of the 410 respondents; 399 responded Yes and 11 responded No to whether the educational content should be delivered in Home Language or not. This shows that, the home language is effective in delivering educational content to a child than the other medium of instructions.

Table 5. Confidence in Self-expression and Home Language

Confidence in using Home language to express yourself than L2	Number of respondents	Percentages (%)
Yes	350	85.4
No	60	14.6
Total	410	100

From table 5, the number of respondents who answered Yes to whether they have confidence in using Home Language to express themselves, 350 representing 85.4% out of 410 answered Yes, whilst 60 representing 14.6% answered No. This means student have confidence in self-expression in the classroom whenever, the medium of instruction is in the Home Language.

Table 6. Home Language and Class Participation

Students' participation in class using Home Language	Number of respondents	Percentages (%)
Active	401	97.8
Inactive	9	2.2
Total	410	100

On tables above the question was asked whether or not students' participation in class was active or inactive when the lesson was delivered in Home Language. It was realized that 401 respondents representing 97.8% answered positively active participation and 9

respondents representing 2.2% said they become inactive when the Home Language is used as medium of instruction. The inactive component in table 6 is insignificant when the two percentages are compared.

Table 7. Group Discussion in Home Language

Using Home Language in discussing group activities	Number of Respondents	Percentages (%)
Total involvement	389	94.9
Partial involvement	21	5.1
Total	410	100

On table 7: 389 respondents representing 94.9% answered total involvement whilst 21 respondents representing 5.1% answered partial involvement. The point driving home was to ascertain student's involvement in group discussions. The figures and their corresponding percentage demonstrate that students get involved in group discussion when the medium of instruction is in Home Language. This table brought to the attention of promoting social and culture of an individual since language is ones cultural heritage.

Table 8. Posters on Creativity on the walls in the Classrooms

Home Language and Classroom environment	Number of Respondents	Percentages (%)
Yes	45	10.9
No	365	89.1
Total	410	100

With Table 8: there was significant changed of results. 45 respondents representing 10.9% answered Yes to the creative wall posters in their classrooms whilst 365 respondents representing 89.1% answered No to the question posed. It was therefore, justifiable that the classroom was a threat to the quality education. Additionally, it is indirect way of infringing on the students' human right, and support the theory of cultural discontinuity. In such classrooms the school culture is strongly undermined the home culture.

Table 9. Home Language (HL) as Medium of Instruction

Using Home Language as Medium of Instruction	Number of Respondents	Percentages (%)
Yes	409	99.7
No	1	0.2
Total	410	100

Table 9, is associated with weather Home Language (HL) should be used as medium of instruction such as countries like USA, Japan and China, The students overwhelmingly responded positive to that motion; 409 respondents representing 99.7% answered Yes whilst 1 respondent representing 0.2% answered No. Inasmuch as countries are demanding bilingual and multilingual medium of instruction, students at lower level of education are advocating for medium of instruction that will make them participate actively during teaching and learning process. There was cleared indication that Home Language (HL) foster understanding and promotes quality education as well as respect human right component of human lives. Currently, teaching in the home languages in schools may not be attractive to many parents, students and teachers because competence in those languages does not seem to matter in educational, social and economic advancement. However, insistence on English only as the medium of instruction at the lowest level of education, with the current high rate of pupils' failure in attaining appreciable proficiency levels, consigns many students to the bottom of society. Meanwhile, their home language (HL) would have been the solution if uses as medium of instruction.

Conclusion

The fundamental philosophy underlying the Ghanaian Language Policy in our schools is to enable the individual acquire a sense of cultural identity and make him/her literate in his/her own mother tongue. Another essential factor is that basic literacy in one's mother tongue or the home language (HL) enhances the child's ability to transfer and apply acquired learning skills in the home language (HL) to proficiency in learning other languages. This paper has focused on the Home Language (HL) as a medium of instruction it has also spoken again inconsistencies associated with medium of instruction in Ghana. While some of the policies require that English, a familiar language and a major linguistic capital in contemporary times, which is also the adopted official language of the country, be used as the medium of instruction at the lowest level of education, others approved the home language (HL) medium at that stage. This paper therefore, supports the home language (HL) as a medium of instruction not only at the lower level of our education but thereafter. The discussion affirmed that, the used of home language (HL) as a medium of instruction brings about advancement of quality education in students.

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Bionote:

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